



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Educational Reforms: Perception of Primary School Teachers towards Online Training Program for Single National Curriculum (SNC)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Single National Curriculum (SNC) has been developed and implemented at primary school level (grade 1-5). Training has been done in different rounds and phases. The researcher wants to investigate the problems faced by primary school teachers in online training and the perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of training. Research questions were developed. Sample consisted of primary school teacher (PSTs) was chosen by using purposive sampling technique. An interview protocol was validated by the experts. Mock interview was conducted in order to check the credibility. Data was collected by taking interviews and then thematic analysis was done. The problems were mainly non-familiarity with technology, lack of face-to-face interaction, internet connectivity, and bandwidth issues. Continuous training, multiple teaching strategies, behavioral and moral development, and assessment strategies were emphasized. The study also holds importance for stakeholders as it recommends improvement of certain aspects of training including continuity of training.

**KEYWORDS** Online Training, Perception, Primary School Teachers, Professional Development, Single National Curriculum

**Introduction**

Education reforms involve changes in public education aligned with educational theory and practice, shifting focus from inputs to student achievement. Reforms address injustices related to gender, class, and poverty, aiming for evidence-based, scientifically sound improvements. Even slight modifications to education reforms can significantly impact citizens' well-being, prosperity, and health (Muzaffar, et. al 2020; Durrani & Halai, 2018). Conventionally, education is imparted through a curriculum though it is certainly possible without the curriculum too. Curriculum is a complex whole - incorporating multiple processes of teaching and learning right from cognitive to physical, social, cultural, scientific, philosophical and technical ones depending on the age and preferences of a society and State. It is designed to communicate knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences and comprehensions acquired from historical narratives, traditional wisdom, books, lectures, illustrations and demonstrations along with some observation, intuition, and heuristic experimentation (Amjad & Asad, 2022).

Former Prime Minister, Mr. Imran Khan introduced the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan to unify the nation's students under one curriculum. Despite lacking clear government outcomes, the SNC aims for religious neutrality by fostering interfaith cooperation and accommodating minority religious views. The curriculum aligns attitudes and actions, reflecting a key aspect of the ruling party's manifesto (Jahanzaib, et al., 2021). Implementation occurs in three stages: Grades 1-5

(2021–22), Grades 6–8 (2022–23), and Grades 9–12 (2023–24). The Federal Government mandates SNC in all schools and madrasas, except in Sindh during the initial phase (Naqvi, 2021).

By considering the current status of SNC, it has been implemented for Grade 1-5. An Online Teachers Training Program for SNC was inaugurated by Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar (Academia Magazine, 2021). This Training Programme was held in different phases and rounds. In order to train teachers from both the commercial and public sectors, PITB and Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development - SED have partnered in the goal of implementing the Single National Curriculum (SNC) that former Prime Minister Imran Khan had envisioned. In order to deliver the online trainings, PITB has designed a comprehensive infrastructure. Aiming to train more than 400,000 teachers, the SNC has begun registration and enrolment for primary school teachers from both sectors across Punjab in its first phase. On the day SNC Online Courses launched, more than 45,000 teachers had already signed up (PITB, 2021). Academy for Educational Development under Quaid-e-Azam (QAED), Punjab has adopted a hybrid model of SNC Training 2021 for Primary School Teachers (PSTs) consisting of six days. The details of the model adopted is given below:

- Three days activity-based SNC training on Microsoft Teams by Mater Trainers (MTs)
- Three days SNC training on state-of-the-art Learning Management Systems (LMS on Web/Android/iPhone) with digital learning content including videos

### **Steps to implementing SNC (2020)**

The Pakistani government plans to implement the Single National Curriculum (SNC) from the 2021–2022 school year, starting with primary education. English will be taught with a focus on skills using SNC, 2020 materials. Islamiyat becomes a separate academic discipline from Grade 1, with SNC offering religious education for five religions. Social Studies promotes patriotism and global citizenship. Modern teaching methods will be employed for math and science. SNC-based teacher training and assessment frameworks are under development. To address concerns, the gradual introduction of SNC, especially in rural areas, was favored over simultaneous implementation for all grades. There are apprehensions among teachers, particularly in private schools, regarding language medium and students' comprehension skills. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between SNC and the Cambridge syllabus in Pakistan (Shaukat, 2021).

