



ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Analyzing Peace Narratives: Content Analysis of Pakistan Studies Curricula and Textbooks at Secondary and Higher Secondary Levels

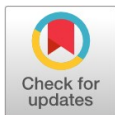
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Abstract— Education promotes peace and harmony by fostering understanding, respect, and cooperation among diverse communities. This study employed a qualitative content analysis method to examine the secondary and higher secondary Pakistan Studies curricula and textbooks, assessing their role in promoting harmony, peace, and respect for diversity. The content was analysed for themes related to diversity, inclusivity, and narratives that support peaceful coexistence, with findings presented through thematic analysis. The analysis revealed that the curricula emphasise moral principles and national cohesion but often fail to fairly represent Pakistan's rich cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, risking reinforcing biases and divisions. Key themes identified include upholding human dignity through justice, equality, and fundamental human rights; challenging ethnic, spiritual, and gender-based prejudices to build tolerance; promoting nonviolence, dialogue, and conflict management skills; caring for the earth; and fostering respect for diversity to create religious and sectarian harmony. However, the study found these efforts insufficient and recommends revising the curriculum to incorporate stronger lessons on tolerance, pluralism, and peacebuilding. Additionally, it highlights the need for teacher training programs and student engagement in activities promoting respect for diverse perspectives. Implementing these changes can transform the Pakistan Studies curriculum into a powerful tool for nurturing a generation committed to building an inclusive and harmonious society, aligning educational content with the broader goals of social cohesion and sustainable peace.

Index Terms— Pakistan Studies, Peace, Harmony, Curriculum, Textbook

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Background of the Study

In the mid-1980s, the government of Pakistan introduced a new subject named Pakistan Studies at the secondary and higher secondary levels. The reason behind introducing this subject in the 1972 education policy, as Hashmi (2014) believed, was the new normal socio-political conditions of the country in the face of the separation of East Pakistan as a new state of Bangladesh. The sad debacle of Bengal, on the one hand, caused the government of West Pakistan and its residues psychological stress and posed a potential threat to territorial integration and ideological unity (Shahid, 2007).

Pakistan studies curriculum, as enunciated by the developer, raises awareness about the Country's history, geography, and cultural heritage. According to Hashmi (2014), teaching about one's socio-historical background is important to strengthen historical and cultural bonds among the citizens. Moreover, learning about history and the significant advantages of independence will help make students

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loyal and patriotic. Khan (2010) also accepted the role of Pakistan studies curriculum in producing sensible national and responsible global citizens by giving knowledge to the students regarding their roles and responsibilities as Pakistanis and members of the wider international community. Hence, one can say that Pakistani studies have a more global and extensive aim rather than creating a mere loyal citizen.

According to Muhammad and Brett (2015), Pakistan studies as a subject was introduced to translate the curriculum imperatives into reality. In Pakistan, textbooks are the most commonly used resource teachers religiously follow because of the non-availability of curriculum documents. Moreover, textbooks are the “primary vehicles for delivering content knowledge, determining in large measure what goes on in a class, and assessing what students do and do not learn” (Mahmood & Saeed, 2011). Thus, teachers are not only customarily and statutorily using textbooks rather, but some teachers have also taken up textbooks as a ‘de facto’ curriculum (Dean, 2013). Muhammad and Brett (2015) also agree with Dean (2013), while blaming weak content knowledge of the teachers as well as limited library resources in the schools coupled with the least book reading culture in society as responsible factors for increasing teachers’ dependency on and growing utility of the textbooks.

It is worth mentioning that a study in Muhammad and Brett (2015), concluded that tremendous changes have been brought in the official document of Pakistan studies, yet there is still a big room for improvement. In the face of ending the war on terrorism and changing the social setup, minimizing extremist sentiments, and building the international image of Pakistan as a peaceful country, infusing peace values and skills among the population in general and the upcoming generation, in particular, is significant. These objective can be achieved via Pakistan studies curriculum and textbooks as this subject carries the maximum potential to highlight the pros of being trained in wider global perspectives and the cons of confining the population in religious bigotries, biased social perspectives, and narrow national and international outlooks (Nayyar & Salim, 2005).

Statement of the problem

Education is a potent instrument for influencing personal beliefs, values, and actions that promote societal harmony and peace. An essential component of the secondary and higher secondary curricula in Pakistan, Pakistan Studies is a subject that is crucial in helping pupils develop social ideals, civic awareness, and a sense of national identity (Naseer, Muhammad, & Masood, 2020). Concerns have been expressed, meanwhile, about the stories and material covered in these textbooks, which might not sufficiently emphasise the promotion of harmony, tolerance, and peace (Emerson, 2018; Jamil, Mehmood, & Aslam, 2024; Qazi, 2023). According to research, textbooks frequently contain prejudiced viewpoints, exclusionary stories, and inadequate depictions of cultural and religious variety, all of which might unintentionally promote division rather than harmony (Naseem & Stöber, 2014; Saigol, 2016).

With its emphasis on plurality, critical thinking, and conflict resolution, Pakistan's educational system can substantially contribute to peace building initiatives, especially through the Pakistan Studies curriculum (Hoodbhoy, 1998; Nayyar & Salim, 2005).

