



## To study the impact of curriculum in declining citizenship values and tolerance amongst the university students

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**ABSTRACT:-** In recent years the universities of Pakistan have seen widespread increase in intolerance amongst the students with fights breaking out amongst different groups of students on petty issues as students try to resolve their differences through violence. This research aims to identify the relationship of curriculum to the increasing intolerance and declining civic values in the university students of the province of Sindh in Pakistan. The investigation and sampling of the research focused on the subjects at the heart of this issue, i.e. the students and their belief as to the problems with the current curriculum.

**Keywords:-** Citizenship, Curriculum, Education, Intolerance, Sindh, Universities

### I. INTRODUCTION

Time and time again stories of intolerant attitudes displayed by students in high schools and universities form the headlines of the national news. Cases of cheating, bribery, beating up of teachers and other disruptions that undermine the sanctity of educational institutions are thrust into the limelight. Such cases have become more frequent with the passage of time like the clash in a university in Karachi in June of this year resulting in injury of 11 students [1] or the 102 students caught cheating during the HSC part II exams last year [2]. Also it has been repeatedly shown that graduates are equally likely to commit crimes such as phone snatching, car thefts and even murder as their uneducated counterparts[3].

One of the most important goals of education is the formation of citizens that are able to responsibly handle their civic duties and are good citizens [4]. However, it is clear from the above examples that our educational institutions are failing to inculcate the values that would produce individuals who are aware of the rights of others and are capable of positive interaction with peers even where conflict of views and opinions maybe present. Also our education system is not enabling the students to determine the right from the wrong and take decision on the basis of good judgement. "Promoting respect, non-discrimination and equal opportunities are issues for everyone. If intolerant and discriminatory attitudes are left unchallenged, they could become ingrained, leaving students to intersociety with unfounded prejudices and an inadequate understanding of diversity" [5].

For determination of solutions to the problem it is essential to analyse the root cause which is identified through a problem solving approach [6]. Once causes are identified, it becomes easier to determine the solutions. Researches have established that the curriculum of a country needs to include citizenship education which according to Kerr, is, "not about trying to fit everyone into the same mould, or creating the 'model', or 'good', citizen. Rather it means developing the ability within citizens to take decisions on their own for their lives and communities and accept the responsibility for their decisions as well"[7]. According to Osler and Starkey citizenship education may also be defined as, "...integration into society. It is about overcoming structural barriers to equality: challenging racism and sexism in institutions, for instance..." While on social and political levels it could be defines as the creation of a social order that would allow the provision of security while at the same time without any need to suppress[8].

Furthermore in the context of Pakistan, placing importance on the development of citizenship values in graduates is essential as, being a democratic country, Pakistan needs individuals who are tolerant and capable of listening to diversified opinions and points of views and even those directly conflicting with their own beliefs. For the development of the community and the political system of a democracy, the nation is in dire need of

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dynamic and socially aware individuals. While in some such understanding is inherent, the masses need to be educated to gain a sound idea of what the system needs to run smoothly and self-learning is “never in itself sufficient to equip citizens for the sort of active role required of them in today's complex and diverse society”[9].

Acclimatisation to changes requires a degree of liberality and patience in people for which citizenship provides a medium. It serves as, “a voice in the life of their schools, in their communities and in society at large.” Citizenship education also enhances their involvement, “by developing the expertise and experience needed to claim their rights and understand their responsibilities and preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of adult and working life” [9]. Society profits the most, as it attains “active and responsible citizenry” prepared and eager “to join in the life of the nation and the global society and play the part expected from them”[9].

At this point it is important to highlight that the Constitution of Pakistan includes freedom of speech, religion, property rights, equality, and security, forbids slavery, forced labour as part of the Fundamental Rights but does not include education as part of it. Furthermore education has been made the joint responsibility of the federal and provincial government. The former has made the curricula, planning and policy while the implementation has been left to the provinces[10]. Over the history of Pakistan, the educational policies have been very varied and inconsistent changing with the changing governments resulting in a very haphazard curricula with no proper planning and progression from primary to secondary and then to higher education.

