

## CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive content analysis of the BS Sociology HEC Pakistan curriculum, focusing on its alignment with the principles of Sustainable Development. The goal of the study is to determine how well the existing curriculum of the BS Sociology four-year program trains students for active engagement in sustainable development projects and how well it addresses important social development topics. A total of 22 courses of the BS Sociology curriculum were analysed. Using content analysis techniques, the study examined how inclusive, relevant, and successful the curriculum is in encouraging pupils to take on social responsibility. This research provides a view of curriculum reforms and enhances Education for Sustainable Development in Pakistan. The checklist method was used to examine the social development curriculum, highlighting the areas that still need improvement. This study aims to elaborate on the extent to which the BS sociology curriculum has adopted these characteristics of sustainable development for the bachelor of sociology degree. The analysis suggests that more fields related to sustainable development can be included to enrich the concept of sustainability.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Social Development, Sustainable Development SDG Goals

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development was initially brought up in the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report published by the United Nations (UN). At the United Nations General Assembly in 1987, "sustainable development" was defined as the organising principle of human growth with long-term living needs in mind. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, had an environment and development conference hosted by the United Nations in 1992. The conference's conclusion included the recommendation that Education focuses on sustainable development. A few years later, on December 20, 2002, a resolution was approved by the UN General Assembly, designating the years 2005–2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The conference designated UNESCO as the organisation in charge of advancing the resolution globally

through suggestions addressing the problem of how to incorporate it into national education policies, strategies, and initiatives (UNESCO, 2003). The primary goal of the resolution on Education for sustainable development is to include sustainable development in the educational system at all levels, via all pathways, and in all forms of instruction. The focus should be given to present and future training and Education that are anticipated to work as change agents to achieve sustainability through all educational levels and meet the demands of various policy initiatives. The degree to which instructors are capable and dedicated to sustainability will determine how well ESD is incorporated into the curriculum and practices of the school (Barth, 2014; Frisk & Larson, 2011).

Social Development plays a crucial role in the broader context of sustainable development, which

aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Salman et al., 2023; Buriro et al., 2023). Social Development focuses on improving the well-being of individuals and communities, fostering social equity, and promoting inclusive and just societies. Some key aspects that highlight social development's importance in sustainable development are human well-being, inclusive growth, poverty alleviation, health and Education, social justice and human rights, community resilience, cultural preservation, and social capital (Fayaz et al., 2023). Social Development contributes to accumulating social capital, including networks, relationships, and shared norms that facilitate cooperation and collaboration within communities (Lashari et al., 2023b). Social capital is a valuable resource for sustainable development.

The idea of sustainable development has been linked to Education since the 1990s. The phrase "sustainable development" was coined in 1992 during the Rio Earth Summit and originally appeared in the World Conservation Strategy (IUCN, 1980). This was the outcome of people becoming increasingly conscious of the connections between the world's expanding environmental difficulties, social problems involving poverty and inequality, and worries for the future health of humanity (Buriro et al., 2023). It is currently a well-known development paradigm (Diemer, 2017). Environmental and social challenges are linked to sustainable Development (Hopwood, Mellor, O'Brien, 2005). Although there are hundreds of definitions of sustainable Development (Dale, 2001), the Brundtland Commission report (1987) contains the official definition. It is generally agreed upon that "sustainable development is the development that satisfies present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," as defined in this study. The concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which was supported by "UNESCO from 2005 to 2014, is in favour of a type of education that is specifically focused on sustainable development. UNESCO adopted the stance that education for sustainable development should "integrate into the teaching and learning process the key themes of sustainable development, such as climate change, prevention of natural disasters," in its international

plan for the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005)". This is why Education for Sustainable Development promotes social development and the acquisition of abilities that help students become more adept at critical thinking, envisioning future situations, and working together to make decisions (Buriro et al., 2023; Suhag et al., 2017).

