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Single National Curriculum in Afghanistan: An Examination of Law and Political Science

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Abstract

A successful education system enables its beneficiaries to achieve their goals and objectives and is a key indicator of the progress of a country. However, the higher education system in Afghanistan has fallen short of the above. Recently, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) processed a Single National Curriculum (SNC) to reform higher education. The paper seeks to critically evaluate if SNC is the solution to problems in higher education and to use the curriculum adopted for Law and Political Science as a case study. In this regard, the paper is divided into two parts. Part one discusses the drawbacks of SNC and challenges in its implementation. It is observed that SNC is against the laws and regulations in place, and guidelines issued by MOHE. Also, SNC is an attempt to take away the academic autonomy of institutions of higher education since their creativity and innovation in the curriculum is undermined, and the critical thinking capacity of students is eclipsed barring them from thinking differently. In part two of this paper, an attempt is made to examine problems in the curriculum for the Departments of Law and Political Science. By adopting a comparative approach, the Afghan curriculum is compared with that approved by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) and the University Grant Commission of India (UGC). It is found out that Political Science is treated as part of Law; subjects offered in the field are out-of-place, and the focus is on a cursory study of law, political science, international relations and diplomacy. Resultantly, a graduate is a “jack of all trades, master of none.”

Key Words: Afghanistan, Single National Curriculum, Political Science, Law, Curriculum

Introduction

The only constant in the education system is change. In today's growing and rapidly changing world; where knowledge is only a click away from the students, it is highly needed for higher education to replace the traditional way of learning with a more advanced and specialized education system. For improving the education sector, revising the curriculum of the universities is a basic and fundamental step. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in coordination with Asia foundation commenced a program “*Barnama Baznigaree Wa Inkeshaf Nisab-e Tahsilee Rishta Huqooq wa Uollom Siasee wa Rawabit Bainul Milal*” to revise the curriculum of Law and Political Science taught in different public and private universities. In the winter of 2018, the ministry appointed a committee composed of experts and professionals from different fields ranging from the personnel of MOHE to university lecturers and officials of the ministry of justice, ministry of labor, and social affairs.¹

After revising the curriculums of different universities, the experts of MOHE submitted their report by stating that the diversification of curriculum in different universities overlaps in topics of the subjects offered by universities, absence of a unified and national code number for the subjects offered, vague credit systems, and educational disparities

¹ MoHE, “*Barnama Baznigaree Wa Inkeshaf Nisab-e Tahsilee Rishta Huqooq wa Uollom Siasee wa Rawabit Bainul Milal*,” Faculty of Law and Political Science, (2018), 1-447.

were some of the major issues and problems for Law and political science in the country. The ministry after reading the curriculums of different countries like Pakistan, India, Iran, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia took the decision of introducing a single National Curriculum; in which all the universities across the country would follow and implement one curriculum for law and political science proposed by the ministry of higher education. The main motive behind introducing a single national curriculum in the country was to bring reforms and eliminate disparities in higher education, and unify the country by implementing a single curriculum that would be following Islamic and national values.²

SNC aims at introducing a unified curriculum to the beneficiaries of the education sector across the country; which would ensure quality higher education to all people irrespective of their class, color, creed and religion, and ethnicity. Moreover, SNC helps in eradicating educational disparities, and promotes social equality across different classes within a country, which will ultimately ensure unity and harmony amongst different sections of society; as there would not be any differences in education as well as in the work environment of the people.³ By scrutinizing the benefits of SNC, some countries like; France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Russia, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, and Singapore implement the unified education system in secondary schools, whereas due to political and socio-economic differences, the system is a contentious in higher education, hence most of the countries have ensured autonomy to higher education.

2. Problems in a single national curriculum

Although, the program seems promising to ears, but is accompanied by many drawbacks and flaws, and is difficult to implement. The first, and most important error in SNC is its contradiction with the guidelines proposed by the ministry of higher education to the universities. Article ten of the “Muqarara Aamozesh Lisans” directs the Academic councils of universities to formulate the curriculum based on their vision and mission and share it with the students and ministry. On the other hand, the ministry directs the universities to accept and implement a unified curriculum. Accepting SNC proposed by MOHE would not achieve the vision and mission of the universities, as each university based on their vision and mission, offer the courses to their students, if the universities follow SNC, it will not achieve the proposed goals of the universities.⁴ In addition, the single national curriculum would undermine the autonomy of the universities, where the universities will be more dependent on the ministry of higher education for their curriculum, teacher appointments, research and publications, and exams of the universities. Whereas, in the 21st-century universities tend to be more autonomous and independent of government control to function properly. Autonomous educational institutions would allow the university to make independent decisions, set a curriculum based on their vision and mission, introduce models of learning which suit them the best, and conduct exams based on their student’s requirements.⁵