To determine whether material helps or hinders social harmony and peace, this study aims to critically evaluate Pakistan Studies textbooks and curricula at the secondary and higher secondary levels. This study intends to assist curriculum creators, educators, and policymakers in producing educational materials promoting a more inclusive, peaceful, and harmonious society by offering evidence-based recommendations.

Research objectives and questions

The objectives of this research were to analyse the contents and themes in the curriculum and textbooks that aimed to promote peace and harmony and to identify the extent to which these materials addressed these values. Additionally, the study sought to uncover any gaps or biases within the existing curriculum that might have hindered the promotion of peaceful coexistence and social cohesion. By analysing the curriculum and textbooks, the research intended to propose necessary changes, deletions, or additions to the curriculum and textbooks to enhance their role in fostering a culture of peace and understanding, ensuring that educational materials contributed to building a more inclusive and harmonious society. This study was guided by the following two research questions to achieve these objectives.

- What contents/themes are included in the curriculum and textbooks to promote peace and harmony?
- What changes, deletions, and omissions are necessary to make the curriculum/textbooks helpful in the promotion of peace and harmony in society?

Significance of the study

In the current educational setup of Pakistan, textbooks are considered the most significant resource for teachers. Since teachers have less access to national curriculum documents because they are not widely available, they mostly rely on textbooks and unthinkingly follow the text in the books. Therefore, one can say that school textbooks are the direct medium of learning that shapes students’ personalities

and worldviews, as preconceived by curriculum designers and textbook developers. On the other hand, curriculum documents drive the textbook development process; hence, despite the teachers' limited access to curriculum documents, one cannot deny its significance. Developing and changing worldviews can help create a peaceful and harmonious society; hence, it can be inferred that Pakistan's study curriculum and textbooks can play a pivotal role. This study was undertaken to help meet the following benefits.

This study will help the researchers broaden their horizons of themes necessary for promoting peace, tolerance, a culture of respect and appreciation, and social harmony.

This study will also help explore anti-peace content in the curriculum document and textbooks of Pakistan studies. This exploration will ultimately help advocate for eliminating hate content from the text and incorporating content promoting value or mutual respect, appreciation of diversity, pluralism, and being a global concern. If developed and internalised, such values will help build a wider perspective and international social and ideological bonds for peaceful mutual coexistence.

Based on the recommendations of this study, a thorough review of the curriculum and textbooks can also be undertaken, or this study may help if curriculum designers and textbook developers wish to bring necessary changes in the text, keeping peace and harmony in mind.

Theoretical Underpinning of the Study

The world today faces an unprecedented security situation due to the rise of radicalised thoughts among youth. Begum (2012) identifies Pakistan as "a prime example of a Country that lacks peace" (p.26) due to these prevailing radical ideologies. Societal divides based on class, ideology, economic disparities, religious polarisation, and distinctions of caste, colour, and language create an environment of conflict and negativity. Alarmingly, these tensions seep into schools, affecting the learning environment and shaping young minds (Begum, 2012). To counter this, schools must play a vital role in educating youth to reduce conflict and bridge societal divides.

Peace is a complex and relative term viewed from diverse perspectives. The challenge in reaching a unified definition arises from varying contextual realities. Shamsuddin (2016) supports this, asserting that people interpret peace through their unique experiences and understanding. UNESCO, New Delhi (2001) echoes this view, highlighting that individuals define peace according to their philosophy and life experiences.

Research offers varying interpretations of peace, ranging from the "absence of war and conflict" to "social balance with harmony and justice in social relations" (Shamsuddin, 2016). Moreover, Galtung (1990) further distinguishes between negative peace, marked by the absence of violence, and positive peace, characterised by collaboration, integration, cooperation, and the absence of physical violence in any form. Thus, peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a multifaceted concept encompassing societal collaboration, integration, and harmonious relationships that foster social unity. The literature does not clarify the accurate definition of peace education and its formal approach to implementation in schools. However, scholars have agreed on aims, purposes, and various elements or components. For example, Richards, Hodgkinson, and Jackson (1987) reinforce that a formal education system could help create peace by teaching peace values, requiring the skills to resolve conflicts, and disseminating the understanding of diversity and pluralism. Peace education aims to widen students' perspectives by teaching social values and skills vital for educating students to live peacefully in their societies (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004). Moreover, Hicks (2003), advocates that peace education aims at negotiating conflicts and discovering paths for resolution. Also, Salomon (2002) viewed peace education as not being standardised for all contexts; rather, it should be adapted to social settings. He further insists that well-planned peace education programs should be executed in the conflict-hit areas.

In the contemporary era, man lives in a globalised society; peace education has always reached the height of its importance. Hence, conflicts among world powers, wars, and confrontations can have long-lasting global impacts. Conflict of any type can be resolved, and peace can be promoted with peace education by incorporating it into the national education scheme or curricula. UNESCO (2001) further reiterates the importance of peace education, stating that confusion and conflicts affect innocent youth. Consequently, intolerance, inflexibility, and rigidity occupy young minds.

