

## **Impact of National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) on the Secondary School Educational Quality in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

Curriculum refers to the collection of programs that are intentionally designed and implemented in schools to foster students' personal development and behavioral changes. In 2013, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) introduced various curriculum reforms to stay competitive on a global scale. This study aims to explore the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) in depth and its impact on the quality of secondary education system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The research adopts a qualitative research approach and utilizes the case study method. The investigator examines several perspectives of novice curriculum reform in KP, firstly by focusing on implementation level of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) in public, private, and madrasa secondary schools across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and secondly the impact of the recommendations in National Curriculum of Pakistan on the quality of secondary education across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Data was gathered from public secondary school Heads, SSTs (Secondary School Teachers) of district Peshawar and Charsadda and Additional Secretary of Education Sector Reform Unit (ESRU) Peshawar. One to one interview with semi structured questions were used as the data collection tool, and thematic analysis was applied as the data analysis procedure. The study findings indicate significant improvements in the quality of secondary education particularly within public schools across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Although implementation level of National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) varies across different streams of education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, the successful implementation of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) across different streams of secondary education i.e public, private and madrasas schools facing a range of challenges. Among the most pressing obstacles are insufficient resources and the lack of effective in-service teacher training programs. To implement the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) in its true spirit and with the necessary commitment, the provincial government of KP must address these issues. It can be hoped that National Curriculum of Pakistan will took one more decade to reach its anticipated goal of high quality secondary education throughout the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa KP, Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Reforms, National Curriculum of Pakistan, implementation level, quality of secondary education, thematic analysis.

### **Introduction**

In the progress of any country, education plays a pivotal role in a competitive, interconnected, and global village where human capital and skills development are basic components of any progressive strategy. Education is perceived as a crucial and fundamental human right (Ashraf & Ismat, 2016). In a policy circle, the quality education system for a country's economic growth is no longer a matter of debate. Virtually all governments around the world have been

reviewing their education system to better position their countries in the changing global marketplace (W B, 2020). Quality of education can be measured by measuring some prescribed indicators for quality education at the secondary school level. Broad quality indicators selected for the study are the following:

- **Teacher qualification and pedagogy:** The teacher must be trained for teaching, must know the subject content, remain updated. The pedagogy of teachers should not focus only on text-based knowledge. Various sources of learning are used to maintain quality standards.
- **Classroom processes:** Classroom processes indicate quality in the transaction of knowledge or constructing new knowledge. It should be a reflective method of teaching. Learning should be a pleasurable experience.
- **Annual outcomes:** Outcomes are clear learning results that we want students to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences. It indicates the knowledge and skill level of learners and is measured by annual exam results (Chandra, 2021).

A curriculum reflects the values, beliefs, and cultural perspectives of a society, transmitting its historical legacy to future generations through a standardized teaching and learning environment (Prendergast & Treacy, 2017).

Human life is changeable. With the spread of knowledge, society is changing. With the advancement of science and technology many modifications are coming in the livelihood and life of the people. And in keeping with it the curriculum is also changing (Chandra, 2021).

In a policy circle the quality education system for country's economic growth is no longer a matter of debate. Virtually all governments around the world have been reviewing their education system in an effort to better position their countries in the changing global marketplace (WB, 2020). In all education functions, Curriculum is measured as the main way to achieve the destined academic aims in any educational situation.

National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) is one of the advancements in the field of curriculum reforms by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, implemented in 2013, idealizing the purpose that provincial all educational institutes should follow one same curriculum, one instructional medium and one examination system to eliminate social inequality and to uplift the standard of provincial education. The provincial government of KP, has took the initiative of (NCP) to overhaul the educational system in KP. NCP's basic aim is that all students have equal opportunities to acquire high quality education for the purpose of unity and equity in children of the province (Zaman & Saleem, 2021).