The universities in India and Pakistan both work under the auspices of UGC and HEC respectively, by maintaining their autonomy in providing their curriculum, budgeting,

² Ibid, 1-447

³ Henna Ahsan, “Analyzing the pros and cons of single national curriculum,” *Pakistan Institute of Development Economics*. Retrieved from, <https://pide.org.pk/research/analyzing-the-pros-and-cons-of-single-national-curriculum/>;

⁴ MoHE, “Muqarara Aamozesh Lisans,” *Rasmee Jareeda*, (2021), 15-91.

⁵ Mustak Ahmad, “Top 3 reasons why higher education institutions should focus on achieving autonomy,” Master soft. Retrieve from <Top 3 Reasons Why Higher Education Institutions should focus on Achieving Autonomy (iitms.co.in).

and recruitment procedures. Whereas in Afghanistan, there is no autonomy for the universities, and are controlled by the government. The world bank is promoting substantive, procedural, and financial autonomy of higher education in Afghanistan. Substantive autonomy includes curriculum design, research policy, entrance standards, academic staff appointments, and the award of degrees. On the other hand, Procedural autonomy is related to university management, budgeting, financial management, procurement of nonacademic staff, and construction management. Whereas, in Afghanistan, there is no autonomy given to the public universities, whether it is curriculum, recruitment of the faculty members, allocation of financial or material means for carrying out research activities, and helping the students, which has retarded the developmental work by the respective universities.⁶

Critics of a single national curriculum also point out, that the policy proposed by MOHE is simply an attempt to the enslavement of academics with the policies and ideologies of the government. The ministry has issued the statement that all universities should implement a unified curriculum in compliance with Islamic and national values.⁷ Restricting the universities to offer only the courses which suit the interest of the government best, is simply an attempt to kill and extinguish the creativity, innovation, and critical thinking capacity of the students and teachers. As the ministry would set limits on the subjects offered, and the content taught in universities and would confine them to fixed subjects, not allowing the students to question issues. The policy would give more power to religious scholars, government officials, and policymakers to intervene in processing and offering curriculum to universities, as per their wishes and beliefs, which will restrict students from understanding science and metaphysics.⁸

By introducing the new policy, the ministry is intending to end the education apartheid, by bringing the universities closer. The ministry of higher education believes that there are higher educational disparities in the form of quality of education, credits offered, and the facilities provided to them. Although, the intention seems positive, but very difficult to implement. Some universities in the center are highly facilitated and have a large number of qualified faculty members, who teach subjects of their expertise, whereas the universities in provinces and some private universities are facing issues in the recruitment of qualified lecturers. So, offering the same subjects and the same curriculum in differently equipped universities is unjust, and irrational.⁹ Moreover, students joining higher education come from different socio-economic backgrounds and have different skills, languages, and absorbing capacities, which will affect their understanding level and jeopardize their careers. Hence, it is better to give a high level of autonomy to universities, which will set curriculum, exam papers, and term papers according to their student's level of understanding.¹⁰

The proposed policy of a single national curriculum can neither succeed in eliminating educational disparities from universities, nor it can ensure qualitative higher education. Hence, it is imperative for the ministry of higher education to look into the actual

⁶ David J. Roof, "Day by Day: Higher education in Afghanistan," *Forum for International Research in Education* (2015), 64-80.

⁷ MOHE, "Barnama Baznigaree Wa Inkeshaf Nisab-e Tahsilee Rishta Huqooq wa Uollom Siasee wa Rawabit Bainul Milal," Faculty of Law and Political Science, (2018), 1-447.

⁸ Aakriti Vinayak, "Single National Curriculum in Pakistan: A recipe for disaster?" *Vivekananda International Foundation*. Retrieved from <<https://www.vifindia.org/2021/october/29/single-national-curriculum-in-pakistan-a-recipe-for-disaster>>

⁹ Faisal Bari, "One Curriculum?" *Dawn*. Retrieved from <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1508901>>

¹⁰ Haider Kaleem, "Single National Curriculum: Anything New?" *Voicepk.net*. Retrieve from <<https://voicepk.net/2020/08/single-national-curriculum-anything-new/>>

problems that lie in higher education, especially in the political science department, and strive for solving the existing issues in the curriculum of political science, as political science in Afghanistan has been dealt with completely different from rest of the world, and is considered as a sub-discipline of law, which affects the overall quality of political science curriculum.

