

Pakistani National Identity, Curriculum Reform and Citizenship Education Textbooks: Understanding Teachers' Perspectives

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This study investigated teachers' perspectives on the thematic area of Pakistan national identity in relation to the curricular reform (2006) and the subsequently revised Citizenship Education (Pakistan Studies) textbooks introduced in the secondary schools in Punjab in 2012. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-seven Pakistan Studies teachers from secondary schools. Using a framework based on three conceptions of Pakistani national identity, that is, the Islamist, the pluralist, and the nation–statist, data were analysed—which revealed that teachers had different interpretations of what Pakistan Studies should be and what kind of Pakistani national identity it should promote. However, most of the teachers' perspectives indicated that they subscribed to an Islamic model of Pakistani national identity more than to the pluralistic, liberal-democratic one. It is argued that there is a need for introducing teachers to a Pakistan Studies curriculum that is faithful to, and respectful of distinctive history, Islamic heritage and diversity of Pakistan.

Keywords: *national identity; cultural diversity; curriculum reform; teachers' perspectives; textbooks*

Introduction

Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, all successive governments have been consciously using curricula and textbooks to promote and inculcate Islamic ideology and values into future generations in order to construct a common national identity of a plural society (Khalid & Khan, 2006). Beginning in 1947 with a foundational National Education Conference, Pakistan has had eight national education policies during the nearly seventy years of its existence. Moreover, during the period of different governments of Pakistan, eight five-year-plans, about half a dozen commissions and committees and a dozen or more workshops, seminars and conferences were established devoted to the theme of educational reform (Bengali, 1999; Khalid & Khan, 2006). All governments, whether Islamic or socialist, civilian or military, elected or otherwise, had the curriculum policy objective of preparing good citizens (Dean, 2005). However, officially produced textbooks always incorporated the government's current conception of citizenship—but Islamic ideology was always given a pivotal position in all the officially produced textbooks of Pakistan. It was during the Zia era (1977-88) that the curriculum content was given a significant shift from a conservative version of Islam towards a more fundamentalist and militant version (Chughtai, 2011). The Zia regime's curriculum policy radically changed the educational landscape: Curricula and textbooks were developed with an emphasis on Islamisation, having generally an anti-minority stance with heightened sectarian divisions between Sunni and Shia (Chughtai, 2011; Lall,

2009; Zaidi, 2011). Commenting on the exclusionary nature of this policy, Lall (2008) asserted, "by legislating what was Islamic and what was not, Islam itself could no longer provide unity because it was being defined to exclude previously included groups" (p. 111). She argued that the adoption of a "Sunni world view through the education system led to deep divisions between the Sunni majority and the Shia minority. The primacy of the Sunni perspective led not only to disputes between Sunnis and Shias but also ethnic disturbances" (p. 111). The reason for the adoption of this Sunni world-view was attributed to General Zia's quest for political legitimacy which made him rely heavily on his religious constituency (Lall, 2009), that is, Islamic political parties, especially *Jamaat-e-Islami* and its particular conception of Islam. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, General Zia was further aided by the United States economic largesse, as Pakistan had become a frontline state in support of the anti-communist guerrilla efforts directed against the Soviet Union. The fundamentalist and militant Islamisation process started by General Zia could not subsequently be reversed by the post-1988 civilian governments (Nayyar & Salim, 2003). Rather, successive governments progressively 'Islamised' the national educational system and Islamic faith became "a sole determinant of nationhood" (S. S. Ali & Rehman, 2001). Saigol (1995) succinctly summed up the reason for Islamisation in Pakistan:

The more the project of national integration and nation building failed, the more ardently religion was invoked as a unifying force. The State's

main imperatives of control and domination through centralisation did not change, despite changes in governments and regimes (As cited in Jamil, 2009, p. 9)

Pakistan's efforts to achieve complete success in manufacturing a common national identity using Islamic nationalism has proved hard to attain because of competing visions of national identity (Ahmad, 2008). This study investigated teachers' perspectives on the thematic area of Pakistan national identity in relation to the Pakistan Studies curricular reform (2006) and the subsequently revised Pakistan Studies textbooks introduced in the secondary schools in Punjab in 2012—through which ideological underpinning of the national curriculum policy was attempted to shift from Islamic nationalism to democratic pluralism aiming to develop a more inclusive national identity of Pakistani students.