Different education systems cope to the children's educational necessities of varied society classes. There are public secondary schools, private secondary schools. Alongside, madrassahs also play their vital role to accommodate religious education for the province children. These all-varied educational institutes followed their own curriculum, and consequently there are learner in the society with highly diversified min set and perception to life and society. These variations act huge challenges for nations aspiration to be unite. A national curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) is therefore, considered as a milestone step in expedition to build a great and strong nation. It is also perceived that it would minimize the division and disparities of KP's school system and constitute an even and modernized education system in the province of KP (Adeel, 2022).

### Literature review

Roehrig et al., (2017), suggested that curriculum implementation means using new teaching methods in everyday classroom activities. These methods engage both students and teachers in ways that reduce differences. It involves carrying out activities to put ideas or reforms into practice and creating a structure that turns the curriculum into actual classroom lessons. The main goal of curriculum implementation is to give students knowledge, experience, and skills, and help them use them effectively. It involves using the same curriculum in all schools at the

same grade levels to encourage positive changes in students, with the guidance of teachers (Gleeson et al., 2020).

Teachers are certainly expected to adapt the curriculum effectively and translate it into classroom activities (Marques & Ronualdo, 2020). Curriculum reforms are often designed and carried out without properly considering the training and ongoing professional development that pre-service teachers need for successful implementation (WB, 2020). Curriculums and textbooks mirror educational goals, bear systematic educational content, and constitute a central place in enhancing the quality of education (Amir, 2023). Iqbal and Afzal (2022), argued that curriculum reforms in Pakistan began with the issuance of a 1959 report, but the issues identified persisted despite subsequent five education policies (1970, 1972, 1979, 1992, and 1998). The most recent comprehensive curriculum reform occurred in the year 2006. These reforms were primarily executed in government schools and low-cost private schools, with provinces having the discretion to accept or reject them. The 2009 Education Policy was aimed to standardize the curriculum and included a proposal to revise the National Education Policy in 2015. However, any significant advancements in curriculum reform have remained limited since 2006. According to Tahir (2022), one of the key advancements in curriculum reforms was the execution of the National Curriculum Policy (NCP) in 2013. This initiative aimed to standardize education across the province by ensuring that all educational institutions follow a unified curriculum, a single medium of instruction, and a common examination system. The goal was to eliminate social inequality and improve educational standards in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Zaman & Saleem, 2021). The curriculum, initially known as Single National Curriculum (SNC), was renamed as National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on July 21, 2022 (Ministry of Education Islamabad, 2022). National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) is one of the advancements in the field of curriculum reforms by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, implemented in 2013, idealizing the purpose that provincial all educational institutes should follow one same curriculum, one instructional medium and one examination system to eliminate social inequality and to uplift the standard of provincial education. The provincial government of KP, has taken the initiative of (NCP) to overhaul the educational system in KP. NCP's basic aim is that all students have equal opportunities to acquire high quality education for the purpose of unity and equity in children of the province (Zaman & Saleem, 2021). Keeping this in mind, the current study intends to analyze the implementation level of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) and its impact on secondary school educational quality in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

The specific objectives of the study were, to examine how far the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) has been implemented across public, private and madrassas secondary schools in KP, and

to determine the impact of the recommendations in the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP), on the quality of education at public secondary education level in KP.

**Research Methodology:** The paper used qualitative research with a case study approach. Qualitative research involves describing events with non-numerical data. Qualitative research stresses gathering data on expected happenings. The qualitative case study research design is an approach to the research that simplifies the discovery of a phenomenon using multiple data sources within its context. This study carried out in natural setting curriculum implementation takes place in schools as natural settings (Creswell, 2017).