3. Political Science as a discipline

The history of political science as a field of study dates back to the 4th century BC when Plato discussed about the concepts such as Republic, justice, virtue, and forms of polities between 348 BC-428 BC. Aristotle after spending 20 years in Plato's academy, established his own lyceum in Athens, where he collected 158 constitutions of Greek city-states. In the medieval ages, scholars like Thomas Aquinas 1225-1274, Niccolo Machiavelli 1469-1527, Thomas Hobbes 1588-1679, John Locke 1632-1704, and Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778 have written about the concepts of enlightenment, human nature, social contract and forms of government. In modern times political science as a field of study developed in the late 19th and early twentieth century in the United States of America and Europe. The University of Columbia, Chicago University, Princeton, Yale, Stanford, and MIT are among the first universities, which have established the department of Political Science between 1880-1920.¹¹

In the Indian sub-continent, the first universities establishing political Science departments as a discipline of the study were Lucknow university in 1921, and Punjab university in 1933. Whereas in Afghanistan, the faculty of Law and Political Science was established in 1938. Political Science is an interdisciplinary subject; annexing with other fields of study like sociology, anthropology, international relations, public administration, economics and so on. However, it has been regarded as a distinct field of study, independent of other social sciences, which should be studied as a separate discipline. In most of the well-known universities in the world Political science is an independent field of study, whereas in Afghanistan it is interdependent on the faculty of law, hence making the curriculum of political science in the country less effective and diverse for the students of political science.

3.1 Political Science syllabus in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India

As per the policy and guidelines of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in Afghanistan, there are four types of subjects offered to the students of law and political science in Afghanistan; namely Core subjects, General subjects, specialization, and optional, which is similar to the University Grant Commission (UGC) in India, and Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan, but the types of subjects offered in both the countries is different from Afghanistan. As per MOHE guidelines bachelor's degree in Afghanistan is four years, with 37 subjects which constitutes 136 credit hours at least, and each student should not opt for more than 21 credits per semester, which is 16 study weeks except exams. A student in his under-graduation should choose 30% core, 50% specialization, 12% general and optional courses, and 8% thesis work.¹² In Pakistan BS political science is a four years degree, with 41 subjects and 130 credit hours. Each semester should be between 16-18 weeks. A student cannot exceed the number of credits from 18 credit hours per semester. Of the total offered 41 subjects; 9 are compulsory courses (25 credit hours), 7 are general courses from other disciplines (21 credit hours), 9

¹¹ Mazhar ul Haq, *Political Science: Theory and practice* (Lahore: Bookland, 2019), 1-26.

¹² MoHE, "guideline of credit system for universities on bachelor's level," Retrieved from <لوائح | وزارت تحصیلات عالی (mohe.gov.af)>

discipline-specific foundation courses (32 credit hours), 12 major courses including research projects (40 credits), and 4 elective subjects (12 credit hours.)¹³

In contrast to the curriculum provided by MOHE and HEC for political science, the syllabus in India provided by UGC is quite different. First, the duration for a bachelor in political science in India is 3 years, and the types of program which India offers is BA program and BA Honors. In the BA program, students get to know about political science and other fields of social sciences collectively, whereas in the BA Honors students specifically study political science as a specialization from the very beginning. So, in BA honors students only study political science in detail, but in the BA program, they have to study sociology, economics, English literature, and Psychology as optional subjects. Moreover, the systems of under-graduation and post-graduation in India are not unanimous. The universities and colleges in India function under the auspices of UGC, but mostly the universities have their internal autonomy in providing subjects, and the credits which should be offered, hence some universities offering BA programs have annual programs, whereas other universities offering BA honors are either semester-wise or credit system.¹⁴ Universities with BA honors follow the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), through which the universities should complete 140 credit hours by offering core, elective, and ability enhancement courses. The core courses are subject-specific and are compulsory for students of political science. A student should at least study 14 core papers (56 credits), elective courses are divided into discipline-specific electives (DSE), which are chosen from the field itself, and a student should study 4 papers (16 credits), and Generic Elective (GE) which are general courses across other fields, and a student should study 4 papers (16 credits), Dissertation/project (6 credits). And ability enhancement courses are divided into ability enhancement compulsory courses and ability enhancement elective courses, and students should choose 2 papers of 2 credits from each of them. The courses offered would either be practical or tutorial.¹⁵