Social Development requires individuals who can think critically and solve complex problems. The curriculum is vital in cultivating these skills, encouraging students to analyse social issues, consider multiple perspectives, and propose innovative solutions (Salman et al., 2023). The content analysis of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) recommended Sociology curriculum designed for the Bachelor of Science (BS) level for the public and private sector universities of Pakistan is critical for exploring whether social, economic, and environmental issues are adequately addressed (Suhag et al., 2017). It evaluates whether it promotes gender sensitivity, challenges stereotypes fosters gender equality, a sense of unity and respect among students, and represents diversity, environmental issues, climate change, changing demographics, human rights education, and integration of technological advancements, including digital literacy and the ability to leverage technology for social development purposes (Shaikh et al., 2023). This examination ensures that the curriculum is inclusive and addresses the unique socio-cultural contexts of different regions within the country (Suhag et al., 2017). Adapting the sociology curriculum, also used for social development, is immensely important for highlighting evolving issues; it empowers graduates to positively contribute within a society where all individuals, irrespective of gender, have equal rights and opportunities (Kazmi, Keerio & Lashari, 2020). Social Development caters to active participation in community affairs and responsible citizenship; it motivates students to associate with their society and communities, understand social responsibilities, and contribute positively to societal development. Social issues are often interconnected on a global scale.

In short, social development is a fundamental principle of sustainable development, guaranteeing that economic development partners with the

improvements of human well-being, social equity, and the formation of inclusive and resilient societies.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research addresses these gaps by conducting a thorough content analysis of the BS Sociology HEC curriculum, last updated in 2008-2009, designed for undergraduate programs. The study highlights the reflection of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) into the curriculum because SDG goals are ignored to reflect in the curriculum. Sustainable development is impossible without educating the young generation about a sustainable future and sustainability goals. Only Education can play a vital role as an agent of change for the future. The study highlights specific areas that need improvement and recommends a more vigorous curriculum alignment with SDG goals.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How is the BS Sociology curriculum structured to integrate sustainable development goals?

How effectively does the curriculum for sociology address the social component and issues related to social justice, equity, and community development?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Two critical components of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are evident in this definition: the first addresses content, and the second addresses pedagogy. There are two well acknowledged in the scholarly works: “ESD continues to grow both in content and pedagogy, and its visibility and respect have grown in parallel” As seen in the UNESCO definition, ESD contents cover diverse disciplines: climate change, poverty reduction, consumption *etc.*, and interdisciplinary is crucial to understand the complexity of SD issues (Buriro et al., 2023). This notion is labelled holism or a holistic approach in ESD literature since it includes multiple perspectives on content. ESD emphasises the necessity to include all three dimensions (environmental, social, and economic) and focus on their interrelationship and interactions over time and space (Buriro et al., 2023). The holistic perspective of Sustainable Development (SD) recognises that social and cultural factors often cause environmental problems, and there is usually a conflict of interest

between the economic, social, and environmental goals of individuals and societies.

Since Education is a vital tool for communication and the foundation of the "sustainability mindset," it is the engine propelling the establishment of sustainability (Fayaz et al., 2023). The notion encompasses "a comprehensive method of comprehending, surpassing technical expertise and comprehending the fundamentals of a robust ecosystem and a flourishing community" (Fayaz et al., 2023, p.25). The sustainable mindset pushes us to move away from traditional management discipline silos by prioritising self-awareness, environmental studies, entrepreneurship, management ethics, and systems thinking (Kassel et al., 2016). Systems thinking, for example, is frequently cited as one of the abilities required to comprehend sustainability more fully. This is so because sustainability incorporates social, environmental, and economic facets. As stated by UNESCAP (2015), *People and the nature of the society in which they live are shaped by and, in turn, shape the economies that support their livelihoods and enhance their overall quality of life. Environments provide life-giving and economically essential services to economies and people.* In this case, systems thinking is the key to promoting a holistic problem analysis approach (UNESCAP, 2015).

In recent years, a considerable number of works assessed the impacts of higher Education on sustainability (Littleddyke et al., 2013; Fehlner, 2019; Leal Filho et al., 2018; Findler et al., 2019a) and, usually, higher education institutions are viewed as “changing agents” and “catalysts” in the development of sustainability-related issues (Shields, 2019). A sustainability-based education affects education contents and the associated process and outcomes (Gatti et al., 2019).

According to Fayaz et al. (2023), “a growing body of evidence indicates that a school's social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum benefits kids' academic and emotional growth. However, due to a lack of knowledge about the presence and advantages of SEL programs, inadequate funding in public schools, a lack of enthusiasm in private schools, and a lack of teacher preparation, Pakistani schools confront numerous obstacles in their efforts to promote social-emotional learning” (p.123). According to Lashari et

al., (2023a) “numerous SEL initiatives have been modified for use with various demographics and nations around the world, with encouraging outcomes. However, little study has been done on how well these programs work in Pakistani classrooms and other nations with comparable cultural and educational environments” (p.54). “We looked through research published between 2000 and 2019 to find SEL curricula that might be used in Pakistani classrooms. There were nineteen studies” (Lashari et al., 2023b, p, 23).

