

## **An Analysis of Pakistan Studies BISE Lahore Question Papers at Secondary Level**

**Mehwish Gull**

Ph. D scholar  
Institute of Education and Research,  
University of the Punjab, Lahore  
Email: [mehwishgull65@gmail.com](mailto:mehwishgull65@gmail.com)

**Muhammad Saeed**

Professor & Chairman, Department of Educational Research and Evaluation  
Institute of Education and Research,  
University of the Punjab, Lahore  
Email: [drsaeed1961@hotmail.com](mailto:drsaeed1961@hotmail.com)

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### **KEY WORDS**

Pakistan Studies textbook,  
Question Papers, Bloom's  
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### **ABSTRACT**

The subject of Pakistan Studies mainly covers the history of Pakistan, with a brief on civics, geography, and astronomy. It discusses the ideological, political, economic, and socio-cultural norms and values of the country. The purpose of the present study was to assess question papers (2015-2017) of Pakistan Studies at the secondary level in the context of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. To assess question papers of BISE Lahore for the year (2015-2017) a checklist was administered. The results of this study revealed that the maximum focus in Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) was on knowledge level. Short answer and long questions emphasized only knowledge and comprehension of cognitive levels. The students' "application", "analysis", "synthesis" and "evaluation" abilities were not truly assessed through the BISE question papers at the secondary level. Therefore this study recommends the need for training teachers/paper setters to include subjective type questions of higher cognitive abilities.

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### **Introduction**

Education develops the personality of an individual. That is why, it takes place as a priority in the lives of human beings. All the era before the arrival of Muhammad (S.A.W.) was considered as the time of ignorance. After the execution of Islam, knowledge became the pivotal ingredient in the lives of individuals. It is the core instrument in the hands of mankind and

can be acquired by a variety of means such as autobiographies, books, media, and so on (Hashmi, 2011). In the early 1980s, to sustain as well as to boost national solidarity, consolidation, harmony, and unity among younger, Pakistan studies was declared as a compulsory subject at the level of secondary and higher secondary schools. To deal with the different aspects of real life, students are needed to be empowered, curriculum development of this subject at all levels. It was based on a multi-disciplinary approach where various disciplines such as international relations of Pakistan, social culture, politics, geography, economy language, and literature were more concentrated. In order to overcome the deficiencies, the curriculum of Pakistan Studies was revised by the Ministry of Education for students of Secondary and Higher secondary school. It is being taught as a compulsory subject from primary to higher education level in Pakistan.

The curriculum of Pakistan studies was “derived from the thoughts and opinions of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah”. He had the opinion that without any spiritual discrimination every Pakistani should be Pakistani. In this regard to produce dedicated citizens who have no spiritual biases and provincial discrimination, at graduation and Higher Education level Pakistan Studies’ curriculum was declared as compulsory subject in the regime of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88). Therefore, this idea may help curriculum developers while developing a curriculum for other courses. The subject can be imparted through activity-based projects by relating it to students’ real-life situations. For the students, it can be more thought-provoking by the use of audio-video aids (Sufiana & Malik, 2012).

Students acquire knowledge about the values, functions, history, and social issues of government in the subject of Pakistan Studies. Pakistan Studies and social studies are interconnected subjects. A basic difference between both is that social studies are related to social aspects while Pakistan Studies deal with all the stuff which is related to Pakistan. In Pakistan, Social Studies is taught as a compulsory subject from grade IV to grade VIII, while Pakistan Studies is taught as a compulsory subject from grade IX to XIV.

Every person either he or she is a layman or a professional one, has any link with the subject or not, describes this subject according to his or her socio-cultural, personal perspective, views, biases, academic and non-academic interests, subjects and disciplines as well. He further argued that the blend of General knowledge, Geography, Civics, Culture as well as Current affairs are associated with the subject of Social Sciences, however for some time, Pakistan decontaminates from social studies, it was the first accelerated and alternative route that Pakistan Studies were achieving both goals with a single action. Cognitive levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956) were being applied to analyze question papers of grade IX-X, BISE Lahore