Political science as a scientific field of study discusses the concepts such as forms of government, different constitutions, legitimacy and legality of a government, justice, virtue, Rights, liberty, and equality of citizens within a country. Keeping the mentioned areas of study in mind, the University Grant Commission of India and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan have created their syllabus for the field. The compulsory courses provided by HEC in universities of Pakistan for under-graduation are Introduction to Political Science, English 1, English 2, English 3, English 4, Pak studies, Islamic studies, math's, and introduction to basics in computer. General courses from other departments offered by HEC are economics, law, logic, Psychology, history of civilization, and Geography. Discipline courses offered by HEC are Introduction to political science 1, introduction to political science 2, political systems of developed countries, political systems of developing countries, Western political philosophy 1, western political philosophy 2, Muslim political philosophy 1, Muslim political

¹³ HEC, "curriculum of Political Science BS/MS," *HEC official website*. Retrieve from <<https://hec.gov.pk/english/services/universities/RevisedCurricula/Documents/2012-2013/Political%20Science%202012-13.pdf>>

¹⁴ Himani Mamgain, "What is the difference between BA hons and simple BA," *Careers 360.com*. Retrieve from <<https://www.careers360.com/question-what-is-the-difference-between-ba-honours-and-simple-ba-what-would-you-prefer>>

¹⁵ UGC, "Choice based credit system: University of Delhi, Department of political Science," *University of Delhi*. Retrieve from <http://www.du.ac.in/uploads/Administration/AC/10072015/Annexure/10072015_Annexure-51.pdf>

philosophy 2, and Pakistan movement.¹⁶ The core courses including research are Introduction to international relations, comparative and development politics 1, comparative and development politics 2, history of International relations 1, ideology and dynamics of Pakistan's politics, foreign policy of Pakistan, research methodology, foreign policy analysis, introduction to local government, international organization, diplomacy, and the political economy of Pakistan. The optional or elective courses within the field offered are conflict and conflict resolution, foreign policies of the UK and USA, Public Administration, and lastly, constitutional development and Pakistan's politics. The above subjects are mostly 3 credits.¹⁷

In India also, the core courses are mostly related to the forms of government and political processes in India. The subjects offered under the category of core courses are understanding political theory, constitutional government and democracy in India, political theory- concepts and debates, political processes in India, comparative politics, public administration, perspectives on international relations and world history, political processes and institutions in comparative perspectives, public policy and administration in India, global politics, classical political philosophy, Indian political thought, Modern political philosophy, and Indian political thought 2. Interdisciplinary general courses are Nationalism in India, contemporary political economy, Women, power and politics, Gandhi and the contemporary world, Understanding Ambedkar, Governance: issues and challenges, politics of globalization, United Nations, and global conflicts, of which students should choose only four subjects.¹⁸ Discipline-specific elective courses offered are citizenship in a globalizing world, human rights in a comparative perspective, development process and social movements in contemporary India, public policy in India, Colonialism and nationalism in India, India's foreign policy in a globalized world, feminism: theory and practice, and dilemmas and politics. Of which 4 subjects are chosen. And lastly, ability enhancement subjects are your laws, your rights, public opinion, survey research, legislative practices and procedure, and peace and conflict resolution, out of which students should choose any two. Ability enhancement subjects that are compulsory are language and environmental sciences.¹⁹

Contrary to India and Pakistan the subjects of Political science in Afghanistan are general. Political Science in Afghanistan is interdependent on the faculty of law; hence the faculty does not provide a plethora of options for the students of political science to choose. The core subjects offered in the faculty of law and political science are Introduction to political science, introduction to sociology, Introduction to law, introduction to economic, International organizations, History of International relations, Introduction to political science 2, History of international relations 2, International Organizations 2, history of western political thought, Political terminology, principles of democracy, management, general law, history of western political thought 2, Research methodology, research methodology in Political science and International Relations, Introduction to diplomacy, human rights and comparative law.²⁰ The subject specific subjects (specialization) are

¹⁶ HEC, "curriculum of Political Science BS/MS," *HEC official website*. Retrieve from <<https://hec.gov.pk/english/services/universities/RevisedCurricula/Documents/2012-2013/Political%20Science%202012-13.pdf>>