**Method and Procedure**

This research is performed through content analysis research design. The data was acquired from the syllabus of BS sociology (four-year program) by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. The courses were assessed and integrated with United Nations 17 sustainable development goals. The present study also reviews the definition of social development and the importance of sustainable development in the curriculum at the university level. The parameter is the checklist made after the content analysis of the HEC BS sociology syllabus, as seen in Table 2. Also, bar graphs were formulated to elaborate further on incorporating SD goals in the major courses of the BS sociology curriculum.

The BS sociology program's overall layout consists of three courses. Nine compulsory courses are essential for every student, and seven optional courses will be chosen for other departments. Also, there are ten discipline-specific foundation courses. All three courses were examined and only those that were picked were related to social development. Further, for elaboration, a checklist (Table 2) was constructed to indicate the implementation of each SDG goal in the BS sociology curriculum.

**DATA COLLECTION**

The BS Sociology Syllabus was analysed to look into its content. The BS Sociology four-year program is a full-time professional degree program that coaches students with theoretical frameworks, scientific understanding, and valuable skills so they may comprehend society on a deeper level. Additionally, it will improve the student's capacity to understand the dynamics of diverse human behaviour and society within a broader framework. In addition to classroom instruction, the course offers internships

and hands-on experience. The revised curriculum calls for teaching the subsequent papers and exams throughout the four-year course in Pakistan. The course description is divided into categories below:

**Table**  
*Major Course Outline*

General Courses to be chosen from other departments		
S.No		
1	Introduction to Psychology	S1
2	Introduction to Economics	S2
3	Introduction to Law	S3
4	Social Work	S4
5	Political Science	S5
6	Everyday Science	S6
7	Introduction to Geographical Information System	S7
8	Introduction to Environment	S8
Discipline-Specific Foundation Courses		
10	Introduction to Sociology	S9
11	Development of Social Thought	S10
12	Classical Sociological Theories	S11
13	Contemporary Sociological Theories	S12
14	Pakistani Society & Culture	S13
15	Social Psychology	S14
16	Gender Studies	S15
Major courses		
17	Sociology of Development	S16
18	Community Development	S17
19	Sociology of Health & Medicine	S18
20	Comparative Social Institutions	S19
21	Social Change & Transformation	S20
22	Sociology of Education	S21
23	Sociology of Globalization	S22

**DATA ANALYSIS**

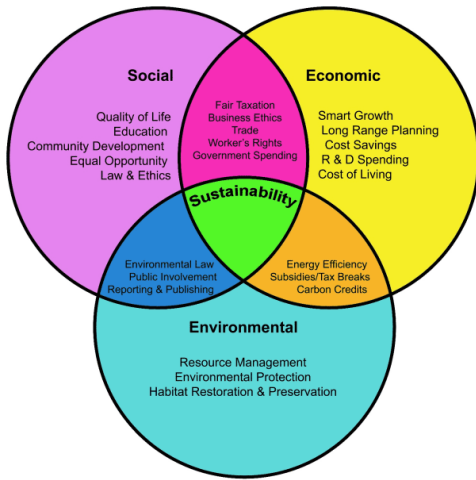
Sustainable development is a unified approach that wraps environmental, economic, social, and cultural aspects. The analysis is performed to analyse the curriculum based on these aspects. However, an

attempt is made to pinpoint distinct and tangible themes in the following elements:

- “Environmental Aspects”
- “Social & Cultural Aspects”
- “Economic Aspects”

**Table**

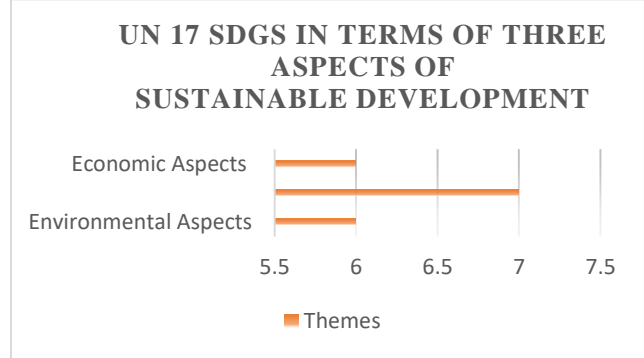
*https://www.coursehero.com/file/139752219/Dimensions-of-Developmentdocx/*



**Themes of Sustainable Development Aspects**

Each goal of SDGs was identified under the themes mentioned above of Sustainable Development;