Identity-Related Issues and Preparation for Citizenship

A variety of markers can be used to construct a nation (Mansbach & Rhodes, 2007). However, in Pakistan, a few certain markers or symbols—historical experience, common residence in the same region common ethnic origin, cultural heritage or civilisation language, religion, etc.—are invoked to construct Pakistani national identity. Invoking certain symbols to construct a certain version of national identity can help in moulding the whole society in a specific image but this also has authoritarian and repressive implications of silencing dissident voices. The literature reviewed on the various conceptions of Pakistani national identity suggested that there existed at least three main

conceptions of Pakistani national identity currently prevalent in scholarly and journalistic work in Pakistan, that is, the Islamist, the nation-statist and the pluralist conceptions (e.g. Adeney, 2007; Ahmad, 2004, 2008; Lall, 2012a; Shafqat, 2009). However, it is Islam which is often used for the purpose of constructing Pakistani national identity (Ahmed, 2008; Muhammad & Brett, 2017). The Islamist conception of Pakistani national identity encompasses a belief that Islam has been the only binding force in multicultural Pakistan since the nation was created in the name of Islam (Shafqat, 2009). The proponents of this conception argue that the “sole reason for the creation of Pakistan was preserving ‘Islam’ and not simply ‘Muslims of undivided India’ as opposed to Hindus; they prefer Islamic belief over the group as the primary source of identity” (Shafqat, 2009, p. 2). Moreover, they argue that harmony in the ethnic and linguistic diversity of Pakistan can only be achieved by accepting the centralising role of Islam (Shafqat, 2009). The nation-statist conception of Pakistani national identity incorporates a view that rather than addressing national integration issues, Pakistani national identity can be constructed by concentrating mainly on Pakistan's antagonism towards India (Jaffrelot, 2002). Though this conception relies on emphasising enmity towards India in defining Pakistani national identity, different regimes in Pakistan have extensively used it to produce “enemy images” and to promote exclusion. Compared to the pluralist conception of Pakistani national identity, the Islamist and the nation-statist have been dominant in shaping the Pakistani national identity discourse. The proponents of a pluralist

conception of Pakistani national identity argue that there is no single culture in Pakistan and stress the pluralistic nature of the content and character of Pakistani society and culture (A. J. Khokhar & Muhammad, 2018). Moreover, they argue that “Pakistan is a multilingual and multicultural state; therefore, its languages and cultures should be allowed to grow and develop in the broader context of national history and cultural experiences” (Shafqat, 2009, p. 2). Furthermore, “the regional cultures and Islam have been in existence prior to the creation of Pakistan and both can flourish together” (p. 2). They also contend that “it is not Islamisation but greater decentralisation and enhanced provincial autonomy that would promote national integration and give substance to Pakistani national identity” (p. 3). They propose an education system underpinned by enlightened and humane ideals so that human rights and diversity in society can be protected (Adeney, 2007; Shakir, 2005). These views tend to be held by only a relatively small minority of better-educated, predominantly urban, and progressive intellectuals. Political parties representing these views have rarely achieved strong election results. It has been argued that every definition of national identity is essentially selective when it stresses one vision of national identity and marginalises others (Parekh, 2000) because the self-identification is not only made through a distinct set of statements but also through negative comparison with sub-cultures, other cultures and other nations (Crawford, 2011; Durrani, 2008a, 2008b; Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Hogg, 2006). Indeed, the process of identity construction comprises the setting of boundaries (Woodward, 2003). Additionally, Pickering (2001)

asserted that “national identity is both unifying and divisive” (p. 89): It provides a compulsive substitute for the cultural need to belong while at the same time differentiating a nationally defined ‘us’ from conflicting forms of national identity. However, this could be particularly dangerous in a multicultural society, which has diverse interpretations of its history and holds to a multitude of values and visions for the good life (Parekh, 2000). Because of competing visions of Islam, various Islamic groups resist official adoption of Islamic ideology (Muhammad & Brett, 2015). Since adherence to Islam was a shared characteristic between most of Pakistan’s diverse ethnic, and language groups, Islamic ideology was deliberately used to enhance common cultural traits and to reduce the differences among the diverse population. Consequently, Islamic values were given an important place in the school curriculum from the early years—in an attempt to create a national identity based on an abstract Islamic model. However, critics argue that this model has had limited success. Commenting on this situation, Cohen (2002) stated that “the most important conflict in Pakistan is not a civilizational clash between Muslims and non-Muslims but a clash between different concepts of Islam, particularly how the Pakistani state should implement its Islamic identity” (p. 113). Thus the idea of the Pakistani nation had become a contested concept (Cohen, 2002, 2011). The dominance of Punjabi visions of national identity alienates other ethnic groups in Pakistan (Talbot, 1998). Many Punjabis perceive that “there is no conflict between a Punjabi and a Pakistani identity” (Lall, 2012a). However, other ethnic groups see this dominance as “Punjabization of Pakistan” (Talbot, 1998,