### **Literature Review**

The article explores the needs met by online in-service teacher training and the methodologies employed (Jung, 2011). Ensuring that both in-service and pre-service teachers possess the knowledge and skills to effectively choose and use educational technology is a primary goal in educational technology research (Collier et al., 2004; Wood et al., 2005). However, consensus on subject matter and procedures remains elusive due to diverse contexts requiring different strategies.

Numerous studies have identified content priorities and effective methodologies (Watson, 2001; Taylor, 2003; Sime & Priesley, 2005; Muzaffar, 2016). Despite differences stemming from pedagogical stances, goals, culture, educational systems, and available

resources, a common thread is the necessity of teaching educational technology using the same tools future educators will use with their students.

Research often recommends online or blended learning strategies to enhance teacher preparation in educational technology (Prendergast, 2004; Triggs & John, 2004). Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) approaches, particularly in communities of practice, are highlighted for their potential in facilitating collaboration among mature and independent learner trainee teachers (Vonderwell & Turner, 2005). Diverse learning communities are seen as beneficial, outweighing the challenges associated with managing heterogeneous groups (Rowley et al., 2005).

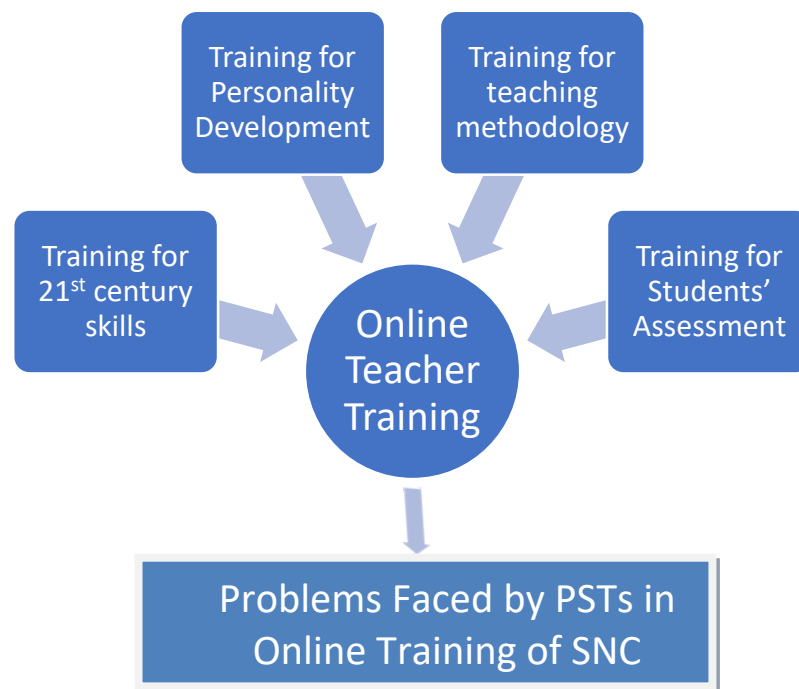
Some studies emphasize tailored training for specific audiences, such as teaching content-specific applications of technology through contextual practice (Sutherland et al., 2004; Otero et al., 2005). Overall, the literature underscores the integration of educational technology in teacher education, advocating for methods that mirror the tools educators will use in their classrooms.

### Conceptual Framework

The current study has multiple aspects to be focused, which are as following.

1. Problems faced in online training of Single National Curriculum (SNC)
2. Training for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including analytical, critical and creative thinking
3. Training for Personality Development of Student (Morally, Ethically)
4. Training for teaching methodology discouraging rote memorization and focusing on activity-based learning
5. Training for Students' Assessment (Class Assessment and emerging international trends in teaching, learning & assessment)

Following is the representation of conceptual framework of the study.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study****Material and Methods**

In this section, the philosophical research paradigm, nature of the study, population and sampling of study, instrumentation along with its validity and reliability, data collection and its analysis and ethical consideration is discussed. At the end of the chapter, a timeframe table is also given.

**Philosophical Research Paradigm**

The study followed the interpretivist research paradigm which is used only in qualitative research.

**Nature of the Study**

This study was qualitative in nature and based on phenomenology in order to study the perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of online training of SNC.

**Population and Sampling**

The in-service, primary school (public and private) teachers in district Lahore who have got training of SNC was the population of the study. A sample of 07 primary school teachers (PSTs) was chosen on the basis of purposive sampling technique. The reason of using this technique is to target those participant who will serve the purpose of the study.