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ UGC, "Choice based credit system: University of Delhi, Department of political Science," *University of Delhi*. Retrieve from <http://www.du.ac.in/uploads/Administration/AC/10072015/Annexure/10072015_Annexure-51.pdf>

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ MoHE, "Nisab Tahsilee Rishta Uloom Siasee wa Rawabit bainulmilal," *MoHE official website*. Retrieve from <<https://mohe.gov.af>>

fundamental law of Afghanistan, Muslim Political thought, politics and government in South Asia, history of Afghanistan's foreign relations, Muslim political movements, history of political thought in twentieth century, principles of international relations, political geography, modernization and political development, politics and government in Central Asia, principles of leadership, democratic states, economic problems and challenges in third world countries, principles of international relations, international law, political sociology, peace and conflict resolution, globalization, administrative laws, foreign policy analysis, diplomatic and consular laws, politics and government in USA, political system of Afghanistan, political sociology², theories of international relations, foreign policy of major powers, international security, laws of international trade, comparative politics, international political economy, theories of international relations 2, world political issues, and foreign policy of major powers 2.²¹ Besides the core and specialization, there are optional courses as well, which are; computer, principles of writing, environmental sciences, good governance, politics and government in Southeast Asia, politics and government middle east, local government, politics, and government in Europe, Political sociology in Afghanistan, each subject is one credit. The general subjects offered by MOHE are the Contemporary history of Afghanistan and political psychology.²²

3..2 Major problems and challenges for political science in Afghanistan

3.2.1 Integrated with Law

The courses offered by Pakistan and India have similarities and differences with Afghanistan. The major difference is that in both the above countries, the discipline of political science is a separate field of study, as both the countries offer a separate degree course from the beginning in the form of BA honors in Political science (BS Political Science), BA honors International relations and BA LLB; where students would either study political science, International relations or law, which gives students of each discipline to specialize in a specific field of study. In contrast to both countries, In Afghanistan political science and international relations are discussed under the banner of faculty of law; in which students should first study compulsory courses of all three distinct disciplines, and after four semesters, the students are allowed to choose their area of specialization from either law or Administration and diplomacy. Specialization in administration and diplomacy is not related to political science, as political science deals with political theories, and political philosophy, whereas Administration is related to civil services within a country, and diplomacy is a subfield of International relations, not political science.²³ Hence, for A political science student, the current curriculum would have very less opportunities, and this reduces the chances of their expertise in any of the fields. As per the MoHE guidelines, a student should study 136 credits or 37 courses, out of 66 offered courses in 4 year degree. But, of all the offered courses, only 17 are political science related, which are offered under core, general, optional, and specialization subjects, mostly related to introduction to political science, history of western political philosophy, Muslim political philosophy, Muslim movements, and governance issues. Of all the remaining subjects 14 are related to law, and 22 are related to International

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Interview with Lecturer of political science "Kunduz university."

relations, area studies, and diplomacy. And the remaining 13 subjects are miscellaneous.²⁴

3.2.2 Misplacing the subjects

The curriculum development committee of MoHE has misplaced some of the subjects by bringing subjects of one department under the specialization of another department. Introduction to law has been put in the department of political science and international relations. Good governance, local government, modernization, political development, and democratic states are all in the specializations of international relations, whereas they all are topics of political science. Similarly, diplomatic and consular laws, foreign policies of major powers, and theories of international relations should be discussed as specialization in International relations, but they have been brought under political science specialization. Also, some important subjects in political science, such as; Good Governance, and local government, which had to be discussed as core or specialization subjects are brought in optional subjects.²⁵

3.2.3 Generalization of subjects

The subject matter of political science is simply about concepts such as; State, legitimacy, governance, power, authority, liberty, equality, and justice.²⁶ Hence, the curriculum designed by UGC and HEC mainly focuses on papers on Western political philosophy, Muslim political philosophy, Indian political philosophy, political ideologies, local governments, public administration, and political processes in these countries. Whereas the subjects offered in law and political science in Afghanistan are mostly introductory subjects to law, political science, International relations, and other interdisciplinary subjects, which reduces the chances of dexterity of a student in a specific field of study.²⁷ Moreover, Political science mainly deals with the political processes and power-sharing mechanisms within the country. Both India and Pakistan have discussed their federal forms of government, the power symmetry between center and state, political parties in these countries, civil society organizations, colonialism and imperialism, and the constitutional developments of the respective countries through their core, and specialization subjects.²⁸ whereas in Afghanistan the core and specialization subjects do not discuss the political processes, public administration, the government policy in the country, instead the subjects offered in the country are all about the basics of either political science, International relations, or the law. This cannot help students of political science in Afghanistan to specialize in political developments and processes of the country and to know more about the traditional power structure in Afghanistan, the monarchy in the country, and the power-sharing mechanism and different policies proposed by the governments of the country at different times in history.²⁹

