Asian Journal of Academic Research (AJAR)
ISSN-e: 2790-9379
Vol. 6, No. 1 & 2, (2025, Spring/Summer), 13-27.

Narratives Comparing Punjab's New Matric Subjects with International Education Standards (International Baccalaureate and Cambridge)

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Abstract:

Punjab has introduced four new subject groups in the matric curriculum as part of a new educational reform. These subjects include Health Science, Information Technology, Agriculture, and Entrepreneurship. The aim of this initiative is to better prepare students for a competitive job market. The research addressed three key questions: How do these subjects compare with International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge curricula? Do they adequately prepare students for global job markets and higher education? What areas require improvement? The study adopted a qualitative comparative approach involving document reviews to explore how the curriculum of these groups aligns with the International Education standards (IB and Cambridge). A manual content analysis identified the strengths and weaknesses in curriculum materials, teaching strategies, assessment techniques and suggested ways to improve alignment. While the addition of these subjects is a positive step, several obstacles remain in current implementation, including outdated teaching approaches, a lack of trained teachers and inadequate practical infrastructure. The findings show significant gaps in interdisciplinary learning, skill development and critical thinking. This research provides useful knowledge for curriculum developers, policymakers and educators aiming to reform secondary education in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

The success of any nation significantly depends on its literacy rate; the more educated the population, the better the country progresses. Pakistan, a developing country, is facing persistent challenges in its education system including varying curricula, teaching methodologies and assessment styles since its independence. Students passing out from this system often lack the necessary knowledge and skills, making it difficult for them to find employment. This lack of attention to its education system has hindered the country's development (Khattak, 2023). It must provide quality education aligned with international standards to make it progressive and

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prosperous (Sahara & Najam-ul-Kashif, 2020). The overall educational process is shaped by the curriculum which includes instructional content, teaching methodologies, resources and materials and evaluation processes (Manzoor et al., 2024).

Curriculum alignment can be considered an "educational quality control" technique. Different departments contribute to creating a curriculum framework, including what should be taught and how (Saher & Kashif, 2020). Curriculum alignment in Pakistan has deteriorated due to issues with textbook content, implementation methods and assessment techniques. Additionally, the socio-political ideologies imposed by different regimes over the years, alongside major global events, have significantly impacted the curriculum (Nisar et al., 2025).

The educational institutions in Pakistan are divided into Public and Private sectors, which differ greatly in terms of basic facilities, curriculum, teaching practices and examination systems. Public institutions are often criticized for using outdated curricula that do not provide the knowledge and skills required in the advanced era. Private schools, on the other hand, follow international systems such as the British O-Level curriculum (Khokhar, 2024). The country's education system consists of three levels: elementary (grades 1–8), secondary (grades 9–12) and tertiary (or higher) education (Zafar et al., 2025). Currently, O-Level and Matriculation remain the two most popular alternatives for secondary education in Pakistan, though approximately 33 schools follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. These international degrees are well-known for their well-rounded approach, offering a wide range of subjects for students to explore. In contrast, the Matriculation curriculum' offers limited options, mainly focusing on traditional major subjects like science, computer and arts. Moreover, these subjects are mostly taught using the lecture-based methods, neglecting the importance of practical learning due to the extensive curriculum (Mehmood & Rehman, 2011).

Recently, the Punjab government introduced new subject groups (Health Sciences, Agriculture, Fashion Designing, Information Technology) in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC), aiming to modernize the education system. The goal of this development is to align the outdated matriculation curriculum with global standards.

This initiative aims to guide students towards new job markets and provide more career-oriented, practical educational opportunities (Gabol, 2025). Despite this advancement, it remains uncertain whether these new subjects align with international education standards such as IB and Cambridge. Students may face difficulties in their academic future and employment prospects if these disciplines are not aligned properly. The purpose of this study is to find out how well these new subject groups in Punjab align with global education systems and propose ways to improve them. This will help curriculum planners enhance the quality of education in Punjab and support students in adopting skills and knowledge that are beneficial in the contemporary world.

This study aims to review the subjects offered in the new matric groups (Health Sciences, Agriculture, Fashion Designing). To compare these subjects and teaching methods with those used in IB and Cambridge systems. To identify strengths and weaknesses within the current curriculum. To suggest improvements for better alignment with global education systems.

