

Problems of Curriculum Change: A Cross-Sectional Study of Primary School Teachers

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Abstract

The overhaul of the curriculum has emerged as a key priority in the transformation of the education system. It is intended to boost the quality of education of teachers and learners. However, over the years, the curriculum change in Pakistan's education system does not seem to achieve its intended objectives. Therefore, this quantitative research investigates the problems teachers face due to curriculum change at the primary level. The study sample consisted of 348 primary school teachers (Male = 174, Female = 174) selected from 04 districts of the Poonch Division. It draws upon empirical data from a self-developed questionnaire based on 24 items. Multilevel analyses, frequency, percentage, mean and Chi-Square were calculated to measure the reflections. Results revealed that teachers supported the change when they are involved in this process. It becomes apparent from findings that lack of resources, in-service training, professional courses, required qualification, and lack of audio-visual aids are the fundamental problems. So, the government should support the teachers and motivate them when curriculum changes are needed. The study guidelines will help curriculum creators, school administrators and teachers to improve the consistency of primary school curriculum change management.

Keywords: curriculum change, problems of teachers, issues & challenges, primary Schools

Introduction

Curriculum review, updates, and changes have become an everyday activity in educational institutions of developed countries (Ali & Baig, 2012). Curriculum is a complex on-going process that is orchestrated by the evolving and emerging political, economic and social demands of the country. The curriculum tells the students why this course is taught to them, and after the end of the course, what is expected from them. It is a guideline for both teachers and students to attain the aims and objectives of the programme (Smith & Lovat, 2003). It is an association between pupils and educational content, materials, tools, and processes to determine educational goals. It is a form and content that consists of essential clues related to styles, which are expected in the course and it is also a preview giving to students

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what is expected from them. The curriculum defines what is right, pedagogy defines what is valid for the transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what is useful for teachers to learn (Bernstein, 2003).

School curriculum is focused on national requirements and priorities and should be seen as an integral part of national growth. The curriculum stands for and promotes the values, aspirations, ideals, ideas, knowledge, and skills that the nation considers essential and that the nation cherishes. It is a blueprint or template for the nation's future development (Paramasivam & Ratnavadivel, 2018). In many developing countries, the curriculum fits the national development objectives, particularly in a country where the education system is highly centralized and determined by the political elite. Blenkin, Kelly, and Edwards (1992) discussed that changes in the curriculum practices reflect parallel changes in our ways of viewing and conceptualizing curriculum, which is associated with new points of focus and new forms of educational discourse.

For the new era, transformation and change is a motto. Change means to make something different or something new instead of old. The purpose of the reform is always to increase the quality and quantity of education. Change may take the form of inventions or alterations. If some new things are added to the curriculum, this is the curriculum change (Paramasivam & Ratnavadivel, 2018). Change in education is more important than any other sector. Curriculum change is an education process for students and school as well. The idea of the curriculum and understanding of the new curriculum is critical for the completion of the new curriculum. Well, curriculum implementation requires healthier use of adapt knowledge, while failure is an outcome of neglect (Sahlberg, 2004). Over time the essential changes get space in science and technology (Apple, 2006). According to Bland et al. (2000), only through the committed efforts of effective agents of reform can meaningful curriculum change occur. Teachers play a critical part in driving change. Change in curriculum creates problems due to lack of training, shortage of time for preparation, and lack of resources. Curriculum improvements are intended to support learners and teachers. Teachers should not be discouraged by seeing some of the more complex effects of curriculum changes (Maimela, 2015).

Teachers and headteachers are equally responsible for the proper implementation of the new curriculum in schools. But the teachers have a fear of change, and they have no idea to face the situation. Changing is the way teachers teach, and students learn required detailed approaches. In service, training is not much for teachers when curriculum changes desire to change the styles of teachers' teaching and students' learning. Change develops sentiments and unhappiness. Teachers sometimes display confusion and sometimes attempt to apply the change in the curriculum (Sahlberg,

2004). Priestley (2011) identified that as norm holders of professional models of transformational change, teachers have recently been positioned as agents of change in politics. There is abysmal communication among teachers and policymakers, so teachers cannot follow new policies properly and remain unaware of new policies for many years (Zafar, 2003). Teachers, therefore, deserve respect and careful consideration as drivers of change, particularly as changes in programmes frequently entail unrealistic criteria, a shortage of time and resources to understand the substance of the changes required, inadequate planning, increased working load, and a lack of effective management (Priestley & Sime, 2005, p.489).