**Instrumentation**

A self-developed semi-constructed interview protocol was used in order to conduct this study. The interview protocol was developed by the researcher on the basis of overall aims and objectives of single national curriculum (SNC). The interview was taken for 30-45 minutes. The validity of the instrument was assured through experts. The amendments in the interview protocol was made according to experts' opinion. The trustworthiness of the interview protocol was checked by conducting an interview from the pool of sample in order to check whether the tool is reliable enough in collecting the required information regarding the problem under study.

**Data Collection and Analysis Techniques**

Data was collected by taking interviews of the respondents telephonically. All the questions of the interview were discussed with the respondents before conducting interview. All the interviews were recorded by taking the consent of the respondent. After taking all the interviews, the interviews were then transcribed in English language. The researcher used thematic analysis to create codes from each transcript's meaningful statements. The researcher evaluated the codes' suitability with the assertions to ensure internal validation of the codes. A colleague with extensive research and teaching expertise reviewed the codes and coding to prevent researcher bias. The researcher read through all of the interview materials numerous times after completing the transcription stage in order to identify the primary themes and phenomena. In light of the research objectives, the categories and codes for these categories were created. The concept of the coding process has been mostly derived from the objectives of single national curriculum (SNC).

## Ethical Consideration

The researcher took consent from all the participants before starting the interview. It was communicated to the respondents that the interview was recorded only for analysis purpose. All the ethical consideration was first monitored before taking any further steps. All collected data was kept confidential and was only be used for research purpose. Same was also be communicated to all the respondents before the interview.

## Results and Discussion

The current study endeavors to find the perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of training. The study was guided by an overarching research questions i.e., to examine the problems faced by primary school teachers in online training of Single National Curriculum (SNC) and to find the perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of training. The collected data was analyzed by thematic analysis. Codes and then categories were generated in the light of research questions. Themes and sub-themes are discussed below in accordance to the research questions.

**Table 1**  
**Themes and Sub-Themes**

Themes	Sub-Themes
Awareness of SNC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality</li> </ul>
Concerns Regarding Online Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-familiarity with Technology</li> <li>Lack of Interaction</li> </ul>
Continuous Training	No Sub-theme
Teaching Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperative Learning (active learning, project, inquiry, discouraging rote learning)</li> <li>Problem-Solving (Critical Thinking)</li> </ul>
Behavioral Moral Development	No Sub-theme
Assessment Strategies	No Sub-theme

Responses along with the themes is discussed below. Each response has given by a code like for respondent 1 it is mentioned R1, R2, and R3 and so on.

### Awareness of Single National Curriculum

The first theme was the awareness of primary school teachers about single national curriculum (SNC). All the participants were asked about the aim and objectives of single national curriculum. Teachers were well aware of the objectives of SNC. The respondents mentioned about uniformity and similarity in content at national level for public and private school students.

### Equality

The respondents were of the view that SNC is basically the similarity in content in order to create equivalence among the nation and to eliminate the feeling of inferiority from the students. SNC is also a suitable and appropriate curriculum according to needs of different classes in a society. Respondents also highlighted the importance of SNC and said that it provides equal opportunities to both public and private students. During the discussion participant R3 said:

*“SNC stands for single national curriculum. It aims to present equal opportunity for students to have uniformity in objectives, contents, medium of instruction and assessment. It is a great initiative of the PTI government. It was decided to implement SNC up to class 5 by the end of 2021, up to class 8 by 2022 and up to class 10 by the end of 2023. It has some special*

characteristics, like starting Islamic study and religious education by class 1 as a separate subject. Prior to this, these were included in general knowledge book. The syllabus was aligned with some international standards, especially of mathematics and science”.

Participants highlighted the importance of SNC. One of the participant R5 were of the view that:

*“SNC is a suitable and appropriate curriculum according to needs of different classes in a society [which provides] unity at national level [and] equal opportunity”.*

### **Concerns Regarding Online Training**

Teachers find this training useful to some extent, likewise few teachers highlighted that the online training sessions were boring and often complain of lacking the motivation leading to a loss of interest towards getting training. It was of the view that training sessions may be improved by few amendments. Few of the participants mentioned the benefits of online mode of training of SNC. R3 were of the view that:

*“I think it was useful as online medium is becoming more familiar these days, especially in COVID situation. It also saves time and money spent in travelling. Other issues like problems related risks on roads and the effect of environment is also avoided”.*

Respondent R6 said that:

*“Online training needs more resources. I used to buy internet packages that costs me too much”.*

Along with its advantages, few respondents highlighted its flaws as they are mentioned in following sub-themes.