This study focuses on the following research questions: How do the new matric subjects in Punjab compare with those in IB and Cambridge systems? Do these subjects adequately

prepare students for global job markets and higher education? What areas require improvement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education serves as the backbone for the progress of a country. According to a recent report by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate among university graduates is 6.5%, compared to the overall unemployment rate of 6%. This implies that, in comparison to people without higher education, graduates are experiencing a disproportionately high rate of unemployment (Khattak, 2023). Secondary education is essential for the economic and social advancement of any country, forming the foundation for further education (Bhatti, 2015).

Pakistan's secondary school system includes several programs that provide students with different learning opportunities including the matriculation system, Cambridge O level and IB programs. The International School in Karachi introduced the IB program in Pakistan in 1996, followed by The New School in Lahore, operated by the Beacon-house School System, in the early 2000a. The IB program is an inquiry-based curriculum that emphasizes providing knowledge as well as helping students develop intercultural understanding in order to create a more peaceful society. The program provides an internationally recognized qualification for higher education (Syeda, 2017). However, the popularity of this program in Pakistan is limited due to various hurdles in its implementation such as high cost, lack of trained teachers and other financial constraints. Finding trained and qualified staff has been challenging for many schools because IB teacher training programs are costly. It often requires teachers to sign long-term contracts burdening schools with financial and managerial challenges (Bashir& Zakar, 2024). Moreover, IB students must appear for Islamic Studies and Pakistan Studies to get an equivalence certificate to pursue higher studies in Pakistan. Since the IB program doesn't offer these subjects, this adds to the program’s complexity (Out-Class). In contrast, Pakistan has been offering the British educational system known as Cambridge since 1959. The Cambridge O-Level is a globally recognized qualification for students aged 14 to 16. The program has been designed for the development of students' subject-matter knowledge, comprehension and analytical abilities. It is designed for students worldwide, including those whose first language is not English (Cambridge Assessment International Education). Cambridge schools also provide their students with appropriate vocational guidance, leading to the better employment prospects than other students from other systems. Many multinational corporations in Pakistan prefer hiring "O-level" and "A-level" graduates over other applicants (Ishfaq, 2009). Both IB and Cambridge programs are highly valued by universities and institutions globally. These programs are known for their comprehensive and inquiry-based approach, which emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary learning and a comprehensive educational experience (Singh & Ahmad, 2025).

In Pakistan, the Single National Curriculum (SNC) was established in 2020 to standardize education across the socioeconomically and culturally diverse nation. The goal was to reduce the educational gap between the public, private and madrassah institutions. However, the proper implementation of the curriculum is threatened by inadequate training and infrastructure, making teacher preparedness a crucial weak point. The curriculum's objectives are often ignored by the misalignment of advanced instructional methods with traditional assessment techniques (Laghari, 2024). Previous literature highlights gap between Pakistan's national curriculum and international

standards, stressing the need for improved alignment in critical thinking, practical application and interdisciplinary learning.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Biggs describes how student learning is improved through alignment between curriculum objectives, teaching methods and assessment. This supports the study, which explores the relationship between the launching of new subject groups and their alignment with international education standards. The framework adopts a comparative education theory**.** The relationship is examined by investigating three main elements including curriculum, teaching methodologies and assessment techniques. These elements are matched with the similar features of the IB and Cambridge systems to assess compatibility and effectiveness. Additionally, the study will examine the role of these components in increasing students' skills and preparing them for higher education and the international job market.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative comparative approach has been adopted to understand the alignment of Punjab's newly introduced matric subject groups with international educational standards, specifically the IB and the Cambridge Assessment International Education systems. The study employs descriptive techniques including a detailed review of curriculum documents, official subject guides and policy guidelines. All sources are appropriately cited to ensure credibility and transparency. Manual content analysis was used to identify similarities and differences across each curriculum. To reduce bias, information from multiple sources was cross-checked and compared, and findings were validated against established research. Additionally, a comparison table was created to show the variations in subject matter, instructional strategies and evaluation approaches. This study doesn't include student learning outcomes or classroom observations, limiting the depth of practical insights. The methodology is supported by Zafar et al.'s 2025 study, which compared the education systems of Pakistan and the UK using document reviews and comparisons to understand curriculum and teaching structures.

OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS (IB VS CAMBRIDGE)

The International Baccalaureate (IB)

The IB is an inquiry-based curriculum founded in Switzerland in 1968. It consists of the following four programs designed for students aged 3 to 19, specifically aimed at promoting critical thinking and personal growth.

Programs	Level/Grade	Age
IB primary years program	Elementary school	3 to 12 years old
Middle years program (MYP)	Middle through earlier half of high school	11 to 16 years old
Diploma program (DP)	High school	16 to 19 years old
Career-related Program	Alternate high school	16 to 19 years old

The Middle Years' Program (MYP) Curriculum

The MYP includes eight subject groups that give a comprehensive and balanced education for early high school. Each subject group involves at least 50 hours of teaching time per year, with students

having the choice to study courses from six of the eight subject groups during the five years of the program. Each year, at least two topic groups collaborate on an interdisciplinary unit, engaging students in cooperative learning. Students also develop a proposal or set of criteria for long-term initiatives, deciding what they want to learn, what they already know and what they need to know to finish the project. The subject groupings that MYP offers are shown below.

- Language acquisition
- Language and Literature
- Sciences
- Mathematics
- Arts
- Individuals and societies
- Design
- Physical and health education

MYP Subjects Brief

Students are able to connect their studies to the actual world using the MYP framework.

	Sciences	**Physical and Health Education**	**Design**
Curriculum content	Courses include biology, chemistry, and physics, along with other science disciplines, such as environmental, life, or physical sciences.	Involves physical activity (e.g., fitness, and movement) and health education including nutrition, mental health, etc.).	Involves Digital Design like coding and Product Design i.e. models, and tools.
	1. Involves scientific knowledge**,** methods, and skills.	1. Focus on understanding healthy lifestyles, and promoting well-being.	1. Helps in identify a problem, design a solution, and evaluate the result.
	2. The focus is on inquiry**,** investigation**,** and real-world applications**.**	2. Includes fitness activities, and personal development topics.	2. Encourages creativity, practical skills, and technology use.
	3. Emphasis on global issues like health, environment, and technology.		3. It involves the following cycle: Inquiring → Developing ideas → Creating → Evaluating.

Teaching Methodology

In the IB system, students are more active in the learning process. They take part in discussions, explore ideas and conduct research to enhance their thinking skills. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding students through different projects and collaborative activities. The curriculum pays less importance to classwork, differing it from more conventional learning methods (Best Schools Lahore, 2025). These flexible Approaches to Learning (ATL) enhance the application of their knowledge and abilities in various contexts and lay the foundation for independent learning.

Students learn to study effectively as they develop and utilize research, thinking, communication, social and self-management abilities (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2025).

	Sciences	**Physical and Health Education**	**Design**
Teaching Methodology	1. Inquiry-based learning	1. Active learning	1. Project-based learning
	2. Practical learning	2. Skill development	2. Problem solving
	3. Conceptual understanding	3. Discussions	3. Use of tools and software
	4. Collaborative projects	4. Follow up	4. Reflection and feedback
	5. technology integration		

The IB curriculum is developed in local and global contexts focused on conceptual knowledge and is differentiated to meet the needs of every student (UK NARIC, 2016).

Assessment

In the final year, after the assessment process, students take external on-screen tests for the first five subject groups. During their last years, they complete their MYP personal projects, which are evaluated internally by teachers and assessed through their portfolios. To obtain the MYP certificate, students must take eight tests. The assessment scoring standards vary for each subject. Subjects are graded on a scale of 1 to 7, with 56 being the highest possible overall score for the IB MYP certificate. To qualify for the certificate, students must earn a minimum of 28 points, with a score of three or higher in each subject (Out-Class, 2025).

	Sciences	**Physical and Health Education**	**Design**
Assessment Criteria	1. Knowing and understanding	1. Knowing and understanding	1.Inquiring and analyzing
	2. Inquiring and designing	2. Planning for performance	2. Developing ideas
	3. Processing and evaluating	3. Applying and performing	3. Creating the solution
	4. Reflecting on the impacts of science	4. Reflecting and improving performance	4. Evaluating
	• Includes lab reports, presentations, and projects.	• Includes written work, fitness plans, and physical performance.	• Tasks include designing portfolios, and prototypes

The Cambridge System

Cambridge is an internationally recognized educational framework that sets high standards for academic excellence. It aims to develop knowledge and skills in students from diverse cultural backgrounds, preparing them for success in higher education and future careers. It is known for its flexible approach, focus on subject depth and standardized testing. Following is an educational path for learners from age 5 to 19 created by Cambridge.