p. 14)—which has further eroded the collective effective dimension of Pakistani citizenship, that is, the shared subjective sense of membership in the unified Pakistani community. Successive martial law regimes led by the Punjabi dominated army—the firmly entrenched upholder of Islamist national identity—“tried to forcibly impose a national identity rather than achieve it by consensus” (Talbot, 1998, p. 19). It further alienated minority ethnic and religious groups. Since the creation of Pakistan, the curriculum policy remained exclusively focused on the national identity dimension of citizenship, and has not been highly successful in cultivating the rights, duties, political participation and civic virtue dimensions of citizenship (Lall, 2012a). Consequently, in present-day Pakistan, “the three concepts of citizenship, national identity, and religion are often muddled by ordinary citizens. This has made the concept of citizenship hazy since the majority of the Pakistanis feel alienated by the state” (Lall, 2012b, p. 270). Similarly, the Pakistani education system has not been highly successful in cultivating participative dimensions of citizenship due to its preoccupation with the construction of an Islamic national identity (Lall, 2012a). Citizenship as participation (Bellamy, 2008; Heater, 2004; Isin & Turner, 2002; Isin & Wood, 1999) “refers to having a voice and exerting influence over public policy in one’s political community” (Molina Giron, 2012, p. 16). All democratic theories agree that citizens should be informed about politics and have an active part to play in politics so that better political decisions can be made in a polity (Theiss-Morse, 1993). However, the Pakistani curriculum policy has strongly

emphasised the acquisition of knowledge and the inculcation of some important Islamic values and not civic skills such as decision-making and problem-solving necessary for effective democratic participation in political life (Dean, 2005). Democratic Pluralism and Curriculum Reform The ideological underpinning of the national curriculum policy was attempted to shift from Islamic nationalism to democratic pluralism in 2006—when newly reformed curricula were formulated by the federal government. Domestic political circumstances and international pressure to revise curriculum policy—pushed curriculum policy makers towards incorporating greater democratic pluralism. The military coup of 12 October 1999 helped General Pervez Musharraf to become the Chief Executive of Pakistan. The ideological orientation of Musharraf was more towards enlightened moderation, which believes in shunning extremism—and interpreting Islam moderately (Musharraf, 2004). After 9/11 terrorist attacks in America, the western world’s alleging—that the education system of Pakistan had been contributing in producing terrorists—developed pressure on the Musharraf regime to revise educational policy and curricula in Pakistan (M. Khokhar, 2007). As a consequence, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided huge investment to commence education reforms in Pakistan—and new school curricula were developed in 2006. The liberal-democratic segments of Pakistani society—a handful minority in Pakistan—hailed this change. However, Islamic nationalists rejected it. This is because the idea of democratic pluralism is the “antithesis of the nation-state concept” and “appreciates

heterogeneity in all respects, ranging from race, ethnicity, and language, culture, to religion and sect. Furthermore, democratic pluralism rejects the idea that the state should represent a distinct racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious or sectarian community” (Rashid, 2014, para. 1). Punjab, the most populous federating unit of Pakistan and consisting of 54 per cent of the total population, is currently adhering to the National Curriculum 2006 (Government of the Punjab, 2014). Nevertheless, the ideological orientation of the ruling party in Punjab, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group (PML-N), was believed to want to “push back the moderate pluralist agenda in education” (Jamil, 2009, p. 11). There were newspaper reports and research studies that highlighted the Islamisation of textbooks, which were introduced by the Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore in 2012. A review of the literature suggested that knowledge about teachers’ perspectives on the treatment of Pakistani national identity was a largely neglected area in the Pakistani context (Durrani, 2008a; Muhammad, 2015). In addition, some newspaper reports suggested that most teachers were unaware of the fact that a curriculum reform had taken place (Afzal, 2014) and that more nuanced and inclusive philosophies had been legislated at a national level as part of curriculum policy. There was no in-depth empirical analysis of how teachers sought to interpret the Pakistani national identity elements of the current curriculum documents relayed within the most recent Pakistan Studies textbooks used in secondary schools. There was a need for a study exploring the perspectives of Pakistan Studies’ teachers on the Pakistani national identity content of the Pakistan Studies. The curriculum of