### **Population of the study**

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa there are 2,284 Heads at public secondary education level and there are 11421, Senior School teachers (SSTs) and one ESRU (Education Sector Reform Unit) Peshawar (EMIS, 2021). A total of 2,284 School Heads and 11421 SSTs and 01 Additional secretary of Educational Sector Reform Unit (ESRU) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) make up the

population of the current study. So, total targeted population of the study was 13706 respondents.

$$\text{Targeted population} = 2284\text{Heads} + 11421\text{SSTs} + 1\text{Add secretary} = 13706$$

### **Sample of the study**

For sampling, a purposive sampling technique was used. Sample of the study was 10 Heads of the public secondary schools, 5 SSTs of the same public secondary schools and 01 additional Secretary of ESRU (Education Sector Reform Unit) Peshawar. In this way total of 16 respondents constitute the sample size of the study. The study was carried out in 10 schools of two districts of KP, District Peshawar and District Charsadda. 7 schools were selected from District Peshawar and 3 from District Charsadda.

$$\text{Sample size} = 10\text{ Heads} + 05\text{ SSTs} + 1\text{ Additional secretary} = 16$$

### **Data collection tool**

The data collection was carried out through one-to-one semi-structured interviews. With semi structured questions.

### **Data collection procedure**

The data was analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis that identifies themes and patterns in collected data is a well-known and mostly used qualitative data analysis method, via generating codes or categories to unfold common themes (Creswell, 2017). Study data was collected by all the 16 respondents, responses was coded and then organized in respective themes to generate results of the study.

## **Results & Discussions**

The current study evaluated two generated themes regarding two research questions. These were,

- (1) How far National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) has been implemented to enhance the quality of education at the secondary school level?
- (2) What is the impact of the recommendations in National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) on the quality of education at the secondary education level in KP?

For theme 1, Additional secretary of ESRU (Education Sector Reform Unit) was targeted. Code was assigned in this study to the Additional Secretary (ESRU) Peshawar as “HA” to ensure his anonymity.

While theme 2, was targeted by 10 Heads and 5 SSTs of 10 secondary schools in District Peshawar and Charsadda KP. Codes were assigned in this study to Heads as HOD 1,2.....10, Codes were assigned in this study to SSTs as Teacher 1,2....5 to ensure their anonymity.

### **Generated themes 1.**

The generalized theme 1 was “How far National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) has been implemented across public, private and madrassas secondary schools?

This theme was probed by the Additional Secretary of the Educational Sector Reform Unit (ESRU) responses to gain insight into level of the implementation of NCP at public, private, and madrasahs schools. The analysis revealed that the respondent believed that implementation of National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) varies across public, private and madrasah secondary education. NCP primary goal is to narrow down the gap among these three different modes of education system. His point of view is discussed below, which was further supported by the relevant literature review, and direct quotes from the respondent’s interview. Three themes emerged from the thematic data analysis of the study,

### 1.1 Public school adoption of NCP 1.2 Private school adoption of NCP 1.3 Madrasa's adoption of NCP

#### **Public schools' adoption of NCP**

The goal of the NCP was to standardize the curriculum across the province. Public schools largely embraced the NCP as a new curriculum without significant resistance, and stakeholders expressed greater satisfaction with this initiative by the provincial government, which has helped eliminate disparities between students in these schools (Amir,2023). The following statement from the respondent highlights how public secondary schools in KP adopted the NCP:

High authority (HA) while demonstrated about the NCP adoption in Public secondary schools in KP, said that public schools have mostly integrated the NCP in their syllabus and fully adopted the NCP to ensure the standardized secondary education system in KP. HA expressed his point of view cited as,

“Public schools in KP have been at the forefront of adopting the NCP. The provincial government has integrated the NCP into the curriculum for secondary schools, aligning with federal guidelines to ensure a standardized education system .Extensive teacher training programs have been conducted to facilitate the transition to the NCP.”

The above statement aligns with Bruns (2017), who found that public schools gain from government support, particularly in terms of the resources and infrastructure improvements required to implement the new curriculum.

#### **Private schools' adoption**

While asking about the NCP adoption at the private secondary school level in KP, HA revealed that private schools have more autonomy in the adoption of NCP, and have varying levels of adoption. According to his viewpoint:

“Private schools regarding adoption of the NCP have shown different levels of NCP adoption. While some elite private schools have integrated parts of the NCP, others continue to follow their curricula, particularly international or Cambridge systems, due to parental preference and existing educational frameworks.”