In the modern age, peace education is a vast area that includes theoretical research and a variety of activities at schools under the supervision of teachers, educators, and curriculum experts (Fountain, 1999). Peace education programs for mainstream academics are also being implemented in Western countries. However, Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009), argue that only initiating a peace education program would not serve the purpose of creating and sustaining peace; rather, the outcome of such programs should be a visible improvement in reducing conflicts, socio-economic gaps, and equity in resource distribution between the world communities. Nevertheless, to create a global peace and harmony community, the important factors are to abide by our principles of pluralism and respect for individual rights (Benhabib, 2002) and promote a culture of dialogue at the national level (Shamsuddin, 2018). This is impossible without collaboration and partnerships, as Kester (2008) stresses efforts at all levels, including schools, parents, government organisations, and the government. Hence, peace education encompasses a variety of educational efforts, including academic programs in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as relevant research (Ahmed & Shahzad, 2021). Thus, enhancing students' knowledge and skills constitutes local, regional, and global peace education.

Gearon (2013) regards education as vital to national and international security. He argues that schools and universities are important in creating and sustaining peace. Here, the curriculum, teaching, and policy play an important role in inculcating peace in the students. It bridges important connections between terrorism and extremism. The various elements like philosophy, ideology, and backgrounds impact this relationship. However, security and intelligence have not been able to create their space in research academia. Conversely, academicians must draw attention to correlating the important terrains of a social construct, such as religion, security, and peace, to combat regional and international terrorism (Gearon, 2013).

The curriculum and textbook of Pakistan studies need special attention for three reasons. First, this subject has been an indicator of dominance and is frequently used by political elites to give political knowledge to the given society (Nayyar & Salim, 2005). Even a common understanding in the Country is that Pakistan studies convey a politically sanctioned academic narrative and thus develop potential 'patriots' for any state-sponsored activity (Jan, Xie, Qazi, Choudhary, & Ul Haq, 2022; Nayyar, 2013).

Second, Pakistan studies have a large coverage and extended audience as it is a compulsory subject from lower to Graduation level. Hence, narrative development and prospective building can easily be done by Pakistan studies. That is why this subject was introduced in the post-Bengal debacle scenario to have a sense of national cohesion and integration (Nayyar & Salim, 2005). The study further says that instructions are given by the curriculum wing to the textbook author who is bound to follow. This situation further increases the possibility of education being a tool to materialize political objectives in the name of national interest (Badshah, Ejaz, & Alam, 2020; Iqbal, Mahmood, & Iqbal, 2023).

Lastly, Pakistan studies are the most potential subject in terms of socialization and provision of citizenship education. Thus, through Pakistan studies textbooks peace skills and values can be taught to the students. (Davies, 2006) also claims that textbooks are a significant tool for promoting peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

Focusing on the content analysis of Pakistani textbooks and elimination of the topic of hatred, Emerson (2018), believes that Pakistani textbooks are tools in the hands of higher authorities to construct an exclusionary understanding of citizenship based on the emerging so-called needs. To Emerson, Hindus, and women are presented as "the other" in the textbook which is a hindrance in creating positive peace.

Teachers play a key role in promoting and transmitting peace skills, values, and knowledge which causes attitudinal changes among students (Shamsuddin, 2016). Rosen and Salomon (2011), believe that schools have the potential and play a dominant role in transmitting state-sponsored and societal-accepted narratives. This is also agreed by Smith (2010), who claims that schools and teachers form collective identities. That is why various governments, according to Staeheli and Hammett (2013), manipulate national curricula for the promotion of state narratives. However, the curriculum is translated into practices and realities by the teachers. Therefore, teachers being the driving force and having enough authority in the implementation of curricula possess potential roles which Smith (2010), believes as an opportunity as well as a threat at the same time. At this point, the minority views must not be altered for the sake of the majority which is done by adding and teaching prejudices and biases against them. Moreover, in such cases, the majority tries to present distorted realities and prejudices against minorities to develop a unified and dominated narrative (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008). In this respect, teaching subjectivity and alternatives which are key approaches in philosophy are important. Here a teacher needs to be open and not dominated by preconceived notions of history and other socio-religious beliefs. It is noteworthy to mention that teachers have also been educated in various ways that can be for peace and anti-peace (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012).

Research Methodology

The content of Pakistan studies curriculum and textbooks taught at the lower and higher intermediate levels in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, served as the basis for this investigation. To comprehend the text's general content, the researchers conducted a thorough and methodical literature search. A research method called qualitative content analysis (QCA) is used to find out whether specific words, subjects, or ideas are present in each set of qualitative data. QCA involves examining intricate connections alongside the social and contextual dimensions that give qualitative data its meaning (Roller, 2019). It means that in QCA, researchers measure and examine the presence, significance, and connection of specific terms, subjects, or ideas using content analysis (Mayring, 2015). Creswell (2017) investigated how the social sciences have traditionally employed the qualitative method of content analysis. To determine the content of peace, the qualitative content analysis in this study attempts to obtain a thorough understanding of Pakistan Studies textbooks and curricula for lower and higher secondary education. The authors used a qualitative paradigm to examine and justify the research methodology employed in this study because they believed in subjective reality and integrated viewpoints on text and context (Merriam, 2009). Below is a presentation of the data collecting and analysis based on curriculum and text content extraction.