Level/Grade/Program	Age
Cambridge Primary	5 to 11 years
Cambridge Lower Secondary	11 to 14 years
Cambridge Upper Secondary (IGCSE and O-Level)	14+ years
A Level	16+ years

Cambridge Upper Secondary (O-Level) Curriculum

Cambridge Upper Secondary offers two alike options: Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge O Level for students between 14 and 16. The Cambridge O Level is equivalent to the UK GCSE and Cambridge IGCSE. It offers over 40 subjects in different combinations.

O-Level Subject Brief

The curriculum provides enormous teaching support and resource materials for each Cambridge O Level subject.

	Science-Combined	Environmental Management	Art & Design
Curriculum Content	Core disciplines: Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.	Focuses on the relations between humans and the natural environment.	Study of textile materials, fashion design, and consumer education.
	Include scientific knowledge and skills applicable to real-world contexts.	To develop awareness of environmental challenges.	Integrates technical knowledge with creativity and practical skills.

Teaching Methodology

Teachers use subject curricula as the foundation for their teaching and learning programs in order to deliver and achieve their broader objectives for students. They have the ability to add learning activities that foster growth into their class plans.

	Science-Combined	Environmental Management	Fashion and Textiles
Teaching Approaches	• Expository teaching	• Inquiry-based learning	• Demonstration-based instruction
	• Demonstrations and laboratory work	• Graph and map interpretation	• Hands-on practical work
	• Use of models, and visual aids	• Field-based activities	• Portfolio development
	• Student-centered discussions	• Collaborative projects	• Use of trend analysis
	• Past paper practice	• Use of multimedia resources	

Assessment

The assessment process includes written, oral and practical exams, which takes place after the course completion. It provides students an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and knowledge effectively. Cambridge has established six globally accepted grade categories, ranging from A* to E, along with clear instructions outlining the expected level of performance. The biannual Cambridge O Level test series is held in June and November while the results are released in January and August.

	Science-Combined	**Environmental Management**	**Fashion and Textiles**
Assessment Structure	**Paper 1:** Multiple Choice (1 hour)	**Paper 1:** Structured theory paper focusing on core concepts and short answer questions.	**Paper 1:** Theory examination
	Paper 2: Theory Paper (structured and extended response questions)	**Paper 2:** Data response and case study analysis paper, evaluating students' application, interpretation, and critical thinking	**Paper 2:** Practical coursework, where students create a textile product based on a design brief.
	Paper 3: Practical Test or Alternative to Practical		

Punjab's Education System

The federal and provincial governments oversee Pakistan's educational system. At the federal level, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is primarily in charge of national policy as well as the development, oversight and maintenance of the required curricula and textbooks. The 26 provincial and federal boards of education, which administer External Examinations for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC; also known as the Matriculation Certificate) fall under the Ministry's authority. Each of these boards is an IBCC member. Education departments are tasked with carrying out national-level educational policies at the provincial level (UK NARIC, 2016). There is a specific curriculum of each of Pakistan's four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. It is followed by many public and private schools in those regions. The Punjab curriculum, like those of other provinces, includes following subjects:

- Compulsory Subjects including English, Urdu, Mathematics, Pakistan Studies, Islamic Studies (for Muslim students) and Ethics (for non-Muslim students).
- Elective Subjects including Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science, General Science, or Humanities subjects (The Millennium Education, n.d.).

In addition, the Punjab government has introduced new subject groups (Health Science, Agriculture Fashion Designing, IT) in the elective stream. Over 15,000 students have enrolled for the new Matric-Tech Scheme in the Rawalpindi district for the 2025–2026 academic year. 3071 students were enrolled in health sciences, 1606 in agriculture, 3367 in fashion design and 7035 in IT. Over 80% of students were accepted into the IT program, 14% into the fashion design program and 6% into the agriculture and health sciences programs ("Over 15,000 students," 2025).

Key Features of New Courses

Students now have the option to select the subject groups based on their interests as they are promoted to grade 9.