The aforementioned statement is consistent with the findings of Rahman (2020), who observed that private schools typically enjoy greater autonomy in selecting their curriculum. This autonomy allows them to introduce supplementary subjects or maintain their existing curriculum alongside the NCP. However, the primary challenge for private schools lies in aligning their established high standards with the mandates of the NCP, without compromising the quality of their educational offerings.

#### **Madrasas adoption of NCP**

During the interview, the HA emphasized the efforts of the KP provincial government to integrate the NCP into the curricula of madrasas, to bring these institutions into the educational mainstream. However, the primary focus of madrasas on religious education presents a significant obstacle to the full adoption of the NCP in the province. According to his statement: “Efforts have been made to bring madrasas into the mainstream educational framework by incorporating the NCP. This includes adding subjects like English, Mathematics, and Science to the traditional religious curriculum. The integration of NCP in madrasas faces resistance due to the traditional focus of madrasas on religious studies.”

The aforementioned statement is consistent with Adeel (2022), who noted that while government initiatives are in place to support madrasas in adopting the NCP, progress remains slow and uneven across various regions of KP. Furthermore, many madrasas face challenges related to inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of trained teachers, which hinder the effective implementation of the new curriculum.

### **Generated Themes.**

This theme demonstrates the impact of the recommendations in the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) on the quality of education at secondary school level in KP. The analysis of this theme is based on the data collected from the 10 Heads of the public secondary schools and 5 SSTs of the same secondary schools in district Peshawar and charsada, KP. Three quality indicators were selected for the study

Teacher's qualification and pedagogical skills 1.2 Class room practices 1.3 Student's annual outcomes

The findings from the respondent's perceptions, suggest that there is an improvement in the secondary educational quality, attributed to factors such as enhanced teacher capacity, pre-service induction training for newly appointed teachers, and activity-based classroom practices, resulting in high student success rate in annual board examinations at secondary school level in KP.

Four key themes and sub-themes emerged from the data analysis addressing the impact of the recommendations in the NCP on the quality of education at the secondary education level in KP.

- 2.1 High teacher capacity 2.2 Effective "Induction" training
- 2.3 Active classroom practices 2.4 Improvement in students' outcomes

These themes & sub-themes are explained in detail below, with further justification provided by the relevant literature review direct quotes of the respondents. Additionally, the findings are supported by direct quotes from the respondents' interviews.

### **High teacher capacity**

Teachers' professional capacity should be enhanced because the teacher's capacity has a direct effect on the student's academic performance. Competent and skillful teachers turn their learners into useful citizens of society.

### **Highly qualified teachers**

According to the majority of respondents, the recruitment process for Secondary School Teachers (SSTs) involves selection through the National Testing Service (NTS), with individuals holding a master's degree or higher qualifications eligible to participate. Selection is based on merit. As a result of the new recruitment policy nowadays highly qualified & skilled teachers are joining the education field. The majority of the newly appointed teachers are fully equipped with all the pedagogical skills and abilities needed to cope with NCP (Adeel, 2022). When one of the respondents was asked about teacher qualification and pedagogical skills. According to one of the respondents HOD-1:

"Teachers are presently selected based on NTS criteria, and many holds advanced qualifications, including M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees. They possess a strong foundation in pedagogical techniques and demonstrate a high level of dedication and enthusiasm toward teaching and learning activities."

The Head of Department (HOD-2) articulated a similar perspective, emphasizing that newly appointed teachers possess considerable talent, hold advanced academic qualifications, and possess the necessary expertise to foster a conducive learning environment within the classroom. In conveying this viewpoint, she further elaborated on the competencies and qualifications that contribute to the effectiveness of these educators in enhancing the learning experience. According to her:

“Teachers are recruited through the NTS system, bringing a high level of competence due to their advanced academic qualifications. They are well-versed in effective instructional methods, which contribute to creating a positive and supportive learning environment.”

Teacher-5 reiterated the preceding statement, calling the newly appointed teachers as dedicated professionals who serve the nation's youth with effective teaching skills and a high degree of expertise. Furthermore, Teacher-5 underlined that these educators communicate with the future generation in a real and relevant way.