- “No poverty (C)”
- “Zero hunger (B)”
- “Good health and well-being (B)”
- “Quality education (B)”
- “Gender equality (B)”
- “Clean water and sanitation (A)”
- “Affordable and clean energy (A)”
- “Decent work and economic growth (C)”
- “Industry, innovation and infrastructure (C)”
- “Reduced inequalities (B)”
- “Sustainable cities and communities (C)”
- “Responsible consumption and production (C)”
- “Climate action (A)”
- “Life below water (A)”
- “Life on land (A)”
- “Peace, justice, and strong institutions (B)”
- “Partnerships for the goals (A, B & C)”



To provide a clear understanding of the research objectives, the above graph is constructed to measure the extent, implementation, and need to improve sustainable goals in the social development curriculum at the HEC level. The bar graph above assists in the content analysis, themes and focus areas of each sustainable goal.

**Table 2:**

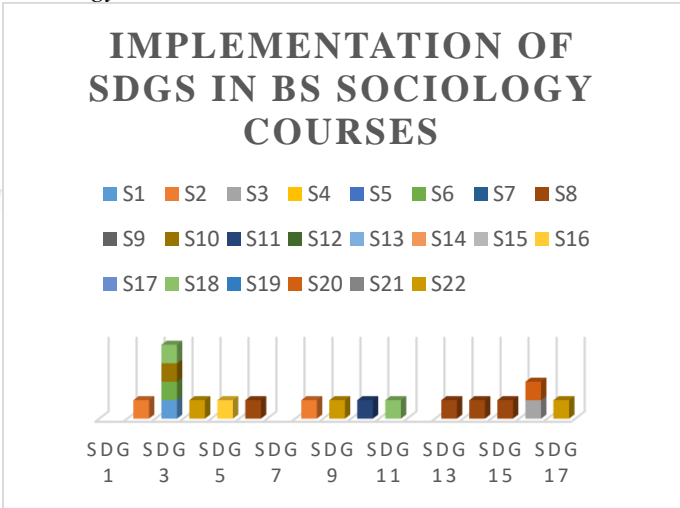
*Sustainable goals and their implementation in the BS Sociology curriculum*

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG)	THEME/AREA OF FOCUS IN SOCIOLOGY CURRICULUM	IMPLEMENTATION
SDG 1: “No Poverty”	Social Inequality, Poverty, and Welfare	“Globalisation and Workers Changes in Work Social Inequality Training for Global Competition <b>Page # 53.</b> ” “Welfare Agencies in the City - Their Structure and Functioning, Adjustment of migrants in the City, Town Planning, Social and Welfare Planning, Meaning, Need and Scope, Planning and Development of the City, House Planning, Neighborhood Planning, Voluntary Associations, The Future of the City. <b>Page # 36</b> ”.
SDG 2: “Zero Hunger”	Sociology of Agriculture and Food Security	<b>Not yet implemented.</b>
SDG 3: “Good Health and Well-being”	Sociology of Health and Healthcare	“The course focuses on providing fundamental concepts and models of health sciences. The psycho-socio and