Intensive pressure is being placed on teachers by policymakers, educational authorities, politicians, the media, parents, and the public. Besides, professional development programmes seldom provide teachers with sufficient resources to cope with change (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). As a result, while curriculum reform is meant to increase teachers' effectiveness, it has the opposite effect when teachers chose to avoid the challenge of change (Richardson & Association, 2001). Changing curricula can also hinder teachers and their ability to incorporate change successfully. Another problem is that there are no proper, dependable and regular professional development programs for teachers. Professional development is a planned program in which teachers get proper professional growth. However, in Pakistan and AJ&K, they are unaware of modern teaching techniques and methodologies according to the new syllabus demand (Farooq & Tong KAI, 2016). In Pakistan and AJ&K system of education is based on traditional methods and it is demand of time and society that teachers should be updated regarding new changes in science and technologies to deliver the students effectively the new curricula.

So, it is the responsibility of primary school teachers to make a solid foundation for students by enabling them to learn reading, writing, and other basic communication skills. Students learn different subjects such as language foundation, mathematics, science, and social studies in primary education. The main structure of student learning is usually prepared in these courses. In order to establish a positive start in education, schools, families, and society have all made their contributions (Islam, Mushtaq, Alam, & Bukhari, 2015). For effective teaching of these concepts, there is a need for proper training and proper refresher courses. But there is no adequate system of training regarding the change in curriculum. Moreover, curriculum change at the primary level affects the ability of students and teachers. The advent of a new discourse on education is one of the challenges of changing the curriculum (Adu & Ngibe, 2014). The objectives of such curriculum change are a journey towards the best. Despite these improvements in the curriculum, the standard of education is not

improving. Poor teacher training for the efficient implementation of the programme and the availability of the necessary resources contribute to the successful implementation of changes to the curriculum. Therefore, this study attempted to explore the problems faced by primary school teachers during curriculum change in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

In this study, the researcher looked at how teachers view changes in curriculum. Therefore, the study was descriptive, and a quantitative research design was used to conduct this research. A descriptive research design was found to be acceptable, bearing in mind the essence of the analysis (Haider & Qureshi, 2016). The survey research was the most appropriate type of descriptive research for drawing accurate outcomes among various descriptive analysis. The primary source of data collection for a survey is the questionnaire (Haider & Hussain, 2014), and in this study, the data was obtained by a self-developed questionnaire.

Population and Sample

All the government girls' and boys' primary schools of Poonch Division Azad Jammu & Kashmir were the study population. A total of 2316 teachers were working in Poonch Division, and from each district, 15% of teachers were selected by using a stratified random sampling technique. From Bagh 114 (male = 57, female = 57), Haveli 70 (male = 35, female = 35), Poonch 82 (male = 41, female = 41) and 82 (male = 41, female = 41) teachers from Sudhnuti district were selected. So, in total 348 (male = 174, female = 174) were selected in this study. Due to vigorous follow-up, the response rate of participants was 100%.

Tool Validation & Measure

A self-developed questionnaire based on a five-point Likert Scale was used in this study to measure teachers' responses. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first portion was related to perception about curriculum change and the second portion consisted of teachers' problems due to change in curriculum. The instrument was validated through the educational experts of the department of education Mohi-Ud-Din Islamic University Nerian Sharif and University of Kotli, Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The researcher visited the approachable area and collected the data. For distance areas, the researcher took help from colleagues. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale was calculated .83 in this study.

Results

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Chi-square test by SPSS 23rd version.