“Recruitment of teachers is done by NTS test, the teachers who selected by this system are more competent, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They are always ready to serve the new generation, by their active pedagogical and technological skills.”

These findings are reinforced by Ngussa and Gundula (2019), who stated that when students come from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, high-quality teachers are held accountable for students' academic performance, not those with inferior teaching standards.

### **Highly equipped teachers**

The quality of instruction influences educational quality. After being selected through the National Testing System nine months of induction training provides them with specific knowledge in their respective areas as well as the ability to teach a variety of secondary school subjects proficiently (Durrani, 2020). The responders HOD-3 provided the following statements about teacher's pedagogical skills.

“Newly hired teachers who are selected through NTS are highly qualified, skilled. This is the reason they can cope easily with NCP.”

Similarly, HOD-9 shared the same opinion as shared by the above respondent,

“The NCP is effectively applied in the classroom by teachers selected through the NTS process. These educators are highly trained and possess the essential pedagogical skills required for the classroom setting. They have the ability to eliminate student confusion and facilitate the application of conceptual learning.”

Similarly, Teacher-2 expressed a similar viewpoint, noting that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government hires highly educated teachers to ensure the successful implementation of the National Curriculum Policy (NCP). Teacher-2's statement was recorded as follows:

"Yes, secondary school teachers are well-qualified, capable, and skilled enough to meet the challenges of the NCP because they possess strong academic and professional qualifications. The NTS recruitment criteria for teachers are well-suited to the requirements of the NCP. As a result, highly competent educators are entering the field, which is a commendable effort to improve the struggling education system."

These statements are corroborated by the findings of Durrani (2020), who emphasized that teachers' capacity building is a critical factor in enhancing the quality of learning.

### **Active Classroom Practices**

Effective teachers use a variety of organizational techniques. Mostly learning is interactive with extensive use of group work, and assessments, particularly in secondary education. The use of audio-visual aids and activity-based learning is preferred by the teachers (Brown, 2019).

### **Activity-based Learning**

Activity-based learning has been increasingly popular around the world in recent years. Since the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in secondary schools, activity-based learning has become increasingly incorporated into teaching techniques. This change seeks to make learning more practical and concrete (Amir,2023).

One of the respondents, HOD-7, stated that teachers' current efforts are centered on providing a learning-friendly classroom atmosphere, with a preference for activity-based techniques. HOD-7 further stated that teachers are currently prioritizing activities that engage students in experiential education in order to improve their academic results. According to her:

“Activity based learning is adopted by the teachers in the class depending on the type of topic and subjects. For this purpose, every possible resource in hand is used whether it is science lab, computer lab, library, or even handmade low-cost audio-visual aids. All efforts are made by the teachers to make learning effective for the learner.”

HOD-8 claimed that the digital era requires activity-based learning in the classroom. HOD-8 stated the following in this regard:

“Definitely its digital era and to keep pace with the digital world teachers adopt different techniques and approaches to make their lesson more concrete and practical.”

Teacher-3 provided the same consent as,

“Since newly hired teachers are young and have recently completed their academic studies, they are eager to integrate the activities and methods they experienced during their education into their daily classroom practices. Additionally, induction training focuses heavily on activity-based learning. Consequently, activities play a key role in the implementation of the NCP learning approach.”

In this regard, the statement of a newly appointed Teacher-4 is worthy. He stated:

“The education department provides tablets to newly recruited teachers to help clarify challenging topics in the classroom. Through these tablets, teachers receive a variety of educational tasks, which are later reviewed by the relevant authorities to assess their performance. This initiative allows educators to develop skills in using technology and integrating it into their teaching methods.”

These comments are consistent with Brown (2019), who claimed that students acquire knowledge readily through the use of various activities in class. Activities operate as motivators for students.

### **ICT blended learning**

Global wise countries are striving to concentrate over IT, centered uniform learning. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) make instruction to cope with 21st century skills of global market through innovative tools. Through visual tactic, more well-rounded and rich education can be promoted (Smith, 2020).