Pakistan Studies has been an amalgamation of the geography, history, and economy of Pakistan (M. Ali, 1992). Constructed within the theoretical framework of Islam, Pakistan Studies have been traditionally deployed to inculcate patriotism, good citizenship, and affinity with *Ummah* in students (Ahmad, 2008). The political nature of the Pakistan Studies curriculum also relates to the teachers’ mediation of the content of the textbooks and implementation of a curriculum. Curriculum documents are not neutral (Apple, 1993; Pinar, 1995; Ross, 2002; Schugurensky, 2002) especially those of Pakistan Studies. Ross (2000) argued that the curriculum is a selection made from a society’s culture. Moreover, Apple (2004) suggested that the curriculum “is always part of a selective tradition, someone’s selection, some group’s vision of legitimate knowledge” (p. 222). The selection of curriculum content is based on the objectives and intentions of the curriculum. Every definition of outcomes essentially embodies values. Use of particular teaching methods and assessment and quantification of outcomes ensure the transfer of these values (Ross, 2002). In spite of teachers’ relatively limited role in determining the shape of the official curriculum (Ginsburg & Kamat, 2009), the formal curriculum is decided by the teachers (Marker & Mehlinger, 1996). The significance of teachers’ work is due to their responsibility for the organisation of constructive and meaningful experiences for their students (Adalbjarnardottir, 2002). Thus, Pakistan Studies teachers play a significant political role since they may mediate the content of the textbooks. Punjab’s secondary school system is stratified into public schools (federal,

provincial, and armed forces schools) and private schools (private elite, missionary, and low-priced private English medium schools) (Rahman, 2001, 2004). As “teachers interpret policy messages in the context of their own culture, ideology, history and resources” (Trowler, 2003, p. 131), it was contended that these teachers in various types of schools in Punjab could possibly have different perspectives to the national curriculum depending on the ideological affiliations of their schools.

Methods

The overall aim of understanding the perspectives of Pakistan Studies teachers was addressed using qualitative case study design and interviewing teachers (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Twenty-seven cases of Pakistan Studies teachers were purposively recruited from various types of public schools and private schools in order to address the different perspectives, they might have on national identity theme of the textbooks. To elicit teachers’ perspectives of Pakistani national identity embedded in the revised Pakistan Studies textbooks, teachers were interviewed to comment on the various features of the Pakistan Studies textbooks’ content introduced in the Musharraf era (2006). Additionally, they were asked to express their personal likes and dislikes regarding the new Pakistan Studies textbooks. Perspectives were assumed to be a teacher’s own meaningful interpretations of the different aspect of the revised Pakistan Studies curriculum/textbooks influenced by his or her prior experiences (Pickens, 2005). These perspectives or interpretations may be considerably different from reality. Here a national

identity theme was assumed to be the content of the Pakistan Studies curriculum or textbooks, which explicitly or implicitly linked to the cultivation of Pakistan’s national identity. National Identity is an elusive and complex concept (Jamieson, 2002; Smith, 1991). However, for this study three conceptions of Pakistani national identity currently prevalent in scholarly and journalistic work in Pakistan, that is, the Islamist, the pluralist, and the nation–statist conceptions (Adeney, 2007; Ahmad, 2004, 2008; Lall, 2012a; Shafqat, 2009) were used in order to understand the diverse responses of the teachers regarding evocations of Pakistani national identity in the curriculum or textbooks. Moreover, teachers were asked to comment on the features of Pakistani national identity that they saw as; particularly promoted through the new Pakistan Studies textbooks, the features of Pakistani national identity not being promoted through the Pakistan Studies textbooks and the stories, events, or emphasis in the Pakistan Studies textbooks used to construct Pakistani national identity. A cross-case analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted to deepen understanding of the perspectives of the Pakistan Studies teachers on the content of the textbooks (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). This analysis was facilitated by the qualitative analysis software, *Nvivo 11* (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). All the coding processes were carried out using *Nvivo 11*—which provided a set of tools for recording, sorting, matching and linking—to answer the research questions from the data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Categories derived from the interview guide questions and constituted the main