Data sources

The curriculum and textbook created by Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and taught in lower and upper secondary education in all public and private schools in KPK, Pakistan, serve as the foundation for this study. The author chose the subjects, grades, and texts based on the curriculum's quality to guarantee that it would help students' future social integration and academic output. The analysis of qualitative content analysis issues to systematically minimize the size of the data set is one of its features (Hashemnezhad, 2015). Secondary schools were chosen because a sizable percentage of students pass the high school exam and participate in society, which is crucial in a nation where social stability and adaptability depend on quality education and training. Additionally, enrolling in a higher secondary school gives kids additional social possibilities because they are not in a rigid classroom setting. Therefore, it's critical to introduce children to all facets of peace education, including how to respect the ruling class in a pluralistic society and cultivate the flexibility to adjust to any changing circumstances. Thus, based on the literature and experience of researchers, it is assumed that Pakistan studies have reserved a large area for adaptation to the theme related to peace and harmony. This type of study requires and streamlines the use of qualitative content analysis, which researchers believe is a more flexible and accommodative way to analyze textual data (Cavanagh, 1997; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Data analysis

Finding, examining, and interpreting themes and patterns in text data and figuring out how these themes and patterns contribute to the resolution of current research issues are all part of qualitative data analysis. It is crucial to remember that the process of analyzing qualitative data is ongoing, seamless, and cyclical. It starts with the data collection phase of evaluating different projects and continues through the data entry and analysis stage. The analysis of the textbooks was conducted using qualitative content analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis approach. This process involved a systematic examination of the content to identify themes related to the promotion of peace and harmony. First, the textbooks were carefully read to familiarize ourselves with the material, allowing us to gain an overall understanding of the content. Next, initial codes were generated by highlighting meaningful units of text that reflected ideas or narratives associated with peace and harmony. These codes were then organized into potential themes, capturing recurring patterns and key messages across the textbooks. As the analysis progressed, the themes were refined to ensure coherence and relevance, with constant reflection on the broader context. Finally, the themes were reviewed and defined, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of how the textbooks addressed peace and harmony while also identifying areas that required improvement. This rigorous approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the curriculum, ensuring that the findings were grounded in the data.

Results

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of Pakistan Studies curricula and textbooks at the secondary and higher secondary levels in promoting social harmony, tolerance, and peace. By highlighting both the strengths and limitations of the content, the study seeks to support the development of educational resources that foster inclusivity, mutual respect, and cultural diversity. The findings are organized under key themes, which are presented in the following section.

Content promoting peace and harmony

Peace content or themes are universally accepted by peace researchers, which shows that the availability of such content in the documents is necessary to promote peace and harmony in society. The availability of content promoting values and skills to uphold human dignity, promote nonviolence, challenge prejudice, challenge the war system, and nurture inner peace are essential to promote a culture of peace in society. Promoting conflict resolution, making oneself faithful to Mother Earth. Based on this study we have developed our framework and analyzed the syllabus and curriculum. From a thorough analysis of the syllabus and textbooks of Pakistan studies at secondary and higher secondary levels in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, we were able to identify content for peace and harmony in the curriculum and textbooks.

Upholding human dignity through the provision of justice, equality, and fundamental human rights

The textbooks and syllabus of the secondary and higher secondary levels have enough content regarding human dignity, justice, and fundamental human rights. Page number 4 of the Grade IX textbook explicitly declares that "human beings cannot be differentiated based on religion, color or creed". They are the equal citizens of Pakistan and thus it is the constitutional responsibility of the state that human dignity must be upheld for the socio-economic development of the citizens. As the content taken from a textbook suggests, people are equal irrespective of their beliefs and ethnicity. The government of Pakistan also considers this a constitutional responsibility to respect

its citizens and to treat them equally in every walk of life. These pledges and promises have been documented in the textbook, as shown in the given content.

Chapter 4 (pages 62-84) of the same textbook is clear about human rights to be provided to all the citizens of Pakistan. Some of the fundamental rights mentioned in the chapter include but are not limited to the "right to life, free movement, expression, gathering, serve, vote, take part in elections and performing one's social and religious responsibilities without any internal and external fear". Moreover, it will be the state's responsibility to pave the way for better social life, schooling, and health facilities for its citizens irrespective of religious, regional, ethnic, and economic differences. The provision of fundamental rights suggests that every human is owned and respected by the state and the state has the responsibility to safeguard their rights and to assign duties to them. The duty of one citizen guarantees the rights of others hence the government is concerned with rights and responsibilities equally.

Likewise, the Grade X textbook under the section of the 1973 constitution enumerates the fundamental rights of the citizens. Besides the constitution, according to the syllabus, bound state to facilitate its citizens equally. Page no 8 states, "The judiciary of Pakistan will be independent and will decide cases according to the constitution without any fear and favor". Without an independent judiciary and a true spirit of the rule of law, it is difficult to make provisions and safeguard of fundamental rights of the citizens. Moreover, it is the rule of law that assures human dignity which in other words means being equal to the law and giving no right to any other citizens to harm the self of any other citizen.

The Grade XII textbooks contain four chapters — Towards Islamic Democratic State, The Structure of Government, National Cohesion, and Economic Planning in Pakistan — that uphold themes related to human dignity. Chapter 4, Towards Islamic Democratic State, emphasizes several rights that should be granted to every citizen of Pakistan, regardless of their social or religious background. These rights include the prohibition of slavery and forced labor, respect for human dignity and privacy, and the assurance that all citizens enjoy civil, economic, political, and religious rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Notably, page 81 elaborates on the UN's International Charter of Human Rights, highlighting key principles such as the equality and freedom of all human beings, the prohibition of slavery and forced labor, the protection against violence, illegal punishment, and disrespect to human dignity, as well as the importance of the rule of law and equality before the law. These principles underscore the commitment to justice, equality, and the provision of fundamental human rights.