Not only this, the syllabus in Pakistan and India, besides discussing western political thought and Muslim political thought, discusses the ideology and thoughts of their prominent figures such as Allama Iqbal, Abul-Ala Al-Maudodi, Dr. Israr Ahmad Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Savarkar and so

²⁴ MoHE, "Nisab Tahsilee Rishta Uloom Siasee wa Rawabit bainulmilal," *MOHE official website*. Retrieve from <<https://mohe.gov.af>>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Rajeev Bhargava and Ashok Acharya, *Political theory: an introduction (New Delhi, Pearson publications, 2008)*, 20-36.

²⁷ MoHE, "Nisab Tahsilee Rishta Uloom Siasee wa Rawabit bainulmilal," *MoHE official website*. Retrieve from <<https://mohe.gov.af>>

²⁸ UGC, "Choice based credit system: *University of Delhi, Department of political Science*,".

²⁹ MoHE, "Nisab Tahsilee Rishta Uloom Siasee wa Rawabit bainulmilal,".

on.³⁰ In the political science department in Afghanistan, no subject is offered about the ideology and views of Afghan scholars, as there are political philosophers in the country; which needs to be discussed in order to have an understanding of Afghan society and politics.³¹ Since political science mainly deals with the state, power, legitimacy, justice, rights, and equality; both India and Pakistan have offered separate subjects by the name of political ideologies and political theories, which mainly focuses on these theories from a different perspective. In India, the curriculum is built in a way, which offers subjects about themes of justice, rights, equality, and citizenship from a western perspective, as well as from the perspective of their own philosophers, such as Dr. Ambedkar and his notion of eliminating the caste system. Mahathma Gandhi's concepts of Swaraj or self-rule, civil disobedience, and non-violence, Chanakya's "*Kautilya's Arthashastra*" about the statecraft and policies of government have been the center of discussion in political science.³² On the contrary, Afghan students who graduated from political science do not know about the Jirga System in Afghanistan, the historical evolution of *Jirga*, *Nizmnama* developed by Amanullah Khan, Syed Jamaluddin Afghan, local government in Afghanistan, the tribal structure of Afghan society, Mahmood Tarzi and the reforms proposed by him, instead, the curriculum development committee in Afghanistan has only included the contemporary history of Afghanistan as a general course for two credits; which is far from being efficient for the students of political science, in order to understand about the political processes and regimes in Afghanistan.³³

3.2.4 Outdated reference material

The curriculum development committee of MOHE has relied more on the course policies, which have been developed and written by Iranian authors. The books and reference material that students of political science refer to in Afghanistan are authored by Irani scholars, which paves the way for Iran's soft power in Afghanistan. This would restrict, political science students from evaluating things from an Irani perspective, not an indigenous Afghan understanding of the situation.³⁴ Contrary to Afghanistan, in India and Pakistan political science syllabus is diverse; comprising subjects developed by western scholars and political scientists from their own countries. Since most of the faculty members in departments of law and political science have studied in Iran or Tajikistan, the curriculum, they have developed is inspired by Irani authors, which does not talk about the political process and changing dynamics of Afghan politics. Also, the reference materials provided by lecturers to the students are outdated, and lecturers do not update themselves and their material according to the changing situation and according to the needs of society.³⁵

3.2.5 Lack of qualified faculty members

Afghanistan has been affected by war and violence for the last four decades, and this has resulted in a brain drain from the country. Excessive brain drain has resulted in the inefficiency of lecturers at public universities. There are various reasons for the inefficiency of faculty members in the department of law and political science. First, most of the faculty members are recruited from universities within Afghanistan, that have high CGPA. Recommendations in recruiting faculty members in public universities highly

³⁰ UGC, "Choice based credit system: University of Delhi, Department of political Science,".

³¹ MoHE, "Nisab Tahsilee Rishta Uloom Siasee wa Rawabit bainulmilal,".