<p><b>SDG 4: “Quality Education”</b></p>	<p>Sociology of Education</p>	<p>cultural assessment of health seeking behavioural patterns and the role of the therapeutic management group will be examined. The indigenous healing system and contemporary medical system will be studied. <b>Page # 37.”</b></p> <p>“The course provides students with the sociological insight of Education. Core concepts, levels, educational institutions, theories, policies, and reforms will be studied. The relationship of Education with socio-economic development will also be discussed. <b>Page # 42.”</b></p>	<p><b>SDG 7:</b> “Affordable and Clean Energy”</p> <p><b>SDG 8:</b> “Decent Work and Economic Growth”</p> <p><b>SDG 9:</b> “Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure”</p>	<p>Sociology of Technology and Energy</p> <p>Sociology of Labor and Employment</p> <p>Sociology of Technology and Development</p>	<p>familiarises with the tools used and methods employed. <b>Page # 50.”</b></p> <p><b>Not yet implemented.</b></p> <p>“Substantive Areas of Law Where Applied: Labor and Employment, Automobile, Construction, Business Insurance, Securities, etc. <b>Page # 58”</b></p> <p>“Technology and Development Technology Adoption of technology in development” <b>Page # 33.</b></p>
<p><b>SDG 5: “Gender Equality”</b></p>	<p>Gender Studies and Sociology of Family</p>	<p>“The concepts about gender relations will be learnt. The historical movements and feminist perspectives about gender relations will be explored. The course will provide understanding about globalisation and its role towards changing gender relation in various societies around the world. Special emphasis shall be given to Muslim and Pakistani societies. Specific areas of gender discrimination (both for men and women) will also be learnt. <b>Page # 27.”</b></p>	<p><b>SDG 10:</b> “Reduced Inequality”</p> <p><b>SDG 11:</b> “Sustainable Cities and Communities”</p>	<p>Social Inequality and Stratification</p> <p>Urban Sociology and Community Development</p>	<p>“Globalisation and Workers Changes in Work Social Inequality Training for Global Competition <b>Page # 53”.</b></p> <p>“The course provides knowledge of the concepts and approaches of urban sociology. It targets at providing necessary skills to the students for the solution of urban social issues. The causes, theories and affects of urbanisation will also be explored. The study of human ecology, urban ways of life, neighbourhood, residential differentiation and gentrification, urban protest, and comparative urbanism (Hungary, China and Japan) will be carried out. <b>Page # 40”</b></p>
<p><b>SDG 6: “Clean Water and Sanitation”</b></p>	<p>Sociology of Environment</p>	<p>“The course will provide the knowledge, understanding and skills for social impact assessment and policy formation. It helps in understanding the role of social impact assessment in the broader context of environmental impact assessment. It enables the students to understand conceptual and methodological advances in social impact assessment. It</p>	<p><b>SDG 12:</b> “Responsible Consumption and Production”</p> <p><b>SDG 13:</b> “Climate Action”</p>	<p>Sociology of Consumerism</p> <p>Sociology of Environment</p>	<p><b>Not yet implemented.</b></p> <p>“The course will provide the knowledge, understanding and skills for social impact assessment and policy formation. It helps in understanding the role of social impact</p>

<p><b>SDG 14: “Life Below Water”</b></p>	<p>Sociology of Environmental Conservation</p> <p>assessment in the broader context of environmental impact assessment. It enables the students to understand conceptual and methodological advances in social impact assessment. It familiarises with the tools used and methods employed. <b>Page # 56</b> (Climate change challenges).”</p> <p>“The course will provide the knowledge, understanding and skills for social impact assessment and policy formation. It helps in understanding the role of social impact assessment in the broader context of environmental impact assessment. It enables the students to understand conceptual and methodological advances in social impact assessment. It familiarises with the tools used and methods employed. <b>Page # 56”</b></p>	<p><b>SDG 17: “Partnerships for the Goals”</b></p>	<p>Sociology of Globalization and International Relations</p> <p>“Introduction and Overview of Sociology of Globalization Sociology of globalisation, globalisation: myth or reality. <b>page # 52.”</b>          “This course provides familiarity regarding the basic concepts and models of globalisation. It will examine the global economy and its impact on local economy as well as social and cultural change especially on South Asian countries. The role of media regarding globalisation will also be discussed. <b>Page # 52.”</b></p>
<p><b>SDG 15: “Life on Land”</b></p>	<p>Sociology of Environmental Conservation</p> <p>“The course will provide the knowledge, understanding and skills for social impact assessment and policy formation. It helps in understanding the role of social impact assessment in the broader context of environmental impact assessment. It enables the students to understand conceptual and methodological advances in social impact assessment. It familiarises with the tools used and methods employed. <b>Page # 56”</b></p>		
<p><b>SDG 16: “Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions”</b></p>	<p>Sociology of Law and Conflict</p> <p>“Sociology of Law and Human rights <b>Page # 55.”</b></p>		

**Table 2:**  
 Sustainable goals and their implementation in BS Sociology curriculum



The implementation of sustainable development in the social development curriculum (BS sociology four-year program) by HEC is constructed in the above graph. All 22 significant program courses (S1 to S22) are mentioned in Table 1, along with the 17 SD goals. The results show that goals **1, 7, and 12** still need to be implemented in the current syllabus.

**CONTENT ANALYSIS:**  
 A standard rubric was established to critically analyse the curriculum of BS sociology in terms of sustainable development. All four aspects of sustainable development were included in the rubric

by referring to various international and national documents on sustainable development, to which “Education for Sustainable Development - sourcebook’ provided by UNESCO, 2012 was mainly referred”. Further, the content validity of the schedule was determined by the experts in the field. The following three areas were identified to evaluate the BS Sociology four-year program Curriculum:

Environmental.

Economic.

Social and Cultural.