In the same textbook page number 101 Chapter 4 titled "Structure of Government" describes women's rights and discourages any kind of discrimination based on sex. It states, "Women are equal citizens of Pakistan as per the very definition of the constitution and guidance of religion Islam. The preaching and teaching of Islam declare equal rights to women as to men." Moreover, in the following pages, a quote from the holy Prophet is given declaring any kind of prejudice and humiliation based on color as un-Islamic.

To internalize the respect to women community in a patriarchal society like Pakistan the textbooks also give examples of women from Islamic history working shoulder to shoulder with male folk. Page 131 declares 18 ladies from the golden era of Islamic history as lawyers. The last paragraph of page 131 states; "A glance into Islamic history shows that women enjoyed liberty not only in getting an education but also used to opt for different professions. They have been appointed to exalted government positions. The best example in this regard is of Shafa bin Abdullah (RA) who was appointed as price control officer by Hazrat Umar e Farooq (RA) the second pious caliph of the Muslims." (Translation)

Textbooks and curricula at secondary and higher secondary levels emphasize human dignity, justice, equality, and human rights. The SSC curriculum aims to "emphasize the rights and obligations of the citizens of an independent and sovereign state," while the HSSC curriculum promotes National Integration to "develop the sense of equality and brotherhood among the citizens." They also raise awareness about child labor, advocating for fair wages and parental responsibility to prevent exploitation.

Interestingly Grade XII curriculum also adds a column in the list of content as a guideline for textbook authors. The chapter on fundamental rights guides the author to elaborate on fundamental rights in a way that will make the students aware of their rightful place in society. Furthermore, it also encourages to adoption of student student-centered teaching strategy which in other words is a practical manifestation of maintaining human dignity. Likewise, the SSC curriculum while discussing teaching strategies bound teachers to have a friendly environment and to answer all the questions raised by students with dignity. The data from the curriculum suggest that the objective of the curriculum should be safeguarding human dignity by the provision of fundamental rights and equal opportunities.

Challenging ethnic, religious and gender-based prejudices and building tolerance

About challenging prejudice and teaching tolerance page no 6 of the grade IX Pakistan Studies textbook quotes from Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan's 11th August 1947 address;

You are free. You are free to go to your temples, mosques, and other places of worship in the state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, sect, or creed; it has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are making the beginning of our system with this fundamental principle that we are all equal citizens of the same state."

The textbooks for Grades X and XII contain content aimed at promoting tolerance, diversity, and peaceful coexistence among citizens.

Extracts from the founder of Pakistan's speeches emphasize rejecting biases against minorities and discouraging provincial, racial, and religious prejudices. The Grade X textbook highlights the government's commitment to eliminating discrimination through policies under the 1973 Constitution, ensuring equality regardless of religion, ethnicity, or gender, and granting minorities the freedom to practice their faith. Additionally, it identifies threats to social harmony, such as religious intolerance, male dominance, economic biases, and a lack of appreciation for multiculturalism. By raising awareness of both the importance of peace and the dangers of prejudice, these textbooks aim to cultivate mindfulness and tolerance, shaping students into more peaceful citizens.

The textbook of Grade XII, like secondary-level textbooks, also contains content discouraging prejudices and signifying the importance of a tolerant outlook. Under the section "Quaid-e-Azam's Pakistan," pages 40 and 42 highlight different speeches of the founders of the nation declaring regional and provincial prejudices harmful to national cohesion and integration. According to the textbook, on June 15, 1948, Jinnah said;

"Now we all are Pakistani. No one is Balochi, Pathan, Sindhi, Bengali or Punjabi. We all should be Pakistani. Our thinking and practices should conform to these norms. And we should be proud of our Pakistani identity." (Translation)

The same narrative has also been discussed on page 37 while coding the founder of the nation in the following words.

If you work together, forget the past, and bury older differences and clashes only then you can succeed in life. If you change your past and work enthusiastically then it has no effect on which group, you belong to. You're first, second, and third are the citizens of this state. A state where everyone will get equal rights, opportunities, and responsibilities. We are moving ahead with this belief and basic rule that we all are equal citizens of this state irrespective of whether we belong to any religion, ethnicity, or region. (Translation)

The extracts from Jinnah's speeches define national outlook and regional and ethnic differences. It is pertinent to mention that on the same page, another speech of Jinnah warns government officials to avoid any biases and prejudices while performing their national responsibilities. This indicates that textbooks are conscious of the fact that promoting prejudices will harm national unity and solidarity.

To further reiterate the concept of no prejudices pages 79-80 extract some of the quotes from the last address of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). This address clearly states to avoid any type of prejudices against fellow human beings i.e. "there is no favor of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, and neither a white skin over black nor a black skin over a white skin."