categories—the key aspects which this study set to investigate (Schreier, 2012)—namely Pakistan Studies teachers' perspectives regarding Islamist, nation-statist and plural national identity content of the text. Sub-categories—that is, what is said about the aspects or main categories in the interview transcripts (Schreier, 2012)—were created inductively from the data. Based on these main-categories and sub-categories, a data display in the matrix—sorting data in rows and columns—was created. The display systematically permitted comparisons across all teachers' perspectives and tests whether these teachers from a certain school see the textbooks' content in a comparable way. These data displays helped in the grouping, summarising, and comparing different teachers' responses around the main categories of three conceptions of Pakistan national identity. A cross-case analysis of the selected sample of Pakistan Studies teachers was also helpful in holistically understanding the perspectives of Pakistan Studies teachers regarding the revised Pakistan Studies textbooks.

Teachers' Perspectives on the National Identity Theme of the Textbooks

It emerged from the data that most of the teachers—from the public as well as private schools—perceived that there were some significant changes in the treatment of national identity theme within the Pakistan Studies textbooks. They either appreciated or expressed concerns about these changes. They appreciated, for example, the inclusion of post-partition history, Islamic values, 'unbiased history', and topics on Indian animosity towards Pakistan and Pakistani cultural content. Categorising the teachers' responses into Islamist, nation-statist and plural revealed

that most of the teachers—mainly from the public schools—had Islamist appreciations and concerns regarding the Pakistani national identity theme. Most of the teachers in this category expressed the view that the addition of more modern and contemporary history—especially an updated history related to the leadership eras of Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq, Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto, and Pervez Musharraf—was a positive development. However, their appreciation of the inclusion of post-partition history was premised on the idea of greater centralisation rather than provincial autonomy. To put it differently, they appreciated the emphasis in the textbooks on post-partition history that gave more coverage to the federal political leadership. They were also notably positive about the inclusion of the constitutional struggle in Pakistan, the more recent history of the previous decade, and current affairs. They believed it was a good thing because they thought that emphasis on the more recent past had resulted in the textbook giving references to various national web sites; e.g., an Economic Survey of Pakistan, the inclusion of activities and colourful pictures, which they believed were helpful in enhancing the content on national identity. A teacher explained the reason for the appreciation of this inclusion:

Before this, students were less interested in Pakistan Studies but now students are studying about Musharraf, he is still alive and students have also seen him. This increases their interest in the subject and gives them a solid knowledge. (Teacher-12PG)

Teachers in the Islamist category also appreciated the addition of content related to Islamic values such as justice, democracy, tolerance, and respect for the law. They believed that these values are the pillars of Islam and Pakistani society. They argued that it was necessary for the students to have a deeper knowledge of Islamic values. However, a few teachers expressed their concerns about the comparatively decreased focus upon—and less comprehensive treatment of—topics relevant to Islamic culture and the increased focus of the curriculum on geographical features of Pakistan.

Some teachers—mainly from private schools—expressed their appreciations and concerns in ways that were categorised as pluralist. They perceived the inclusion of more emphasis on the four provincial cultures of Pakistan as a good development for the cultivation of Pakistani national identity. In addition, two teachers—from missionary schools—were concerned about the inclusion of a disproportionate amount of content about Islamic beliefs. They expressed views that Pakistan Studies should deal with topics relevant to Pakistan and that Islamic content (beliefs) should be confined to Islamic Studies. They viewed the addition of content about Islamic beliefs as an unjust imposition on the minority students:

We have sects (in Christianity) but if a student has the Catholic faith, he will be taught only about Catholic faith (in our school). I was taught in a government school and there I had to study Islamic Studies. I still remember Islamic prayers and verses. How can we impose

our faith on our students, when they are not comfortable with this? (Teacher-26M)

Moreover, they argued that the representation of the belief system of Islam had the potential to cause conflict in society. For example, one teacher argued,

I do not have the aim of making them religious scholars; my aim is to make them good citizens. The aim of Pakistan Studies is to make them patriotic citizens. If we start arguing about the preaching of religious beliefs, this would cause conflict. (Teacher-27M)

They perceived that content related to Islamic beliefs had been reduced rather than removed totally in the new Pakistan Studies textbook. They believed that this was because the textbook writers wanted to please the Islamic pressure groups or that the textbook committee would not approve a textbook without Islamic content. Interestingly, they were not concerned about the presence of Islamic ethical values as they both expressed that the ethical values were universal in all the religions and needed to be promoted.