Table 1: Primary Teachers' Beliefs regarding Curriculum Change

S r #	Items	Leve of Agreement (%)					M	SD	Chi- Squ are	Sig
		SD A	D A	U D	A	SA				
1	Curriculu m Change is a need of time	1.4	.9	2.0	65. 5	30. 2	4.2 2	.66 2	558. 49	.00 0
2	Teachers are responsible for Implement ing New Curriculu m	0	0	14. 7	62. 1	23. 3	4.0 9	.61 1	133. 19	.00 0
3	Curriculu m change cause difficulties for Teachers	0	.3	9.5	64. 4	25. 9	4.1 6	.58 4	334. 36	.00 0
4	Curriculu m change affects teaching abilities of Teachers	0	.6	13. 8	59. 8	25. 9	4.1 1	.63 9	268. 92	.00 0
5	Curriculu m change affects Teachers' Performan ce	0	.3	17. 8	61. 2	20. 7	4.0 2	.63 0	277. 26	.00 0

The first statement results revealed that 65.5% of primary school teachers agreed, and 30.2% were strongly agreed regarding the statement (See table 1). The high mean value of ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .662$) statement revealed that the majority of teachers were in favor that curriculum change as a need of time. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit also showed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $X^2(4) = 558.49$, $p = .000$ hence, providing

substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that curriculum change is not a need of time. Moreover, it is evident from the second statement that 62.1% of teachers agreed and 23.3% were strongly agreed regarding the statement. The high mean value of the statement ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .611$) revealed that most teachers favored that it is teachers' responsibility to implement the new curriculum. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $X^2(2) = 133.19$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that teachers are not responsible for implementing the new curriculum.

Furthermore, the third statement results present that 64.4% of teachers were agreed, and 25.9% were strongly agreed regarding the statement. The high mean value of the statement ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .584$) revealed that the majority of teachers were in a favor that teachers feel difficulties after curriculum change. Furthermore, the chi-square goodness of fit also showed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $X^2(3) = 334.36$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that curriculum change does not cause difficulties for teachers. Additionally, the fourth statement results revealed that 59.8% of teachers were agreed, and 25.9% were strongly agreed regarding the statement. The high mean value of the statement ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .639$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that change in curriculum affects teachers' teaching abilities. Furthermore, the chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $X^2(3) = 268.92$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that curriculum change does not affect the teaching abilities of teachers.

Finally, the last statement results expressed that 61.2% of teachers were agreed and 20.7% were strongly agreed regarding the statement. The high mean value of the statement ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .630$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that change in curriculum affects teachers' performance. Additionally, the chi-square goodness of fit also showed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $X^2(3) = 277.26$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that curriculum change does not affect teachers' performance.

Table 2: Teachers' Beliefs regarding Problems faced due to Curriculum Change

Sr #	Items	Leve of Agreement (%)					M	SD	Chi-Squa re	Sig
		SD A	D A	U D	A	SA				
1	When Curriculum change, teachers feel problems due to lack of Training	0	3.7	15.5	56.3	24.4	4.01	.742	212.06	.001
2	Change in curriculum affects the effectiveness of teachers	0	2.3	17.2	62.9	17.5	3.96	.663	288.16	.032
3	Lack of teaching skills cause difficulties for teachers	.6	2.6	21.8	57.8	17.2	3.89	.731	368.40	.000
4	Nonavailability of audio-visual aids according to the new curriculum creates problems for teachers	.6	1.1	21.8	61.8	14.7	3.89	.672	436.79	.000

The first statement results demonstrated that 56.3% of teachers were agreed, and 24.4% were strongly agreed regarding the statement. The high mean value of the statement ($M = 4.01$, $SD = .742$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that due to change in curriculum, teachers worried because they do not have the proper training to address this change. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(3) = 212.06$, $p = .001$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that when curriculum change, teachers do not feel problems due to lack of proper required training. The second statement results revealed that 62.9% of teachers

were agreed, and 17.5% were strongly agreed regarding the statement. The mean score of the statement ($M = 3.96$, $SD = .663$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that curriculum change affects teachers' effectiveness. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit showed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(3) = 288.16$, $p = .032$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that change in the curriculum does not affect teachers' effectiveness.