This amalgamation of constitutional and legal responsibilities with religious teaching will bring more power to the promotion of peace content in the religion-oriented society of Pakistan. This moral approach is also part of the secondary and higher secondary curriculum of Pakistan studies. For instance, the HSSC curriculum starts with an introduction to Pakistan studies as a subject. It states that Pakistan studies as a subject should "create awareness among the students about national affairs and issues, to prepare them for a positive and constructive role as a responsible citizen of Pakistan."

Cultural diversity, respect for difference and avoidance of any form of prejudices are also a part of curricula. Even the basic objective of introducing Pakistan studies as a subject according to the HSSC curriculum is "to develop awareness regarding some socio-cultural aspects of civic life." It is worth mentioning that the SSC curriculum also mentions respect for and appreciation of diversity as key objectives of the subject. On page no one, it states,

(Objectives behind introducing Pakistan studies are to) inculcate awareness about the multi-cultural heritage of Pakistan to enable the students to appreciate the socio-cultural diversity of Pakistani society better and get used to the idea of unity in diversity in our national context.

Promoting nonviolence, dialogue, and conflict management skills

Conflicts are inescapable realities of social life due to differences in the patronage of beliefs, behaviours, and actions. One cannot avoid conflicts, yet managing conflicts will be helpful in not getting them violent. Different peace education research suggests three possible reactions to any violence or conflict. (1) No reaction (2) violent reaction (3) nonviolent response. All three reactions have their repercussions. No response to violence strengthens the hand of a violent system or individual. A violent response might cause a ripple effect and bring society to the eve of destruction. The last reaction, "responding nonviolently," thus, "has the potential to curb violence as well as cause no more violence, and transform conflicts into opportunities.

Peace education aims to teach such skills and values to the students. For these reasons, content teaching how to deal nonviolently with violence needs to be part of our education system. Therefore, textbooks and syllabi must teach skills and values regarding dealing with violence nonviolently.

A thorough analysis of the secondary and higher secondary Pakistan studies textbooks suggests that only the Grade XII textbook contains content that can help develop a nonviolent attitude and teach conflict resolution skills among learners. For example, on page 43, while elaborating on key leadership qualities, it states,

Dialogue has the potential to deal with issues faced by the world. Rather, dialogue is the ultimate solution to every problem. Therefore, a leader should always keep the option of dialogue open. The leader should possess the quality of openness in dialogue and readiness for

accepting logical arguments even presented by opponents. Such an attitude will help resolve the conflicts. On the other hand, rigidity on the part of leadership destroys the nation.” (Translation)

This extract from the text suggests that dialogue and flexible attitude have been declared as measures towards conflict resolution which is according to the teachings of peace education as well. The availability of texts declaring flexibility, readiness for dialogue, and accepting the rational argument of the opponents will help develop a sound and peaceful mind in society.

Discussing and negating violent behaviors, the textbook also contains religious messages and sayings of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Page no 151, under the section “sectarianism and extremism,” has penned violence as the worst action of human beings. Furthermore, a translation of a verse from the Holy Quran is also quoted as “and he who saves a life shall be as if he had given life to all mankind”.

Nonviolence and conflicts are more explicitly discussed in the subsequent pages. Conflicts are very rightly declared as an integral part of life and the democratic system on page 155. The page further states,

Being different and having different political and social viewpoints is a person's basic social and political right. Hence, it is important to respect others' views to get respect for one's perspective. In short, “live and let others live” should be practised in a true spirit. (Translation)

The above extract from the textbook shows that in line with peace education themes, students are enlightened that conflicts are part of life and that no society can be declared conflict-free. It is, however, important to know that conflicts can be transformed into opportunities by listening to each other patiently and respecting the viewpoints of others.

Caring for the earth

Mother Earth is replete with resources that allow humans to survive. To use all of earth's resources mindfully and to conserve and maintain natural conditions of all the physical and biological aspects of the earth is caring for the earth. Such steps are significant to maintain life possible on earth. Unfortunately, human attitude towards the resources of the earth, which are essential to nurturing life, has damaged the life sustainability of the earth.

Being environmentally conscious is the cry of the day and one of the major concerns of peace education. The earth which nurtures human life needs to be nurtured by its inhabitants which is possible only by educating environments to upcoming generations. Hence, it is important to incorporate themes in our textbooks and syllabus about natural resources, their just distribution, and more importantly a well-disciplined approach toward caring for the earth.

For the said purposes' textbooks and syllabi of Pakistan Studies at secondary and higher secondary levels carry enough content on earth resources, their just utilization, giving awareness regarding pollution as a threat to earth and humanity, and much more. Starting with the Grade IX textbook, there is a complete chapter titled “Land of Pakistan” pages 36-53 explicitly mentioning earth resources and the hazards of their misuse. After mentioning different climates, climatic zones, and natural resources of Pakistan the chapter discusses hazards of climate change, pollution, and deforestation to make students environment friendly. Page no 53 under the subheading environmental hazards enumerates pollution, flood, soil erosion, storm, and global warming as a danger to Mother Earth resulting from a human careless attitude towards it. Talking about the natural environment a paragraph states, “Natural environment of Pakistan is a blessing of Almighty Allah but some of the human activities endangered the natural environment which in turn creates so many problems for us.”