Teachers in the pluralist category also saw the inclusion of “unbiased history” as a positive development. They believed that the history component of the new curriculum was without any prejudice, free of twisted facts, and based upon grounded realities. When asked to provide specific examples, a teacher pointed vehemently to the following example of the treatment of Mughal rulers:

The previous curriculum was a pack of lies and used to reflect a certain way of thinking. For

example, it used to be taught that India was ruled by Muslims—no, it was not. It was ruled by Mughals—and then there was a lot of praise for these Mughal rulers. When I was a student, I used to take them mistakenly as saints. When I became an adult, I came to know they were corrupt people. These were the lies included in Pakistan Studies...They are no more in the new textbook. (Teacher-11PG)

Another teacher, arguing that the history in the new textbook was unbiased and multi-perspectival, elaborated this point by giving an example of the treatment of East Pakistan in the new textbook:

We have been reading and teaching that it was the wish of the people (of East Pakistan) to separate—but in truth—the ground reality, which is also now incorporated in this textbook—the Awami League had a majority—it was their right to make government. Now in Pakistan Studies, they have described this fact. Similarly, there were many ambiguous and one-sided concepts in the previous textbook. They are now described in both ways. They have left it to the new generation to decide themselves who was right and who was wrong. It is a good thing that you have both aspects. They have not blamed—they have only

described in both ways—it is a good thing. (Teacher-14PG)

Interestingly, only two teachers—from the armed force schools—had perspectives inclined towards the nation-statist conception of Pakistani national identity. They saw the inclusion of topics on Indian animosity towards Pakistan as a positive thing and considered it an essential theme for the cultivation of national identity. For example, a teacher from an armed forces school believed that “inclusion of topics such as the Pakistan movement and the Indian animosity was good because these topics induce sudden responses from the students and promote Pakistani national identity. Students are really involved in the discussions of the classroom” (Teacher-19AF). One teacher expressed concern related to the decreased content related to pre-partition history—especially, the content on those personalities who contributed to the struggle for Pakistan’s independence. This teacher believed that the pre-partition antagonistic history always helped him in cultivating students’ national identities.

There was a small group of teachers—from the public as well as private schools—who saw no changes in the Pakistan Studies textbooks. They believed that the same previous topics and themes were being repeated and the syllabus just divided into two books. One teacher articulated it as: “Typical pattern (of topics) is being followed. It seems as if the time has stopped after the Zia Era” (Teacher-15AF).

Teachers also provided suggestions to improve the treatment of the national identity theme within the Pakistan Studies textbooks. Majority of teachers were in favour of the inclusion of one or more additional aspects of national identity

content. Based upon their suggestions, the teachers fell in two categories: Teachers' suggesting that more topics were required to promote national identity (23) and teachers' suggesting that no changes were needed (4).

Most of the teachers—mainly from the public schools—suggested changes in the national identity theme of the textbooks, which can be labelled Islamist. For example, many teachers in this category suggested that Islamic points of view should be given more attention in order to improve the national identity content of the textbook. They felt that more content on the pillars of the Islamic ideology of Pakistan and their relevance to society should be included. They also suggested that content related to Islamic values—justice, democracy, tolerance, and constitutional matters should be enhanced. One teacher argued, “When Islamic values had been added in the constitution of Pakistan then Islamic values are Pakistani values, they should be promoted more” (Teacher-24Pri). Therefore, he thought that it was necessary for his students to have a deeper knowledge of Islamic values. This group of teachers did not see it as an injustice to non-Muslim students who would be forced to read the Islamic content of the textbooks, as one teacher argued:

It would not be an injustice to add more information related to Islam. Injustice would be only when we do not treat non-Muslim students properly and we have hatred for them...Nobody's religion should be attacked in the textbook or during lectures...Islam is a universal

religion. All that is in Islam is applicable to all human beings. (Teacher-8PG)

Similarly, another teacher argued:

Islamic concepts of justice, democracy, and tolerance are not only valuable for Muslim students but also for non-Muslim students because, in this way, they will become aware of their rights and duties—and then they can work towards the progress of this country. (Teacher-24Pri)

Some teachers in this category suggested that more topics to promote national identity should be included. For this, they suggested the addition of more topics on national heroes—from all provinces but acknowledged at the national level such as life histories of leaders who took part in the freedom movement or military leaders who received *Nishan-e-Haider* (Pakistan's highest military gallantry award). They were not in favour of additions of cultural issues as they argued this would promote what they regarded as provincialism and provincial prejudice.