HOD-5 explained about the use of technology in learning by saying, this is the era of technology. The nations which blend technology in their learning can keep pace with technological global world. To enhance activity base learning the KP government has provided IT labs to most of the schools of the province with IT teachers. HOD-5 statement in this regard was as,

“Mostly secondary schools in KP, are provided by the government furnished IT labs, having IT teachers. Teachers and students take advantage in their studied by these IT labs to blend technology in education as it is demand of the new era.”

HOD-6 echoed the same as,

“My school does not have an IT lab, although there is one IT teacher. The integration of information technology (IT) in teaching plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of instruction and fostering lifelong learning. On occasion, teachers use their personal laptops during lessons to clarify complex topics, helping students better understand the material.”

A newly appointed Teacher-1 statement is worthy in this regard,

“IT labs in schools serve as a space for student learning, where they gain skills in using computers to enhance their educational experience. These labs provide an opportunity for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to develop essential IT skills during their time at school.”

Above statements concur with the literature review of Smith (2020), he opined that, for the uplift of educational outcomes, educators construct engaging activities for the learners lead by latest technology and internet resources.



### **Outcome-based education**

Teaching strategies are gradually improving as a result of NCP implementation. The NCP framework provides novel teaching approaches, such as learner-centered curriculum and project-based learning, to achieve productive academic outcomes. Outcome-based learning represents two underlying purposes: learner success and staff success ideology.

### **Outcome-oriented curriculum**

A curriculum is created to ensure proper instruction in the school system. It also includes an evaluation of student performance, which is designed to access the predetermined academic goals of a syllabus. Student evaluations help to consider each learner's educational growth and out-comes(Brown,2017).

All of the respondents agreed that students' secondary school outcomes have improved significantly in recent years. The responders HOD-10 made the following statements:

"The new curriculum has been designed with all 21st-century skills and pedagogical approaches in mind; it discourages cramming and stimulates a child's creative potential. As a result, the initiative is outcome-oriented. This NCP approach resulted in high-performing schools. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted student outcomes in 2020 and 2021, but the situation is improving now."

Teacher-5 agreed that activity-based learning, as emphasized by NCP, stimulates learners' interest and prepares them for great exam performance.

"Present activities in the curriculum have stimulated the curiosity level of the students, for their academic accomplishments; certainly, they now score high in their annual examinations."

The literature evaluation of Liza (2022) is consistent with the aforementioned claims, which state that curriculum analysis includes determining the rate of required results and addressing curriculum objectives.

### **High academic achievement**

Secondary Data metrics, obtained from respondent school's result record register, verified that implementation of NCP at public secondary school level during last decade (2014- 2023) has marked high annual board academic achievements by respondent secondary schools in KP, and indicating rise in student's achievements after the implementation of NCP. Following statements of the respondents indicating rising percentage of school annual results:

HOD-3 stated while talking about good performance of the schools in the form of good results as, KP government had launched a policy of rewarding many Secondary School Heads, Teachers & Students with incentives and laptops as a best performance school on criteria of their best annual academic achievements. She said in this regard as,

"Over the past decade, numerous schools have benefited from this policy. The initiative, introduced by the KP government, has been highly praised by school leaders, teachers, students, and parents for boosting the morale of stakeholders. It has served to motivate them towards improved academic performance and has helped equip students to compete more effectively with those in private schools."