The textbooks approach caring for the earth in two ways: creating awareness about environmental threats and providing suggestions to minimize risks of natural and artificial destruction. Various environmental issues like deforestation, desertification, and different types of pollution are explained along with their causes. Encouragingly, the textbooks go beyond raising awareness by proposing practical steps to mitigate these risks. Some suggested remedies include adopting a responsible attitude towards nature and its resources, enforcing specific environmental protection laws, avoiding excessive tree cutting while promoting afforestation, and implementing proper regulations for industries, such as ensuring industrial waste is kept away from cultivable land and planting shrubs nearby. Additionally, the textbooks emphasize preventing overgrazing and soil pollution to reduce desertification and advocate for mass awareness programs to educate people about pollution, its types — such as water, land, and soil pollution — its hazards, and conservation methods. These proposed solutions highlight that environmental hazards are not solely natural but are often driven by human actions, making it crucial to raise awareness and promote responsible behavior toward the environment.

Unlike Grade IX, Grade X textbooks did not carry any significant content on the reservation of earth resources. Although Chapter 3 titled “Economic Development” discusses different natural resources and their importance it lacks any explicit approach toward the preservation and proper utilization of the earth's resources. For instance, page 72 confines itself only to introducing natural resources, saying, “Natural resources mean forests, minerals, and mountains which are didn't taken care of and never utilised properly in our Country”. In the subsequent pages, floods have been declared as a threat to human lives as well as natural vegetation, yet no significant discussion is built on the causes and hazards of natural calamities. For a peaceful life on earth, a deeply-held commitment to the ethics of being honest

to earth needs to be developed among students. It means that content on earth should lead towards a commitment to keep one's actions, future programs, and scientific and social development within the capacity of earth and guide.

Grade XII textbook however carries significant content on the resources of earth and hazards associated with their misuse. Page 55 while discussing the positive aspects of the climate of Pakistan also warns about the impact of unbridled scientific development on human life in the following words.

Human life owes to the climatic conditions of the region. It is historically proven that old civilizations have flourished in the areas where climatic conditions are suitable. It is, however, very unfortunate that scientific development in the contemporary world has widely and severely affected the climatic conditions of the world. Despite that, Mother Earth facilitates life there. (Translation)

An analysis of the data suggests that along with awareness about earth resources, problems, and threats to survival, certain feasible suggestions should also be given to students about their role. One needs to know that caring for oneself while ignoring other fellow beings, in general, and Mother Earth, in particular, never guarantees a peaceful life on Earth. Hence, thinking about a global perspective on earth and caring for life rather than a single self is important.

For the said reasons, the secondary and higher secondary curriculum is also conscious of making the learner aware of the importance of nature. Page no 12 of the HSSC curriculum, while giving guidelines to the textbook, authors say, "the data should build Confidence in natural resources of Pakistan with human integrity and application of science and technology." The SSC curriculum also suggests a chapter on Pakistan's natural resources and energy resources. The reason behind the inclusion of such chapters is to give awareness regarding the importance and proper utilization of the resources of Mother Earth. The chapter will also discuss hazards related to human negligence in caring for Mother Earth.

Promoting respect for diversity and building religious/sectarian harmony

The simplest connotation of respect for diversity can be putting all prejudices and biases aside regarding people belonging to other cultures, religions, societies, and beliefs different from you. It is to appreciate rather than celebrate differences and build relations based on similarities. To promote respect for diversity, accepting the reality of individual differences in terms of culture, beliefs, and values comes first. Listening to others, talking about differences, and learning from them come later, ultimately resulting in a peaceful and harmonious society.

Awareness of cultural and religious or sectarian differences is the basic block to acceptance. For this reason, Pakistani textbooks contain content on cultural diversity, its significance, and positivity. Although the Grade IX Pakistan studies textbook is silent, Grade X and XII contain data related to respect for and appreciation of cultural and religious diversity.

Grade X textbook has one complete chapter on the society and culture of Pakistan, which declares Pakistan society as multicultural and religion-oriented. It explicitly explains Punjabi, Pashtun, Sindhi, and Balochi cultures and urges respect for each other while living under the umbrella of Pakistani culture. It is worth mentioning that this chapter did not contain even a single sentence regarding similarities among different cultures.

The Grade XII textbook also contains a chapter titled "Culture of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan." It starts with the definition of culture and discusses its importance and different cultures within Pakistani culture. However, promoting respect for cultural diversity is also lacking here. Yet, discussing Pakistani culture and religion has been mentioned as an integral part of it. Furthermore, it states that for the sake of national cohesion and integration, believing in global culture, respecting mankind, and avoiding biases on religious grounds are the features of Pakistani culture.

Interestingly, the curriculum documents of both SSC and HSSC provide a sense of respect for difference and minimise any hatred among followers of different cultures or religions. The document is trying to build unity on diversity. For example, page 13, while describing the objective of a chapter on culture, states its goals as "identify major features of Pakistani culture and commonalities in regional culture leading to national cohesion and integration." In the same way, the SSC curriculum on page 9 describes the objective of the chapter "Culture of Pakistan" as "to bring out unity through diversity." In the subsequent pages about a chapter titled "Languages of Pakistan", it is stated, "(Chapter on languages) should present the languages as a vehicle of cultural integration and human relationship." The data indicates that the curriculum document also carries content on cultural diversity and societal harmony through appreciation and acceptance of religious or cultural diversity.