- It gives students more authority over their academic journeys and provides foundation for personalized education (Mawadat, 2025).
- The new subjects have been integrated into the existing examination framework, maintaining the total score of 1,100 for matriculation exams.
- The newly introduced major courses will carry marks ranging from 100 to 150.
- Students will receive practical instruction; theoretical exams will carry 35 points, while practical exams will carry 40. Major courses will be prominently mentioned on students' result cards.
- Punjab has also introduced a change in the way Islamic and Pak studies are examined. Previously, Islamic Studies and Pak Studies received 50 points each, but now each will receive 100 points. In the ninth grade, pupils will take a 100-mark Islamic Studies exam and during matriculation, they will take a 100-mark Pakistan Studies exam.

Curriculum

The matriculation system follows the national curriculum, with textbooks recommended by the education departments carrying significant weight. Instead of concentrating on students' cognitive development, as indicated by Bloom's Taxonomy, this result-oriented strategy emphasizes lower-order thinking skills. Classroom education, which is confined to textbooks and follows summative examination standards, limits students' potential for growth through inquisitive and problem-solving approaches, hindering their overall learning development (Akhtar et al., 2022).

Subject Brief

Each of the below-mentioned streams also includes five compulsory subjects.

	Health Sciences	**Agriculture**	**Fashion Design**
Curriculum	Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Health Sciences	Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Agriculture Science	General Science, Computer Science, Entrepreneurship, Communication Skills and Personal Grooming, and Fashion Designing.
	Prepare students for healthcare sector.	Equip students with the necessary skills to excel in field of agriculture.	Developing 21st-century skills among students.

Teaching Methodology

Teachers must be trained in modern, engaging teaching strategies to improve their classroom performance. It comprises the teacher's activities in the classroom, such as teaching approaches, providing suitable stimuli for timely replies, performing learned responses and enhancing responses via additional activities (Shah et al., 2022). Unfortunately, in Pakistan, rote memorization remains the dominant style of teaching in matriculation. It focuses on recalling textbook definitions

and model answers. It has been discovered that students in Pakistan received the greatest scores on SSC and HSSC exams for using words and phrases rather than concepts when it came to the actual application of the knowledge they had acquired. In the end, it causes pupils to become restless, developing a cramming tendency and avoid deeper learning (Akhtar et al., 2022).

Assessments

Assessment is the process of improving student learning and programs by using observable data on student learning. For so long in Pakistan, the public examination system has been condemned for exerting too much pressure on students forcing students to seek private tuition in addition to formal schooling for exam preparation. Students often resort to reviewing past exam papers and memorizing the concept for good results. The system emphasizes content retention over analytical thinking. This system works for students who perform well under pressure and excel in structured, predictable learning environments. The Exam structure consists of

Objective type	Subjective type
• 20% multiple-choice questions	• 50% short-answer questions • 30% descriptive questions

Hurdles in Implementation

Students in Punjab schools are still waiting for their textbooks, despite the new academic year beginning on April 1st, 2025. Textbooks for new subject groups are not available in the market and no schools have hired subject specialists or established labs for these disciplines. It has not even been finalized what kind of labs are needed for these subjects. Teachers are also unaware of the exact curriculum of these new subjects. The lack of early preparation has impacted students' learning timelines, underlining the results of implementing academic reforms without sufficient basis (Shirazi, 2025).

Comparative Curriculum Alignment

Recently, educationists have placed significant emphasis on curriculum alignment. The degree of co-relation among curriculum, instruction & assessment is called curriculum alignment.

Category	Punjab Curriculum	IB Curriculum	Cambridge Curriculum
Curriculum Focus	Traditional focus on fundamental or textbook knowledge.	Balanced approach	Mixed approach, Subject-focused with practical learning
Teaching Methodology	Lecture-based and rote memorization	Inquiry-based, student-centered, interdisciplinary	Expository teaching, practical demonstrations
Assessment	Theory with a small portion of practical	Internal (projects) and External exams (performance-based)	External exams: MCQs, theory, practical tests
21st-Century Skills	Weak integration	Strong focus	Moderate
Critical Thinking	Limited	High	Medium

Summary of Findings

- The Punjab curriculum introduces new subjects in the curriculum such as Health Sciences, Agriculture, and Fashion Design to develop 21st-century skills among student. Unfortunately, the curriculum of these subjects remains content-heavy and exam-centric, lacking in critical thinking and real-world application.
- The IB curriculum is inquiry-based, promoting interdisciplinary learning and personal development with both internal and external assessment methods.
- The Cambridge system offers subject specialization and adopts a structured learning approach, which provides a mixture of practical activities along with strong assessment systems.
- The absence of trained teachers, proper labs and available textbooks in Punjab hinders effective implementation.
- The shift in Punjab curriculum is commendable but lacks scope and execution. Unlike IB and Cambridge systems, it lacks an interdisciplinary focus, project-based learning and modern assessment methods. This misalignment can hinder students' competitiveness in global academia and job markets.