³² UGC, "Choice based credit system."

³³ Interview with political science lecturer at Kardan university.

³⁴ MoHE, "Nisab Tahsilee Rishta Uloom Siasee wa Rawabit bainulmilal,".

³⁵ Interview with political science lecturer in Kunduz university.

play an important role in the country, due to which sometimes the deserving candidates cannot make it to the public universities. Around 50% of the faculty members recruited to teach in universities are bachelor's degree holders. Hence, the ministry of higher education has decided to send its lecturers to foreign countries to pursue master's and PhD degrees. The university lecturers are mostly sent to Iran, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Malaysia, and other countries.³⁶

Second, the faculty members do not understand the English language, which affects their overall performance in the department. The university lecturers who completed their master's or PhD in Iran and other non-English speaking universities are weak in the English language, which has affected their teaching method, the material which they provide, and their research capacity. The lecturers appointed to teach and publish articles and books are incapable of writing research papers; as most of the literature available in political science is the English language, and they have issues in understanding the language, this reduces their efficiency for the students, department of political science and publishing articles and books for reputed journals.³⁷

The third most important reason for the inefficiency of faculty members is their engagement everywhere except in classrooms. Most of the public university lecturers in the department of law and political science, who should be only attending classes, arranging course materials, updating course policies, advising students, and writing research papers, serve as advisors to the president, ministry of higher education, ministry of foreign affairs, and private universities. And lastly, the teacher-student ratio is also an important impediment to the productivity of political science classes and faculty members. The number of students entering higher education is growing, and by 2022 around 625000 school graduates would be entering university, compared to 225000 in 2014. As per university lecturers, there are around 100 students in each class, which increases the student-teacher ratio, and the university has already introduced evening sessions, taught by the same lecturers, and this compromises the quality of the lectures.³⁸

4. Conclusion

Education institutions are always dynamic, accepting change as per the evolving situations. By keeping this thing in mind, the ministry of higher education of Afghanistan has proposed a single national curriculum in order to improve the quality of education and eliminate the existing disparities. But, the decision of MOHE has backlashes, as it cannot solve the existing problems in higher education, in fact, it creates more problems in the form of eliminating the autonomy of the universities, restricting students' creativity and innovative capacities, and taking away the neutrality of education institutions. Instead of the unification of curriculum, the government should focus on the problems in the political science department, as it is a distinct field of study in the rest of the countries. Moreover, the discipline emphasizes the concepts of power, authority, state, government, legitimacy, rights, justice, and equality. In contrast to well-known universities in the world, political science in Afghanistan is a sub-discipline of law and has been taught under the faculty of law. Additionally, the subjects offered in the department of political science in the country are general ones, which is not sufficient for specializing in the field

³⁶ Anthony Welch, "Quality assurance in Afghan higher education: achievements and challenges," *Department of education, university of Sydney*, (2019), 1-15.

³⁷ Mohammad Zahir Akbari, "Glance at challenges of higher educational system," *Daily outlook Afghanistan*. Retrieve from <Glance at Challenges of Higher Educational System - The Daily Outlook Afghanistan>

³⁸ David J. Roof, "Day by Day: Higher education in Afghanistan," *Forum for International Research in Education* (2015), 64-80.

of political science. Also, in Afghanistan's law and political science faculty, the curriculum committee has emphasized more western concepts, instead of building an Afghan narrative about the political processes in Afghanistan. The curriculum, built by the university lecturers is influenced by Irani authors, which restricts the students from thinking beyond that. Also, law and political science lecturers are mostly Iran or Tajikistan graduates, hence they are not fluent in the English language, which is essential for political science graduates for conducting research and preparing lectures, ultimately, they are unable to conduct research, which should help students of political science for improving their skills and potential.

5. Recommendations

1. Independent departments of political science should be established in public and private universities of Afghanistan at both bachelor's and master's levels.
2. Academic, financial, and recruitment autonomy should be given to the universities in order to improve the quality of their studies and research. And, the universities should be allowed to have the autonomy to choose a curriculum, which suits their mission and vision.
3. A committee of professionals and experts should work on developing the minimum curriculum of political science, which should focus on bringing the Afghan narrative of political theories, and bringing the political processes of the country into the syllabus.
4. Faculty members should be sent for higher education outside the country to improve their potential for research and teaching qualities.
5. The faculty members should be prepared and trained to provide updated and diversified material for preparing the students for different spheres of lives.

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