Some teachers' suggestions regarding the content of Pakistan Studies textbooks were pluralist. For example, teachers from missionary schools were mainly concerned with the addition of minority voices in the national narrative. One teacher who sought the addition of more content related to Pakistan minorities—for example, the Christian minority and the contributions of different Christian leaders. He believed, “Now the Christian minority can also say that our contributions to Pakistan are also highlighted. But I think it is not enough—

there should be more. Other minorities—Hindus and Parsis—should also be given some space” (Teacher-26M). Similarly, another argued that there were many minority leaders who worked for Pakistan but he could not see their adequate portrayal in the textbooks or other official histories. He went on to suggest that the contributions of these minority leaders should also be acknowledged. Nevertheless, he suggested that their contributions should not be included, describing them as Christian or Hindu, rather as Pakistanis. He argued, “Every other community, Sikh or Parsi, who has contributed to Pakistan, should be given space in the book. Otherwise, other communities would feel isolated” (Teacher-27M).

A few teachers in the pluralist category also suggested an approach, which they labelled as a futuristic vision to the teaching of Pakistan Studies. They argued that the futuristic vision—especially in the teaching of natural resources of Pakistan—should be included and that the historical content should be shortened and modified accordingly. A teacher argued, “Though there is certain importance of the past, whilst keeping the present in our view we should work towards making our future better” (Teacher-22Pri). Furthermore, the teacher argued, “If they (students) come to realise the importance of the resources, they will also come to realise that they should not waste these scarce resources” (Teacher-22Pri). These teachers believed that there was an abundance of national resources within Pakistan across different provinces but that there was an absence of vision to use these resources to help future generations to develop and prosper. Therefore, they argued for textbook

content that had futuristic components within the ambit of Pakistan Studies. They also argued that information on the problems in provinces and various ways of solving them should be included because it would not only promote national identity but also encourage the younger generation to find creative solutions to these problems.

A few teachers’ suggestions regarding the content of Pakistan Studies textbooks were nation-statist. For example, these teachers insisted that the freedom movement should be given more space, and politics since 1947 and the history of various constitutions should be curtailed. They believed that content related to an antagonistic freedom movement was much more effective in the construction of national identity than the power struggle and ever-changing political history after partition. Nevertheless, they also suggested that more content on the history of recent decades should be included in the curriculum and the textbooks because they heightened the interest of the students in the subject. It was interesting to note that only one teacher suggested that the Kashmir issue should be given more space in order to cultivate the national identity of the students. Only two teachers suggested cultivation of the love of the national language—Urdu.

With regard to the medium of instruction, I would suggest that our own Urdu language should be preferred (although we teach 50% of our lectures in English). This would help in improving national integration...At least Urdu should be given its value in the state-run educational institutions. (Teacher-19AF)

It is interesting in the sense that there was relatively less emphasis by the teachers on the Kashmir Issue and Urdu language—both of which are generally promoted as the core components of Pakistani national identity (Ayres, 2009).

Apart from the above-cited views of the majority of the teachers arguing for the addition of content related to one or another conception of Pakistani national identity, a few teachers were not in favour of the addition of more national identity content. They believed that this additional material would increase the burden upon students and teachers. They were mainly concerned with the burden that would come from the assessments and examinations. A teacher elaborated it as:

We already have too much syllabus content. As a teacher, I feel that it is too much to do in one year. Students do not want to study it...before the addition of more national identity content, the syllabus should be reduced. (Teacher-17AF)

Others expressed their lack of agency and voice in such matters. For example, a teacher argued, “I have no idea of the syllabus and what it should be. There should be good results; I have no concern with what should be in the syllabus” (Teacher-6PG). Conversely, other teachers suggested various other alternatives to the addition of more national identity content. For example, a teacher argued, “For the better cultivation of national identity, changing the textbook is not the only way, other resources should be used, and parents should be involved more” (Teacher-18AF). Therefore, they did not insist on changing the content of the

textbooks but did argue for the textbook content to be augmented by other library resources.