Similarly, the third statement results expressed that 57.8% of teachers were agreed, and 21.8% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean value of the statement ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .731$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that lack of teaching skills creates difficulties for teachers. Moreover, the results of chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(4) = 368.40$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The fourth statement results explained that 61.8% of teachers were agreed, and 21.8% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean score of the statement ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .672$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that the nonavailability of audio-visual aids according to the new curriculum creates problems for teachers. Moreover, the results of chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(4) = 436.79$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 3: Teachers' Reflections on Problems caused due to Curriculum Change

Sr #	Items	Leve of Agreement (%)					M	SD	Chi-Squa re	Sig
		SD A	D A	UD	A	SA				
5	Lack of resources is a problem faced by teachers during curriculum change	0	5.2	21.3	54.3	19.3	3.88	.774	180.85	.01
6	Shortage of relevant books is also a problem during a	0	2.0	23.9	64.4	9.8	3.82	.620	321.77	.00

	change in curriculum									
7	When curriculum change, teachers feel problem due to lack of teachers' guide	.6	1.4	30.2	55.7	12.1	3.77	.694	376.91	.001
8	Lack of awareness regarding intended learning outcomes of the changed curriculum is a problem for teachers	0	3.7	27.3	56.6	12.4	3.78	.705	225.01	.000

The fifth statement results demonstrated that 54.3% of teachers were agreed, and 21.3% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean value of the statement ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .774$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that lack of resources is a problem teacher face during curriculum change. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $X^2(3) = 180.85$, $p = .01$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that lack of resources is not a problem faced by teachers during curriculum change. The sixth statement results revealed that 64.4% of teachers were agreed, and 23.9% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean score of the statement ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .620$) revealed that most respondents favored that shortage of relevant books is also a problem during a change in curriculum. Moreover, the results of chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $X^2(3) = 321.77$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

The results of seventh statement identified that 55.7% of teachers were agreed, and 30.2% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean value of the statement ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .694$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that teachers feel problem due to lack of teachers' guide when curriculum change. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(4) = 376.91$, $p = .001$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that when curriculum change, teachers do not feel problem due to lack of teachers' guide. The results of eighth statement revealed that 56.6% of teachers were agreed, and 27.3% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean score of the statement ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .705$) revealed that most respondents were favored that lack of awareness regarding the changed curriculum's intended learning outcomes is a problem for teachers. Moreover, the results of chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(3) = 225.01$, $p = .000$ hence, provide substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4: Teachers' Perspectives on Problems faced due to Change in Curriculum

Sr #	Items	Leve of Agreement (%)					M	SD	Chi-Squa re	Sig
		SD A	D A	U D	A	SA				
9	Teachers' feel difficulty due to lack of command on the content of the changed curriculum	0	1.7	39.7	46.0	12.6	3.70	.708	187.81	.003
10	Teachers' lack time managemet skills to cover changed curriculum	.3	3.4	36.8	46.6	12.9	3.68	.750	295.64	.000
11	Teachers' deficiencies in professional qualificati	0	1.1	17.5	74.4	6.9	3.87	.524	472.62	.001

	on cause difficulty in implement ing change curriculum									
12	Change in curriculum increases teachers' workload	0	1. 7	26. 7	61. 5	10. 1	3.8 0	.63 0	292. 29	.00 0

The results of ninth statement demonstrated that 46.0% of teachers were agreed, and 39.7% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean value of the statement ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .708$) revealed that most respondents favored that teachers' feel difficulty due to lack of command on the changed curriculum content. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(3) = 187.81$, $p = .003$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that teachers' do not feel difficulty due to lack of command on the content of the changed curriculum. The results of tenth statement revealed that 46.6% of teachers were agreed, and 36.8% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean score of the statement ($M = 3.68$, $SD = .750$) revealed that most of the respondents favored that they have lack time management skills to cover the changed curriculum. Moreover, the results of chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(4) = 295.64$, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

