**Significance of Single National Curriculum**

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Prime Minister Imran Khan has launched the first phase of Single National Curriculum (SNC) for class I to V, which will be taught in all educational institutions including government and private schools as well as in the seminaries with a view to bring them into the mainstream by providing modern education to their students. The SNC for class 6th to 8th is scheduled to be implemented from next year, while for class 9 to 12 it will commence in the year 2023. It was part of the PTI manifesto and the cabinet had approved this plan for implementation on 25 February 2020. Reportedly, the government has prepared the model text books for the curriculum and private publishers will also be allowed to print them.

A curriculum is an educational framework outlining skill and content milestones that need to be attained by a society ensuring dynamic flexibility that caters to its diversity of cultural, socio-economic and regional backgrounds. It is a permeating view that different systems and curricula being taught in schools and colleges, particularly in the private sector. It is quite discriminatory in nature and puts the students studying in the government managed institutions at a greater disadvantage viz-a-viz the students of the private schools with regards to their future prospects of employability and career prospects. The situation is even worse for the students of the religious seminars who remain deprived of modern education with very limited chances of competing in the job market. Unfortunately, some seminaries have also been promoting Jihadi culture and fissiparous tendencies within the society that promoted sectarianism, religious extremism and terrorism, which further pose an existentialist threat to the country making it imperative to fight it out on the ideological front. The best way of doing so is to have a Single National Curriculum while also bringing the students of seminaries into the mainstream.

The PTI government has made a right move, which will have a very healthy impact on the social landscape, besides, nudging an equitable socio-economic development. It will also rectify the well-entrenched maladies germinated by the non-uniform system of education and curricula, besides, lessening the degree of social stratification that has been the bane of our socio-economic development.

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Sociologists use the term social stratification to describe the system of social standing. Social stratification refers to a society’s categorization of its people into rankings of socioeconomic tiers based on factors such as wealth, income, race, education, and power. Society’s layers are made of people, and society’s resources are distributed unevenly throughout the layers. The people who have more resources represent the top layer of the social structure of stratification. Other groups of people, with progressively fewer and fewer resources, represent the lower layers of our society.

In the modern era, democratic entities and societies are laying greater emphasis on equal chances of success for every member of the society, which is only possible when there is one education system in the country and a uniform curriculum for all the students. Although there is no dearth of people who would like to argue that hard work and talent, and not prejudicial treatment or societal values determine social rank, but the sociologists recognize that social stratification is a society-wide system that makes inequalities apparent. While there are always inequalities between individuals, sociologists are interested in larger social patterns. Stratification is not about individual inequalities, but about systematic inequalities based on group membership, classes, and the like. No individual, rich or poor, can be blamed for social inequalities. The structure of society affects a person’s social standing. Although individuals may support or fight inequalities, social stratification is created and supported by society as a whole.

Factors that define stratification vary in different societies. In most societies, stratification is an economic system, based on wealth, the net value of money and assets a person has, and income, a person’s wages or investment dividends. While people are regularly categorized based on how rich or poor they are, other important factors influence social standing. For example, in some cultures, wisdom and charisma are valued, and people who have them are revered more than those who do not. In some cultures, the elderly people are esteemed while in others, the elderly are disparaged or overlooked. Societies’ cultural beliefs often reinforce the inequalities of stratification.

One key determinant of social standing is the social standing of our parents. Parents tend to pass their social position on to their children. People inherit not only social standing but also the cultural norms that accompany a certain lifestyle. They share these with a network of friends and family members. Social standing becomes a comfort zone, a familiar lifestyle, and an identity.

Other determinants are found in a society’s occupational structure. Teachers, for example, often have high levels of education but receive relatively low pay. Many believe that teaching is a noble profession, so teachers should do their jobs for love of their profession and the good of their students, and not for money. Yet no successful executive or entrepreneur would embrace that attitude in the business world, where profits are valued as a driving force. Such cultural attitudes and beliefs support and perpetuate social inequalities.

Therefore, on a societal level, the best way to break the log-jam of social stratification and mitigating its effects lies in the adoption of an education system under which students from all segments of the society are imparted education of the same standard and content so that they can compete with each other on a level playing field with regards to seeking different careers. Apart from the economic dimension, such an environment also consolidates social harmony and solidarity, which are the much-required ingredients to crown the national efforts with success and earning a respectable place in the comity of nations. The PTI government has indeed taken a great plunge forward in reforming the education system of the country and giving it a right direction.

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