Ayub Khan's reforms were liberal market-oriented and emphasized on the technical and managerial aspects of an industry based society with the education policy to support this and promote modernisation and liberal Islam for which the Commission of National Education was formed that included Dr. Herman Wells, President of Indiana University in Bloomington, Dr John Warner, President Carnegie Institute of Technology, Dr I.H. Qureshi, Professor of History, and Dr Abdus Salam, Pakistan's lone Nobel Laureate. However, the findings of the Commission were ignored[10]. After the 60s era, Yahya Khan ruled for 3 years bringing in his own set of policies which were designed around the concepts of decentralisation and universal education until Grade V[10]. However, this change was also short lived because of the political upheaval during 1971 which saw the Bhutto regime bringing in their own national policies on education. These policies saw that nationalisation of all educational institution and the focus to increase on agro-technical education [11]. It also included a very detailed concept of religiosity which saw a rapid establishment of Madressa education. This was not the final stop for strategic changes in the educational policy. With the coming in of Zia-ul-Haq's regime came the Jihadist Islam form of education with the claim that the national policy of education shall be driven through the Ideology of Pakistan [10]. It wasn't the ideology that drove the education rather the “Jihad in Afghanistan” and the necessity to gain the nation's support for it drove the national policy. Zia changed the medium of instruction to Urdu which split the school system into two tiers; with English being the medium of education for the elite while Urdu was the medium for the rest of the country studying in the government schools, a course of action termed as the “Islamisation Programme”. This attempt at change has been described by Gandin and Apple “as an authoritarian populist attempt to bring education in line with the word of God” [11].

After the disaster of the Zia regimes Islamisation of the national policy of education came the two policies developed by the government of Nawaz Sharif during their short tenures. These policies were the 10 year policy of 1992-2002 and the 12 year policy of 1998-2012. The first continued to focus on Islamic education while the second policy show a shift from supply side to demand side education which is to focus on the fields of education that catered to the demand by the market and generate graduates in subjects that could get them jobs in the market. However, both of these policies still did not have a single mention of citizenship education or focus on the civic values. The successor to these policies was that developed by the Musharraf regime. The mission statement of its Education Sector Reforms Action Plan 2001 – 2004 stated, “Developing human resources in Pakistan as a pre-requisite for global peace, progress and prosperity.”[11] The White Paper developed by the regime tried to be more inclusive and accepting of the other religions by developing an alternate ethics course that could be opted for by non-Muslim students. This was anticipated to promote inter-faith tolerance and create awareness for inter-faith acceptance. Also the Education for All Action Plan was developed by the government to attain the millennium development goals that Pakistan had adopted to achieve till 2015. To this purpose, it was recommended that the national policy should ensure that education prepares an individual in coping with unexpected adverse situations. The civic curriculum document specifically shed light on the concepts of adaptability, impartiality, respect for human dignity and acceptance for cultural and social values and universal brotherhood. The curriculum has also been designed to uphold the basic aims of an education that would allow students to emerge as good citizens, as expected of an Islamic society and nation.

An overview of the changes in curriculum shows a huge shift between the pre and post 1979 educational policies from a secular curriculum to one that contained more violence, hate, prejudice, discrimination and degradation of all other faiths except Islam. There were three major factors responsible for this including the Afghan Soviet War, the Iranian Revolution and the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia

who have both tries to promote their own egocentric interests within Pakistan's territory [10]. Pakistan being the only nuclear power did not help matters rather further fuelled the interest of external forces who each try to gain control of the mind-sets of the people of Pakistan for their own interest. After 1979, the curriculum of Pakistan was greatly altered. Books came to include passages such as "India is our traditional enemy and we should always keep ourselves ready to defend our beloved country from Indian aggression" – class V social studies text book; "In Islam Jihad is very important....The person who offers his life never dies....All the prayers nurture one's passion for Jihad" and "Education sector in East Pakistan was totally under the control of Hindus. Under the guidance of India they fully poisoned the minds of Bengalis against Pakistan and aroused their sentiments" – class IX Pakistan Studies text book [10]. This, combined with several other research studies, shows that teachers in Pakistani schools do not have the required knowledge and understanding to teach citizenship to school children. Studies also reveal that the textbooks used lack proper content which would aid teaching citizenship to students. For example, when discussing citizens' rights, only civil rights have been focussed upon, while other relevant topics, such as the functioning of the government, police, health and education departments and other related institutions have been neglected. In the same way, the teaching carried out in the classroom does not adequately attend to promoting the skills and perspectives that would contribute to students becoming active citizens. In this regard, it has especially been noted that students are not encouraged to be inquisitive and excessive questioning is frowned upon. Studies have advocated the adoption of a variety of teaching methods to ensure that students emerge from schools as responsible citizens in the society. These measures include inquiry methods of teaching, encouraging critical thinking within the classroom, co-curricular activities which stimulate students and the recruitment of students in positions of responsibility and decision making at classroom and student body levels.