### **Non-Familiarity with Technology**

Technology makes teaching and learning process easier for students as well as for the teachers in order to find information quickly and accurately. This paradigm shift has caused advantages and disadvantages in their education activities like teaching and training. It is also useful in conducting trainings of primary school teachers regarding SNC. Data highlighted that few of the teachers were not familiar with the use of such technology gadgets. They find it hard in getting training online. Majority of the participants responded that they have faced internet connectivity issue which is generally associated with low internet bandwidth. In this regard, R3 responded that;

*“It created a bit problem in the beginning, however the problems were resolved. Continuous sharing of videos related the usage of mobile phone for meeting help a lot. These were shared by the department”.*

Another respondent R4 were of the view that:

*“I was not aware of mobile application usage. I learnt from my husband and watching videos from YouTube:*

### **Lack of Interaction**

For both trainees and trainers, the challenges of face-to-face teaching and learning were the lack of social presence and the sense of community. Social interaction in online training can lead to increased trainees engagement, motivation, and can help improve

instructional strategies. Although it was very useful training sessions but the importance of face-to-face interaction can never be denied. Respondent R1 said:

*“Although it was a healthy activity, yet it did not beat the effects of face-to-face meetings”.*

Face to face interaction helps in trust building among the participants. Face-to-face communication can demonstrate your concern for your coworker's needs. Your credibility as an active participant may enhance if they can tell from your body language that you are being open. It also helps in resolving the conflicts very nicely. It provides clarity to conversations and it lesser the misconceptions. Although, face to face interaction is the quickest way of communicating. Respondent R4 said:

*“Virtual trainings are good but the lack of face to face interaction cause problems in understanding the concepts. It may lead to misconceptions”*

The respondents' responses reflect that online training mode is advantageous but the benefits of face to face interaction cannot be overlooked. It has its own advantages as it provides better understanding of the concept by reducing the misconceptions.

### **Continuous Training**

Continuous training of SNC empowers primary school teachers. It gives them the confidence in teaching and learning the uniform content across the nation. Continuous training ensures PSTs have a nodding acquaintance with every new equipment the company acquires and all the risks it comes with. Training of SNC is necessary so that teachers may cope with the new teaching and learning strategies aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century. When the teachers are trained enough it would be helpful in transferring the knowledge effectively and manageably. Participants were of the view that there should be frequent training sessions of SNC so that teachers can understand the emerging trends and challenges by the implementation of SNC at classroom level. Respondents also mentioned that training is not enough to fully grasp the concepts of SNS. Respondent 2 mentioned:

*“No, I don't think so [that the training is enough]. However, to some extent, I have understood the concept of SNC”.*

Another respondent R3 were of the view that:

*“Training is not enough. However, it was fruitful. It must be continued”.*

So, the above responses reflect that the training phases are insufficient, it should remain continues in order to get deeper understanding of the concepts of SNC. It would also help in integration of the SNC in classroom setting accurately.

### **Teaching Strategies**

The use of teaching tactics in the classroom is crucial. Teachers would be haphazardly projecting material that doesn't connect with students or interest them without the usage of a technique. Strategies foster engagement, connection, and enthusiasm in the delivery of the content. Participants highlighted that using of multiple teaching strategies, teacher can make their learners an active participant in teaching learning process. It keeps students active. In answering the question related to teaching strategies mentioned in SNC training, respondents R1 were of the view that:

*“Different strategies were shared, like verbal, non-verbal, and written. In verbal, words are used as the source of communication. In non-verbal different gesture and postures are used. While the communication may be done through written expressions”.*

Following are the sub-themes drawn from the responses.