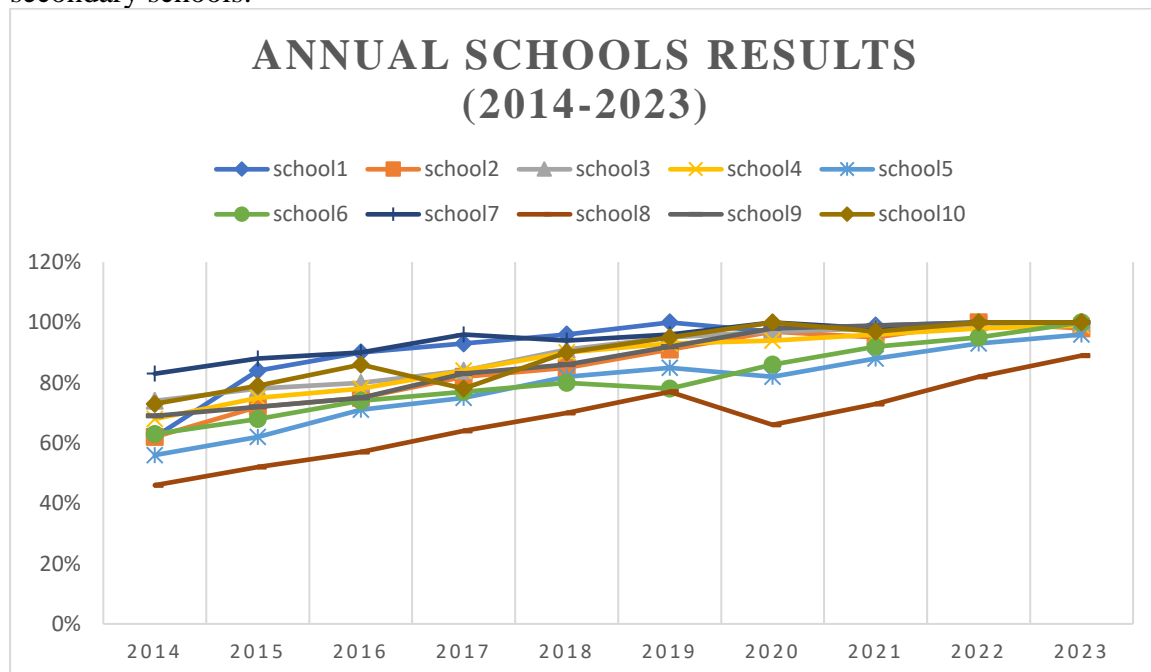
HOD-6 showed the same consent as,

"As a result of the various initiatives related to the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP), students are increasingly motivated to engage in their studies. Their interest in learning has grown, largely due to the presence of knowledgeable and skilled teachers. Consequently, student outcomes have significantly improved. In recognition of their exceptional academic performance, schools are annually rewarded with incentives by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government."

Teacher-5 opined that, school annual results record, highlighted that from last one decade school performance is on rise, indicating good results. She opined as,

“The implementation of the NCP has led to a significant improvement in the academic performance of secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, demonstrating a marked increase in positive outcomes. This trend reflects the enhancement of educational standards facilitated by the NCP.”

The annual board results of the respondent schools were obtained from the schools' official record registers and were visually represented in the line graph presented in Figure 4.2. This graph illustrates the academic performance trends of ten secondary schools over the past decade (2014–2023) within the scope of the current study. The line graph reveals a consistent upward trajectory in the schools' academic results following the implementation of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP). This graphical representation of annual results aligns with the statements provided by school heads and teachers, who identified the NCP as a significant factor contributing to the gradual improvement in the annual performance of students in public secondary schools.



**Figure 4.2** Percentage wise rise in school annual board results during (2014-2023).

#### Findings

- Findings of the current study revealed that, the implementation of the NCP at the secondary school level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is underway. Despite facing several hurdles and incremental developments. The level of implementation varies throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in a variety of educational institutions, including public and private schools, as well as madrasas. Public educational institutes are leading the way with systematic support and training, while private schools and madrasas are gradually adapting to the new curriculum, each facing their specific problems.
- Study findings apparently indicated that, NCP has made significant improvements in quality enhancement of the public secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).
- The analysis reveals that newly appointed teachers at public secondary school level in KP have a high teacher capacity as determined by the NTS (National Testing System). Teachers are credentialed, well-trained, and passionate about the new curriculum. They are also technology-savvy and have the necessary skills to effectively implement the NCP.
- Study found that the newly hired teachers as SSTs at the public secondary education level in KP are offered highly effective induction trainings. The Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has introduced the "Induction Program" (IP) for newly recruited teachers. So, they are able to appropriately execute the NCP at public secondary school level in KP.