Discussion

A thorough analysis of the secondary and higher secondary curricula and textbooks indicates that content for peace is included in the text. Keeping the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious population in mind, the textbooks are creating awareness about respect for and appreciation of diversity, hazards of prejudices, and religious bigotries to some extent (Iqbal et al., 2023; Jan et al., 2022). Different

studies show that the availability of peace content in the syllabus and textbooks promotes creative energies toward the positive direction and guides students to react nonviolently to violence, resulting in a culture of peace (Emerson, 2018).

One of the study's major findings was the availability of content regarding human rights and negating cultural and ethnic prejudices. Various paragraphs and sentences give awareness about fundamental human rights and the urge to uphold these as moral and legal obligations of the citizens. Moreover, the textbooks and curriculum educate the students about various forms of prejudices and their negative impact on a nation. Literature shows that human rights education is essential to uphold human dignity (Kurian & Saad, 2024). According to Castro and Nario-Galace (2008), content about fundamental human rights, awareness regarding pluralism, and positive insight into cultural, social, and religious differences are the basis of nonviolent social order. Moreover, the same studies highlight that respect for human life and dignity-tolerant attitudes, behaviour, and mindset can be cultivated, ultimately promoting mutual peaceful coexistence.

Besides being at peace with humans, being at peace with nature is also a significant aspect of peace education (Krampe, Hegazi, & VanDeveer, 2021). Hence, the students must be educated about world ecology as an interdependent system and common to all as a blessing or a tragedy. It is significant that texts about caring for the earth as common property, properly utilising its resources, climate change, natural disasters, and ways. Pollution, deforestation, and desertification are included in the secondary and higher secondary level curricula and textbooks. Hence, the data provides the urge to make cooperation imperative to survive on the planet. This conception of prevention is one of the effective strategies in peace education as the United Nations has given importance to preventive diplomacies like peacekeeping and peacemaking strategies. This is also in line with Harris (2004) belief that to ensure the best and most peaceful life, preventive measures regarding environmental harm must be taken and learned. Hence, ecological education will sensitise students and help maintain inner and external peace.

Conclusion

This study critically analysed the secondary and higher-secondary Pakistan Studies curricula and textbooks' capacity to foster social harmony and peace. According to the findings, these educational resources do not adequately portray Pakistan's cultural and religious diversity, challenge prejudices, or promote critical thinking and conflict resolution abilities, even though they contain themes of national unity and ethical ideals.

The report emphasises how the curriculum has to emphasise inclusivity, pluralism, and peace education more. Stereotypes can be reinforced, and underrepresenting different viewpoints and biased narratives can thwart attempts to create a tolerant and cohesive society. Students can be transformed into active participants in a peaceful and harmonious Country by filling in these holes in the Pakistan Studies curriculum.

Policymakers, educators, and curriculum creators must work together to produce educational materials that uphold the values of diversity, respect for one another, and conflict resolution if this promise is to be realised. Additionally, teacher preparation programs must emphasise giving teachers the tools to facilitate conversations with students that encourage inclusivity and critical thinking.

Recommendation

The study suggests the following recommendations based on the analysis and literature review.

First, the study found several contents regarding inclusivity and respect for diversity in the textbooks and curriculum. Some of the significant content that can promote peace values and skills among students are content on human dignity, respect for cultural and religious diversity, highlighting the significance of Mother Earth, discouraging prejudices, and promoting nonviolence. Yet, in the face of the post-war on-terror scenario, the content on diversity, culture, and appreciation of pluralism and different cultures is not enough. Hence, the chapters on culture and languages need to be expanded. They should give merits and significance to other regional cultures instead of just describing them.

Second, the study found that the curriculum is sometimes not accurately translated into textbooks. For instance, the secondary-level curriculum suggests an explanation of other cultures and languages and their significance. The textbooks, however, are limited in their descriptions. These do not provide any significant details of regional cultures, and they do not highlight the fact that being rigid with a single culture and ignoring it may harm national integrity rather than promote it. This approach causes grievances among small cultural groups and identities, compelling them to believe in rigidity against them on the part of bigger cultural groups and ethnicities. Despite having guidance in the curriculum to promote all cultural realities, ignoring it by the textbook designer does not encourage cultural harmony and societal peace. Therefore, it is important to materialise the curriculum in textbooks properly.

Third, it was surprising that despite having the potential to give womenfolk a share in the content, they have been sidelined in the textbooks and the curriculum. Two findings were very significant in this regard. Firstly, all the documents have enough space for historical events, the contribution of leaders in making Pakistan, and heroes from different walks of life. Yet, no women were properly mentioned

under any heading. Secondly, the chapter on culture leaves no room for women, and the language portion didn't discuss women poets, prose writers, or linguists. This situation indicates that the textbooks need to be inclusive regarding women as this segment of the human population has been ignored in the textbook and curriculum. The services of male and female populations' contribution to the struggle and development of Pakistan need to be highlighted and incorporated into the curriculum and textbooks.

Finally, it is also suggested that some adjectives need to be replaced with positive words. It will help minimise and eliminate the use of negative language in other communities of the Country. Moreover, instead of discussing negativity, the curricula and textbooks can highlight the contribution of different communities during the origin, evolution, and development of Pakistan.

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