### **Cooperative Learning**

Students engage in collaborative learning, where they work together to accomplish assignments over the course of several weeks or one class period. Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy that tries to divide classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences, something that was emphasized during SNC training. Group work, team work, peer work, pair work are the strategies which were mentioned by the participants. One of the respondent R7 said:

*“Learning format that requires the cooperation of a small number of students to complete a task together”.*

While asking for the cooperative learning strategies, one of the respondent replied:

*“I don't remember their names exactly. But generally, it was disused that divide the students into groups and assign them a task then try to produce an environment of competition among the groups”.*

Cooperative learning is an active learning strategy which allows students to be a potential participant. It allows students to work together which in turn enhance their skills like communication. Students learnt the way they can socially interact in society. Participants also highlighted another method of active learning that is project method in which children solve a practical problem over a period of several days or weeks. Students are allowed to work in a group to solve particular problem. Participants highlighted the importance of the use of different teaching strategies. One major advantage highlighted was the discouraging rote learning. R5 were of the view that:

*“Use of teaching strategies helps in minimizing rote learning as it keeps students engaged and active”*

### **Problem Solving**

The main goal of problem-solving techniques is to guide a team or group through the process of first recognizing issues and difficulties. It is a process of overcoming difficulties that appear to interfere with the attainment of a goal. It requires critical thinking which leads towards creativity. Critical thinking is required for problem solving by considering each and every single aspect of the problem. Respondents highlighted that at primary level it is very hard to make student enable as a critical thinker and problem solver. As it requires the application of knowledge so at primary level this is a difficult task. In SNC training, different strategies were highlighted that are mentioned by the respondents. R1 were of the view that:

*“It is a higher-order skill. Creativity can be developed through giving them unseen questions”.*

R1 also mentioned that:



*"It is a bit hard to make primary level students as a critical thinker".*

Respondent 3 highlighted the ways by which one can promote creativity among students. Respondent said:

*"Unseen questions and situations may be presented to develop creativity among students. These may be asked to write through mind mapping technique. These may be asked to develop some new design on paper or paint something of their own choice".*

Respondent 4 highlighted a technique that was mentioned in the SNC trainings. R4 said:

*"I think some techniques were discussed, but these were not enough to instill the skills of critical thinking. I required lots of experience and mastery of skill. Still, I feel difficulty to make my student as critical thinker".*

Respondent 6 were of the view that:

*"It depends upon the method of presenting the content and the way teacher teach. SNC is arranged in different way. It does not promote rote learning, but the stress of getting marks in the exams, may force student to memorize the content, without understanding".*

The responses of the respondents reflect that in the training the emphasis on activity-based learning, cooperative learning, project method and problem-solving teaching and learning strategies was more because it discourages the rote learning. It also reflects the strategies enhancing creative thinking i.e., unseen questions and mind mapping techniques.

### **Behavioral Moral Development**

By looking at both the development of increasingly complex behaviors and the learning of fundamental abilities, behavioral development takes a behavior analytic approach to the study of human development and behavior change over the lifetime. A method for behavior development is positive reinforcement. Another component of SNC training is moral development, which involves principles of right and wrong in their community based on social, cultural, and legal norms. All the respondents were of the view that in SNC training, there was a great emphasis on behavioral moral development. Respondent 1 were of the view that:

*"Observe the behavior of the student and then mold that by modeling or feedback. Better to use reinforcement, instead of punishment".*

Respondent 4 highlighted the ways of behavior modification as:

*"The behavior of the student may be modified through modeling. The teacher is the best modal for students. Furthermore, storytelling method may be utilized for this purpose".*

The above responses reflect that behavior can be modify by the use of a strategy that is modeling. A teacher is a model for his/her students, so it can be a technique for behavior development of student. Along with modeling, mind mapping is another strategy for behavior modification and moral development among students. Positive reinforcement is another way for behavior development. Mind mapping can be a strategy which serve as driven factor for moral development of students. The moral

values that were highlighted in SNC training were Honesty, truthfulness, fair play, and commitment.

### Assessment Strategies

Assessment strategies are the strategies that can be used in order to assess students for placement of students and diagnosis of their needs. Respondents were asked about the assessment strategy used, mostly were of the view that they use formative and summative assessment techniques. Different types of assessment strategies that were highlighted in SNC training. Portfolio assessment and other assessment techniques was mentioned by the respondents. R7 were of the view that:

*“Different assessment techniques may be used in this regard. Assessment for learning, and assessment of learning, oral, written assessment techniques may be used. Assessment is the only tool to measure students’ abilities and capabilities”.*

Few respondents highlight feedback as an assessment strategy. R3 responded:

*“Feedback is done on the basis of assessment. It is very necessary to motivate the students and let them continue their efforts”.*

R5 responded:

*“Yes, it is necessary to provide feedback after assessment. Students are guided towards their destination by overcoming the lacks in studies”.*

R6 responded about assessment:

*“We are not assessing the students in such a way that are necessary to assess them. As for as emerging international trends in teaching, learning & assessment concerns; regrettably, we don’t bother to learn and know them”.*

The above responses reflect that in SNC training, portfolio assessment, assessment for learning and assessment of learning along with oral or written assessment techniques. *Feedback* is another strategy highlighted in the SNC training.