- The study revealed that teachers use active classroom practices to successfully implement NCP, which is not only activity-based and SLO-based but also outcomes-oriented and ICT blended learning curriculum. As a result, all attempts are made to avoid rote memorization by replacing traditional educational approaches with better and novice pedagogical approaches.
- The study found that all participants agreed that NCP is an outcome-based curriculum. Students are more motivated to get high results on their annual exams when teachers and learners participate enthusiastically in the learning process through activity and project-based learning. That is why public secondary schools in KP have become high-performing in terms of annual results and can compete with private schools by aiming for high scores in the annual board exams.
- The study found that public secondary schools in KP successfully meet all three quality indicators for secondary education: teacher qualification and pedagogical skills, classroom practices and approaches, and annual board results. This suggests that secondary education quality has improved significantly as compared to previous curriculum.

## Conclusion

The present study findings indicate that the implementation of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) has a significant positive impact on educational reform in KP. It contributes to achieving more uniform education across all districts of KP, ensuring that children at every level have access to equal educational opportunities.

Study concluded that the effective implementation of NCP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) at the secondary school level is progressing. Although it faces several challenges and gradual developments. NCP implementation level varies across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in multiple educational institutions i.e public & private and madrasas. Public educational institutes are leading the way with structured support and training, while private schools and madrasas are gradually adapting to the new curriculum, facing unique challenges. NCP has brought about notable changes across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), aimed at uplifting the education quality of secondary school education. Findings revealed that all the three selected quality indicators for secondary school education in KP, i.e teacher qualification and Pedagogical skills, class room practices and approaches and annual board out comes of the secondary schools in KP, are successfully met by the secondary schools in KP, to successfully cope with NCP, indicating that quality of secondary education has been largely improved than before. Quality of education at public secondary school level in KP, is significantly improving by addressing the quality indicators for quality enhancement.

Overall, the qualitative study results showed that High Authority of (ESRU), Heads and teachers are hopeful that the implementation of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) at public secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) will lead to positive changes and quality enhancement. The study also revealed that the NCP is an effective tool for promoting social cohesion and peace among secondary school students.

Teachers' perspectives highlighted that the NCP is a multi-dimensional curriculum, incorporating philosophical aspects and 21st-century skills, which can significantly influence students' behavior and actions. Most respondents agreed that the NCP fosters critical thinking, enhances enthusiasm for learning, and encourages the development of friendships among students. It can surly, be said that quality of public secondary education is on the rise by the effective implementation of National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP). Which can be said a mile stone in the history of KP's secondary education system.

## Recommendations

- The Provincial Education Ministry may prioritize ensuring proper implementation of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) in all streams of secondary education in KP.

- KP government may take effective initiatives to promote national cohesion and integration and to realize its dream of having uniform and quality education throughout the province of KP by creating an effective curriculum implementation framework for the proper implementation of NCP not only at the public secondary school level, but also in private schools and madrasas.
- Provincial governments may establish pedagogy training institutes to provide comprehensive training for public school in-service teachers' trainings. These institutions should provide continual professional development to help teachers enhance their classroom techniques and increase their students' learning skills. These training institutions must be adequately funded and staffed to provide high-quality training on a consistent basis.
- KP government may provide additional funds to the public secondary schools and teachers' training institutes in KP.
- The study suggests that in-service refresher courses for teachers could enhance the effective implementation of the NCP curriculum. The ministry can sponsor these courses, and schools can work with non-governmental organizations to achieve this goal.
- KP government may provide IT labs with IT teachers to all public secondary schools in KP.
- KP government may provide science labs and audio-visual aids to the secondary schools to enhance vigorous implementation of NCP at public secondary education level in KP.
- Seminars and workshops at the district level can help educate teachers, administrators, and stakeholders on their roles in effective NCP implementation and co-curricular activities.
- KP's educational institutions may encourage a research culture. The provincial government may enhance financing for the Secondary Education Commission in this regard.

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