Recommendations

- Students should be given the necessary socio-emotional skills to thrive in the twenty-first century with a strong emphasis on skill development. Content should be in line with international standards, providing more attention to multidisciplinary knowledge and skills. Include teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills into every topic (Nisar et al., 2025).
- Replace lecture-based instruction with inquiry- and project-based learning, integrating performance-based assessments. Greater attention should be given to how schools operate internally and daily, which is exactly what the studies in this area are meant to achieve (Nisar et al., 2025).
- Implement internationally recognized certification systems for instructors to guarantee a standard of excellence in education. Provide training in modern instructional approaches such as constructive alignment and student-centered learning.
- Teachers should be chosen based on their qualifications to make the syllabus simple. They should teach in a straightforward manner. Many highly qualified teachers lack strong explanatory skills and abilities. In order to relieve their workload, more teachers ought to be employed. Nowadays, a teacher is required to instruct 30–40 kids in a class, which can be overwhelming. To make teaching easier for teachers, the number should be reduced by at least half (Ahmed, 2023).
- Encourage close cooperation and collaborations between employers in a various industries and educational institutions. To successfully bridge the gap between education and the workforce, involve specialists in mentorship, career counseling and curriculum building (Ahmed et al., 2023).

- A framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation is required to pinpoint the shortcomings of the current curriculum and textual content. Along with the newly created curriculum document, a checklist should be developed for curriculum monitoring and assessment. Various facets and stages of curriculum creation and implementation should be included in the checklist, with improvement based on feedback (Hussain et al., 2011).
- In most schools, the sole learning resource accessible is the textbook. There are hardly any extra resources, such as instructional aids, extra reading materials, or school libraries. The irregular evaluation procedure causes textbooks being misaligned with standards and lacking adequate content coverage of national standards. A suitable system for assessing textbook content is required (Akhtar et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The well-recognized curricula (IB and Cambridge) set educational standards globally in their unique ways. The IB program focuses on skill development while Cambridge emphasizes specific-subject content. both programs are not only expensive in Pakistan but also focused on teaching the English language. This creates a gap between English medium schools and public institutions that teach the syllabus in Urdu. The curriculum in public sectors should be updated at least yearly to keep the syllabus up-to-date according to the new advancements. Despite significant reforms, Punjab curriculum still lacks some crucial features like fostering critical thinking and creative abilities among students. Certain features of the curriculum, such as overburdening the course with definitions and examples, differ significantly from the ideal practices that are generally recommended for effective education. The major cause of these problems is the deeply rooted culture of memorization over creativity and critical thinking, that encourages rote learning and places a sole focus on exam achievement.

The importance of academic knowledge can't be overlooked, as it serves a foundation for success. However, it is important to possess the skills necessary to effectively utilize this knowledge. The scope of employability extends beyond the limits of the professional domain, comprising a wide range of social, cultural and ecological capabilities. It is vital for graduates to effectively familiarize to a wide range of contexts and demonstrate excellent proficiency in interpersonal communication. Additionally, the qualities of strategic planning and an entrepreneurial spirit are widely regarded as essential. However, overemphasis on the central role of the exam system distract teachers' focus, diverting their attention away from the objective of delivering on the actual goals set forth by the curriculum. Furthermore, as an evaluative tool, the examination is highly unsatisfactory and fails to provide meaningful insights into students' understanding and capabilities. In particular, the efforts with learning outcome-based curricula and a shift from solely knowledge-based content need significant and urgent attention. This study found that while Punjab's new curriculum reforms are a positive step, significant gaps remain in alignment with international standards. The curriculum is still largely content-heavy and examination-focused. To improve alignment, it is recommended to adopt inquiry-based and project-based teaching approaches, invest in teacher training, update assessment methods and provide essential resources such as labs and textbooks.

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Date of Publication	June 30, 2025