In Pakistan, the educational opportunities are so varied, that divisions range from on the basis of "regional disparities, rural – urban location, gender, income and wealth of parents, medium of instruction in school, curricula and syllabi, ideological divides types of schools and access to extra coaching (shadow schooling), among others" [12]. In addition, Pakistan has three analogous systems present within the education sector, namely the madrasah system, the Urdu-medium public schools and the private sector schools. Madrasahs have been an important branch of education in the subcontinent due to Muslim parents wishing to impart Islamic education to their children. However, ever since the Cold War, when Pakistan supported the USA against Russia and delivered the Afghan Mujahideen training and logistic support, these madrasahs have been wrongly influenced by extremist ideologies which had spread intolerance within our society. During wartime, the motive behind these madrasahs had been to promote Jihad and persuade young boys to enlist as part of the forces against the Russian army. In 2005, the World Bank estimated that Pakistani madrasahs aggregate to less than 1% of the total student enrolment, and even from this seemingly trivial amount, there are only a handful with promote radical thoughts. This handful, however, has resulted in bigoted beliefs causing problems for the country. A madrasah student is enrolled to learn to read, memorize and recite the Qur'an, and pursue advanced theological studies to become an Ulema (religious scholar). Different schools of Islamic thought all have their own seminaries and the students are imparted education about all aspects of religion. On the other hand, the few seminaries indulging in extremist behaviour produce students that do not attend regular schools or go on to attend colleges or universities. These are the madrasahs causing the real problems in the society.

The public sector schooling, which caters to approximately 60% of school going children, is no better than the seminaries, as the students leave these institution with narrow-minded beliefs and old-fashioned practices. Having seen severe deterioration over the past twenty years, it is now regarded as an obsolete system, producing rote-learning, incompetent individuals, who would repeat thousands of words of nonsense as written in their textbooks, without comprehending a word of what they had been taught and are now speaking. The textbooks have not once been revised since the reorientation during Zia-ul-Haq's regime. The only competent graduates entering our industry are from the English medium private school sector, with a very few illustrious exceptions from the public schools. The students from these private schools are able to exhibit an unbiased and resourceful thinking and question the blindly prejudiced religious and cultural philosophies taught to them since infancy. The diversity in these schooling systems has resulted in the development of radically different mind-sets within our society, with the Madrasah students supportive of Jihad and extremist behaviour, Urdu medium school graduated less prone to favour fighting but an ideology with is bigoted, backward and bordering on intolerant, and the elite English medium school students aloof from the others, believe themselves to have superior intellect and consider themselves detached from the world and its bias, conservative thinking, and illiterate people from rural areas and their problems. The latter part of society had isolated itself from the mainstream Pakistani society, to the extent that the upper class of the nation has become unaware from the plight of the rest of the country, content in their bubble. Thus the school system has in truth cemented social gap further, rather than providing social mobility and causing a decrease in the socioeconomic difference.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to determine the role that the inefficient curriculum has played in the increasing intolerance and lack of civic values in the students of the universities of Pakistan focusing on the universities in Sindh.

## **II. RESEARCH QUESTION**

This study will make an attempt to address the following questions:

- 1 - To what extent has the curriculum of Pakistan contributed towards the declining tolerance levels and civic values in the universities?
- 2 - What is the difference between the role played by inefficient curriculum in declining citizenship values in public universities and in private universities?

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

### **III.I. RESEARCH STRATEGY**

The researcher opted for quantitative methodology for this research considering the advantages of this type to include provision of precise, numerical data in a short time and over a large sample of the total population[15]. Also quantitative research is most suitable for analysing variables[15] and determining the relationships between them which is the purpose of this research in identifying the link between the curriculum and intolerance. Furthermore as this research attempts to establish the difference between the public and private universities as to whether the curriculum is equally important in both cases, again quantitative research is most suitable since to test the hypothesis [16].

The total population for the research comprised of all the students studying in the universities of Sindh encompassing both government-owned (public) and private universities. This comprises of a total of 51 universities recognised by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan in Sindh including 21 government owned and 30 private universities [17]. For the sample, the researcher selected 3 private and 6 government universities because even though the number of private universities is higher, however, the number of students in government universities is 1.6 times more as of 2013 [18]. From the sampled universities, the research instrument was administered to 300 students selected through stratified sampling.

### **III.II. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The researcher used a questionnaire administered to the students selected as part of the sample. The questionnaire was developed using the Likert Scale with a total of 7 questions. All the questions had five degrees from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree thus respondents are required to only indicate their level of agreement with the statement. This was considered appropriate for the research as they are easy to read, interpret and complete by the participants[19] and require least input from the researcher thus generating reliable results.

### **III.III. DATA COLLECTION**

For the collection of data, the researcher visited the universities selected in the sample and distributed as well as collected the questionnaire from the students. The in-person visits were to ensure that the respondents could immediately clarify any queries from the researcher. In order to maintain high reliability of the data collected, the researcher refrained from giving own interpretation of the questions or any comments which could have resulted respondents' biased answers.

## **IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

The sample consisted of 55% male students and 45% female students as follows:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Male</b>	169	55%
<b>Female</b>	137	45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>100%</b>

Out of the 306 students 227(74%) belonged to the public sector universities and 79 (26%) belonged to the private sector universities while the younger students belonging to the age range of 16 years to 25 years were 248 (81%) while the older students of above 25 years were 58 (19%). According to the education, the demarcation included 75% students belonging to graduation programs while 25% students belonged to post-graduation.