The content analysis of the BS sociology HEC syllabus concerning sustainable development reflects that all the course content, assignments and activities listed in the four-year BS sociology syllabus were scanned, and a rubric (Table 2) was designed. Also, the areas directly reflecting the components (17 Goals) of sustainable development listed in the rubric (Table 2) were highlighted.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**

It's essential to conduct qualitative assessments to understand the effectiveness of the content analysis of the social development curriculum for sustainable Development in Pakistan. The following rubric below will aid in assessing the effectiveness of the content analysis of the social development curriculum for sustainable development.

S.No	Aspects of Sustainable Development	Assessment of Social Development Curriculum in Pakistan	Impact on Students' Understanding of Sustainable Development
1	<b>Inclusion of SDGs</b>	Limited incorporation of SDGs into the curriculum. Content often focuses more on traditional subjects, with less emphasis on sustainability.	Students may lack awareness of global sustainability issues.
2	<b>Relevance of Content</b>	Insufficient emphasis on practical community engagement projects.	Limited understanding of the interconnectedness of global issues.
3	<b>Community Engagement</b>	Limited focus on values such as empathy,	Limited opportunities for students to actively contribute to sustainable development.
4	<b>Values and Attitudes</b>		Students may lack a strong foundation for ethical and

5	<b>Interdisciplinary Approach</b>	responsibility, and global citizenship. Siloed approach, with limited integration across subjects.	sustainable decision-making. Students may struggle to see the holistic nature of sustainable development.
6	<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Emphasis on exams and standardised testing.	Limited opportunities for assessing the practical application of sustainable development concepts. Teachers may feel ill-equipped to communicate sustainable development concepts effectively.
7	<b>Teacher Training</b>	Limited training for teachers on integrating SDGs into teaching practices. Limited resources are allocated for updating and implementing a sustainable development-focused curriculum.	Lack of materials and tools to support effective teaching of sustainable development.
8	<b>Resource Allocation</b>		Students may lack motivation and practical experience in sustainable development projects.
9	<b>Student Engagement and Participation</b>	Limited involvement in extracurricular activities related to sustainability.	

The rubric above identifies gaps and areas for improvement in the BS Sociology curriculum and the need to include sustainable development.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

After the evaluation of the curriculum of the BS Sociology four-year program, it has been determined that the existing curriculum meets the demands of Pakistan's current situation. Still, there's space for development. There are still some social development components that should be taken into account while developing curricula. Based on the research mentioned above, the following suggestions are offered:

To create a uniform curriculum on sustainable development at all levels of higher Education, a



monitoring committee of educational specialists, environmentalists, philosophers, sociologists, economists, political leaders, and administrators should be established at the state and federal levels.

Training in Education for Sustainable Development should be provided to the current educators.

The pertinent ideas and associated subject areas about sustainable development dispersed throughout the current curriculum should be consolidated and encompassed under the one overarching name of Education for Sustainable Development. An initiative of this kind is feasible if the social development curriculum is wholly restructured.

To coordinate efforts related to Sustainable Development in research, extension, evaluation, and advice, a central institute or agency should be formed at the state and federal levels.

With an appropriate focus on sustainability principles, sustainable development is to be disseminated and practised among people through various activities with the assistance of local authorities and non-governmental organisations.

Throughout their four years of BS programs, all student teachers should be required to complete practical assignments such as case studies, projects, and surveys about sustainable development.

At the state and federal levels, publications, pamphlets, and books about sustainable development should be produced and distributed to students.

Teachers, public administrators, relevant officials, and representatives may attend seminars, workshops, and in-service training.

There should be lessons on Education for sustainable development.

## CONCLUSION

By conducting a thorough content analysis of the social development curriculum in Pakistan, this research attempts to add significant insights to the current conversation on Education for sustainable development. The curriculum developer of higher Education should make sure that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are integrated into all of the courses, even though the current curriculum already focuses on the implementation of 17 SD goals, as per the above content analysis of the social development curriculum in Pakistan that focuses on the SDGs. This will provide a comprehensive framework that aligns with global sustainability

objectives. However, a few of the elements still require thorough implementation. It is essential to support interdisciplinary learning across the curriculum and foster cross-disciplinary cooperation to give students a comprehensive awareness of sustainable development issues. Include case studies and global perspectives in the curriculum to help students.

Forecasting global citizenship, addressing real-world difficulties, promoting ethical values, stimulating innovation, and educating students to be active contributors to a sustainable and equitable future depend on social development curricula aligning with sustainable development.

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