The results of eleventh statement identified that 74.4% of teachers were agreed, and 17.5% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean value of the statement ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .524$) revealed that most respondents were favored that teachers' deficiencies in professional qualification cause difficulty in implementing change curriculum. Moreover, the chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(3) = 472.62$, $p = .001$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis that teachers' deficiencies in professional qualification do not cause difficulty in implementing change curriculum. The twelfth statement results revealed that 61.5% of teachers were agreed, and 26.7% were undecided regarding the statement. The mean score of the statement ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .630$) revealed that most respondents favored that change in curriculum increases teachers' workload. Moreover, the results of chi-square goodness of fit also revealed a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies $\chi^2(3) =$

292.29, $p = .000$ hence, providing substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis

Discussion & Conclusion

The basic purpose of this research was to analyze primary teachers' perspectives regarding curriculum change and what problems they faced due to this change in curriculum. The study findings related to curriculum change revealed that most teachers believed that curriculum change is a need of time. Every country must modify and change its curriculum according to changing world situations to bring at par their students and teachers with others. As long as conditions change, even the needs of individuals and countries are no longer the same, and the curriculum will inevitably change to accommodate emerging technology and meet people's needs at that particular time. However, to ensure the proper implementation and efficacy of the change, teachers should be presented with reasons for the change in the curriculum to have a decision that contributed to the change and see the logic behind the change (Mandukwini, 2016). The results of the study conducted by Ali and Baig (2012) are also in line with our research and expressed that useful improvements to the curriculum have highlighted that these changes should reflect on all facets of curriculum education: evaluation, teacher training, school schedule, subject structure, educational context, organizational structure, and institutional culture.

The results of our study explored that majority of teachers were in favor that it is the responsibility of teachers to implement new curriculum, but the process of proper implementation of changed curriculum gets affected due to some issues related to curriculum change such as teachers feel difficulties after curriculum change, change in curriculum affects teacher's teaching abilities and change in curriculum affects teachers' performance. Türkkahraman (2012) also finds out that teachers feel problems due to lack of content-based knowledge, refresher courses, and professional development programs. Similarly, Bordage and Harris (2011) reflected that teacher preparation aims to provide teachers with the capacity to enact and sustain educational improvement efforts. Like our study findings, Channa (2014) identified five principal problems faced by primary school teachers. These problems are lack of resources, professional support, technical awareness, professional adequacy and attitude, and interest in the career.

Our study's findings are also in line with some of the above-reported researches and identified that teachers get worried due to change in curriculum because they do not have the proper training to address this change. Maimela (2015) also supported our findings that if training makes sense, good teachers can only be essential for their career development. Teachers need some kind of skill-building to deal

with the ever-changing knowledge and style of education now so that they can confidently implement curriculum changes without feeling helpless and unworthy of their vocation. Curriculum change affects teachers' effectiveness; lack of teaching skills creates difficulties for teacher and nonavailability of audio-visual aids according to new curriculum create problems for teachers. The findings of Keller, Neumann, and Fischer (2017) also supported our findings that compared to non-qualified teachers, skilled teachers are more likely to perform well. It is also essential to educate and provide more qualified teachers to help students meet the goals and objectives of the curriculum. The findings of ÖZTÜRK and Campus (2013) also align with our results and explored three main challenges faced by teachers; these are the lack of preparation, departmental support, and coping strategies in the classroom. The results of these researches are almost similar to this research. In this research, teachers face problems due to lack of training, lack of skills, lack of professional development courses, and lack of awareness about intended outcomes.

The study findings also revealed that many primary school teachers believed that lack of resources is a problem faced by teachers during curriculum change. They have a shortage of relevant books and teachers' guide, lack of awareness regarding intended learning outcomes of the changed curriculum, they do not have proper command on the content of the changed curriculum, and lacks proper professional qualification. The findings of Paramasivam and Ratnavadivel (2018) also supported that teachers focus only on the content coverage and neglecting the actual knowledge, skills, and values that should be acquired by the students, and it led to decreased interest in learning by the pupils. The results of Ali and Baig (2012) also showed that most of the faculty members prefer to feel that they did not make any contribution during the process. Even they are not adequately qualified and led to the apprehension that the already confused faculty still felt ill-equipped and prepared to face curriculum reform demands. Steele, Steyer, and Nowalk (2001) viewed that administrators did not conceive this backlash faculty and could have been better treated if noted earlier.

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