The data collected through the questionnaires was then tabulated, analysed and interpreted in accordance with the objectives of the study. The analysis was conducted by using the chi square tests and through percentages. The data obtained was tabulated in accordance to each item (question). Chi square is a statistical test “commonly used to compare observed data with data we would expect to obtain according to a specific hypothesis” [20].

Gay, L.R (1990) explained the formula of chi- square, which is as under.

$$\chi^2 = \sum (fo - fe) / fe$$

where,

- fo is FREQUENCY OBSERVED and
- fe is FREQUENCY EXPECTED
- Table Value of chi-square was 9.488 at 4df (degree of freedom) and at 0.05 level of significance.

S No	Items	$\chi^2$ value		Accept/ Reject	Agreed (%)		Disagreed (%) *	
		Public	Private		Public	Private	Public	Private
	Null Hypothesis: These is no significant difference in the views of public and private sector universities regarding each of the following items:							
1.	Intolerance is increasing in the university students.	138.176	49.924	Reject	71%	65%	14%	12%
2.	You are given moral education such as tolerance and respect for others opinion	168.837	60.557	Reject	74%	76%	9%	8%
3.	During your stay at university you have participated, attended or heard of debates, seminar, etc. on such topics like tolerance and extremism	37.031	17.392	Reject	49%	41%	29%	39%
4.	University curriculum includes civic education i.e. education about the rights of individuals and about how they should behave in society.	81.304	55.494	Reject	60%	55%	21%	23%
5.	Present curriculum of universities is enough to bring positive change in society.	44.256	18.658	Reject	44%	29%	33%	45%
6.	Madrassa education is promoting intolerance.	38.485	30.177	Reject	33%	21%	37%	42%
7.	Madrassa education is creating extremists.	34.432	24.101	Reject	33%	28%	37%	31%

\*The remaining students selected the option “Neither Agreed nor Disagreed”.

#### Item by Item Analysis:

- 1 - The results show that both the categories of students agree on that intolerance amongst the university students is on the rise giving weight to the purpose of the research in establishing poor curriculum as a cause of intolerance. There was no major difference on the response of this item between both the categories of students.
- 2 - There was heavy agreement by the students that they are given moral education such tolerance and respect for others with almost three-quarters of the respondents belonging to both public and private sector universities agreeing to it. There was no major difference on the response of this item between both the categories of students.
- 3 - Although a significant percentage of the students agree on participating in some form of seminar, debate, speech or forum, however it is of importance to note that about 20% of students from both the public and private universities did not give clear agreement and disagreement regarding this item. Furthermore, there was no major difference on the response of this item between both the categories of students.
- 4 - 5% more students of public universities as compared to private universities (60% vs 55%) agreed with there being an inclusion of civic education in the curriculum. There was no major difference on the response of this item between both the categories of students.
- 5 - The agreement rate of students belonging to public universities is much higher at 44% as compared to the private universities at 29% with the statement that the curriculum of the universities is enough to bring

about a positive change. It is also important to note that the disagreement ratio is a mirror image with more private students disagreeing than public university students. Also almost a quarter of the sampled respondents did not express clear agreement or disagreement with the notion.

- 6 - and 7 - It was observed that the public university students were equally divided in agreeing, disagreeing or nor giving a response to the statements that madressah education creates extremists and promotes intolerance. 30% of the public university students did not give clear agreement or disagreement. While more than 40% of the private university students disagreed with madressah education promoting intolerance whereas 41% private university students did not give clear agreement or disagreement on the statement that the madressah education creates extremists.

## V. CONCLUSION

From the research it can be concluded that the current curriculum is not enough to bring about a positive change in the intolerance level of the students graduating from the universities. Also there is still a reluctance to talk about the Madressa education and the effects of such education on the society in terms of the individuals who study for them. This may be because the general student body believes that they would face repercussions on expressing their opinions on the Madressa's or because there is ignorance pertaining to the education being imparted in them. Furthermore, the above research also shows that although there is an inclusion of civic education in the curriculum, however, it is still not playing the required role in the promotion of civic values and in creating individuals aware of their civic duties, rights and responsibilities.

This research has established that curriculum is not playing its required role as a cause. Prior researches have established that the curriculum development has always been a problem area for Pakistan. This goes on to show that all stages of curriculum development, monitoring, implementation and actual utilisation are being managed inadequately. Researches are required to determine the solutions of this problem. Also further areas of research may include investigation into the factors that prevent the students from actually taking away with them the civic values that they do hear about through the seminars and other extra-curricular activities. It may also be investigated that what is the level of understanding of the civic values such as honesty, bribery, cheating, etc. and how likely are individuals to forgo their civic values in light of adversity. The results of all these studies together would determine the extent of the problem and the solutions.

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