There were also certain outlier views in the suggestions of teachers. For example, contrary to most of the public-school teachers suggesting more Islamic curriculum content, a public-school teacher suggested that instead of promoting Islamic nationalism there was a need to promote a more secular nationalism in the curriculum and the textbooks. This teacher insisted on including the virtues of secular national identity and argued:

It is a tradition here that we involve Islam in teaching students to be good Pakistani citizens. I think it is wrong to give reference to religion because no religion dictates you to steal or tell lies or do injustice—all the religions have the same preaching. Putting more emphasis on Islam creates prejudice in the minds of students. They start thinking that Islam is the only true religion and other religions are false. This prejudice takes them along the wrong path. (Teacher-11PG)

This teacher also provided a solution to this problem:

There are two countries that came into existence on the basis of religion: Pakistan and Israel. Israel is not a stable country nor is Pakistan. Just because of religion, you cannot keep a country united. You have to raise slogans of nationalism. There were some

religious parties—who have been considering nationalism as *Kufar* (infidelity). When it is said we Pakistanis are Muslim where should Christians go, where should Hindus go? We disown them by just saying that we Pakistanis are Muslim...this promotes all kinds of prejudices. If we do not go to nationalism, then we will have all other identities. (Teacher-11PG)

Discussion & Conclusion

Most of the teachers' perspectives indicated that they subscribed to an Islamic conception of Pakistani national identity more than to the pluralistic, liberal-democratic one. There were different interpretations of what Pakistan Studies should be and what kind of Pakistani national identity it should promote. This could be possibly attributed to their different interests and their diverse value systems. Nevertheless, the dominant understanding was more Islamist than plural because of most of the teachers—mainly from the public schools—expressed their appreciation for the addition of specific Islamist content and articulated some concerns regarding the comparatively decreased Islamic content in the new Pakistan Studies textbooks. They valued the inclusion of post-partition national history—depicting efforts to increasingly centralised governments over the years—and showed concern about the lesser focus upon topics related to Islamic nationalism and Islamic culture. However, some teachers—mainly from private schools—expressed pluralist appreciations and concerns. They appreciated the inclusion of post-partition national history

with a view of struggle and experiences of different ethnic groups, cherished the inclusion of “unbiased history,” and showed concerns about the dominance of Islamic beliefs and typical Zia Era patterns of topics. Interestingly, two teachers—both from armed forces schools—exhibited otherness by adhering to the nation-statist conception of Pakistani national identity. They appreciated the inclusion of topics on Indian animosity towards Pakistan and revealed their concerns about the decreased focus on antagonistic pre-partition history in the new Pakistan Studies.

Most of the teachers were unaware of the 2006 national curriculum documents produced during the Musharraf regime. Nevertheless, many of the teachers were aware of the curriculum debates—regarding the Pakistan Studies content and the liberal educational agenda—through the media. Most of the teachers did not come to know about the specific changes in the curriculum content before the new textbooks were available in the market in 2012. This can be attributed to a long tradition in Pakistan to preparing “official curriculum” by policymakers centrally and sending it to the micro level, through top-down approach for the implementation by teachers (Vazir, 2003). Teachers have usually been excluded from the curriculum development process; this was true for the Pakistan Studies national curriculum document 2006, which was solely drafted by hand-picked university professors, with not a single school teacher included in the curriculum development team (Muhammad, Masood, & Anis, 2019). In her recent study, Chughtai (2015) claimed that though the curriculum was reformed, there was no simultaneous effort to prepare teachers to teach the curriculum

differently. Similarly, Hashmi (2011) reported that “no teacher training or refresher courses for the teacher were conducted by the board” (Hashmi, 2011, p. 218). Teachers’ responses also highlighted the professional development issue related to the new curriculum policy. For example, most of the public teachers indicated that no professional development was undertaken after the introduction of a new curriculum policy. They added that if this was done, it would prioritise Mathematics and Sciences. Pakistan Studies, Islamic Studies, and Language subjects were neglected. In the absence of established mechanisms for transmitting new curriculum policy, it was unlikely that the teachers would have in-depth knowledge of new curriculum policy recommendations and thus it was unlikely that they would significantly change their perspectives and practices.

However, the findings from this study point to a long-standing ambiguity and tension between three conceptions of national identity. The present study has identified that there would be benefits in clarifying the place, nature and role of Islamic ideological foundations within the curriculum. Instead of official endorsement of one sect of Islam, that is, Sunni, there is a need for more nuanced and inclusive interpretations of Pakistani religious identities. Since many non-Muslim minorities exist in Pakistan, official endorsement of one Islamic sect may lead more towards the conflict in society. Moreover, there is a need for a curriculum policy shift accommodating liberal democratic approaches for addressing diversity and respecting distinct Islamic Pakistani history and culture (Muhammad & Brett, 2019).

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