Single National Curriculum (SNC) has been developed and implemented at primary school level (grade 1-5). In order to train teachers from both the commercial and public sectors, PITB and Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development - SED have partnered in the goal of implementing the Single National Curriculum (SNC) that former Prime Minister Imran Khan had envisioned. In this approach, PITB created an online training platform. There have been various rounds and periods of training. The researcher aims to look into the difficulties primary school teachers have when taking online courses. Researcher also want to find out the perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of training. Whether the aims of training were aligned with the aims of SNC. In the light of stated objectives, research questions were developed. To address those research questions, sample was chosen from the population by using purposive sampling technique. Sample was consisting of primary school teacher (PSTs) in district Lahore from both public and private sector. An interview protocol for PSTs was developed by the researcher. The research instrument was validated by the experts and amendments were made as per their opinion. An interview was conducted in order to check the reliability of the instrument. After reliability analysis, data was collected by taking interviews and then thematic analysis was done for drawing the findings. The results showed that PSTs were well aware of SNC.

## **Discussion**

The first research question that this study aimed at answering was about the challenges that PSTs has faced during online mode of training. In this regard, data highlighted that few of the teachers were not familiar with the use of such technology gadgets. They find it hard in getting training online. It is pertinent to mention here that in such online trainings there is always connectivity error or internet bandwidth issue. Although online training mode is advantageous but the benefits of face to face interaction cannot be overlooked. It has its own advantages as it provides better understanding of the concept by reducing the misconceptions. To ensuring that in-service and pre-service teachers have the knowledge and expertise necessary to choose and use educational technology effectively is a primary goal of research into educational technology, according to both policymakers and academics (Collier et al. 2004; Wood et al. 2005). Online or blended learning strategies are frequently suggested in research that address how educational technology might be used to improve teacher preparation. These can take the shape of fully developed institutional courses, typically utilized in pre-service training (Prendergast 2004; Gray et al. 2004), or communities of practice, typically involving in-service teachers (Triggs & John 2004; Hartnell-Young 2005).

The second research question was about the perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of training for example continuous training, multiple teaching strategies, behavioral and moral development and assessment strategies were emphasized. Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) approaches hold significant promise, particularly for mature and independent trainee teachers who bring a wealth of skills and competencies. Collaborative processes are deemed highly productive, especially when involving individuals with diverse backgrounds and levels of experience (Vonderwell & Turner, 2005). Several studies propose that the richness stemming from differences within the learning community has a positive impact that outweighs drawbacks, primarily associated with managing a heterogeneous group (Rowley et al., 2005). The study's relevance extends to stakeholders, emphasizing the need for enhancements in training aspects, including the continuity of training.

## **Conclusion**

The study's initial goal was to researcher wants to investigate the problems faced by primary school teachers in online training. Researcher also want to find out the perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of training. Whether the aims of training were aligned with the aims of SNC. A study found that teachers think SNC will assist Pakistan in the future in becoming a strong and united country. The promotion of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal's values would result from ensuring that all children obtain an equal education of the best caliber. It will support Pakistan's efforts to combat poverty. The problems faced by primary school teachers in online training of Single National Curriculum (SNC) were mainly non-familiarity with technology and lack of face-to-face interaction. Internet connectivity and bandwidth issue was another issue that was highlighted. The perception of primary school teachers regarding multiple aspects of training for example continuous training, multiple teaching strategies, behavioral and moral development and assessment strategies were emphasized. The study also holds importance for stakeholders as it recommends improvement of certain aspects of training including continuity of training.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been put forth:

1. It is recommended that the training phases may be continued so that teachers can understand the emerging trends and challenges by the implementation of SNC at classroom level.
2. It is also recommended that mode of training can be shifted from online to physical training so that there may be face-to-face interaction which enable participants away from misunderstand/misconceptions of concepts.
3. There should be more funding supplied to solve the dearth of resources in schools so that SNC can be effectively implemented.
4. Time management strategies must be the part of teachers training regarding SNC.

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