One of the main contributors and editor of the Taxonomy, Krathwohl (2002) states that the idea behind the theory was to create and

exchange a bank of items, to facilitate the faculties of various universities to measure the same objective of education. The hierarchy of different thinking skills was originated in the original taxonomy. He further argued that the persistent use of this taxonomy was to organize objectives of the curriculum and to diagnose the pitfalls of the test items as well as test deficiencies of its breath according to objectives. In recent years taxonomy was revised. Bloom and Krathwohl (2002) also introduced a two-dimensional, non-linear progression model in 2002. Moreover, Leach (2007) argued that taxonomy was revised in respect of curriculum planning by keeping in view to expand the audience, assessment, and use of assessment activities to address the test time and giving a wide range of interpretations and descriptions of subcategories regarding the major category of test.

Bumen (2007) explored that knowledge, comprehension, application; analysis, synthesis, and evaluation were the main features of the original Bloom's taxonomy. The crux of taxonomy was to help administrators, teachers, educationists, professional specialists, and researchers, to deal with the problems of curriculum evaluations in a precise manner as well as according to the classifications of goals regarding the education system. Nowadays, a revised taxonomy that is used by educators has the components such as "remember", "understand", "apply", "analyze", and "Evaluate" and "create". Revised components of Bloom (2001) may be helpful to evaluate a deep understanding of students' knowledge according to specific learning objectives.

Two levels of objectives i.e. 1) general objective 2) specific objective, were established by Bloom.

### **General and Specific Objectives**

General objectives may drive from the country's national education policy. Although these objectives are written as open-ended statements, identify expected outcomes of learning but could not address assessment strategies and particular learning conditions (Oermann & Gaberson, 2006).

Specific objectives are associated with specific activities and information. It can be attained at a specific time and known as a short-term objective. The statements of specific objectives are directly related to expected learning outcomes and framed according to intended observable behavior. Generally, these are viewed as a clarification of general objectives. During the instructions and in daily lesson planning of units, it is suggested that it is good to concentrate on intended objectives that are more specific and related to long-lasting results, although it is too time-consuming to manage and monitor. Objectives mainly fall into three domains or categories that are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (McMillan, 1997).

### **Taxonomy of Educational Objectives**

Taxonomy is a division system and form in the hierarchy and establishes the nature of groups and relations with other components of the group. It makes it easy for the potential user with objectives and helps to

remove the communications barrier with others. If two educationists want to elaborate their views about the definition for understanding, not only words will be different but also meanings will be divergent, it is due to the diverse mental level of both educationists. According to Bloom's et al. (1956), taxonomy has some characteristics such as:

1. Descriptive in nature and offer basic criteria for assessment.
2. A crucial tool for assessment
3. Checks the mental level of students and provide bases for learning
4. Arranged from simple to complex.

Bloom and associates categorized objectives in the following categories: a) Cognitive, b) Affective, and c) Psychomotor. Cognitive objectives are linked with the thought, information, principles, and execution of ideas. These are associated with recalling and recognition of knowledge as well as developmental and intellectual skills. Noble (2004) stated that all emotional attitudes, interests, reactions, behaviours fell under an affective domain.

While the objectives which are allied with mental and psychomotor attributes of students obtain competencies by accomplishing different tasks.

#### **Cognitive Objectives/Domain**

Bloom presented this domain in 1956 which is arranged from simple to complex reasoning, related to an individual's mind, and generally, it is acquiring of information, knowledge, and understanding. This domain of learning has six levels which are briefly discussed below.

1. **Knowledge:** In Bloom's taxonomy (1956), knowledge is the lowest level of objectives. If a teacher of school delivers a lesson regarding Pakistan studies and next she faced some queries regarding topics that she has delivered in the previous class (Orlich, 2007).
2. **Comprehension:** It is categorized as the understanding stage of the learner. It is not merely a stage of rote learning but at this level, the learner recalls and demonstrates basic knowledge in their own words and understanding. For instance, if a learner describes a paragraph with a full understanding of the meaning, in his own words that's mean the skill of comprehension has been established (Orlich, 2007).
3. **Application:** It is the application of previous knowledge according to the situation which we acquired in classrooms. Learners' abstract reasoning is developed at the application level (Bloom, 1956).
4. **Analysis:** It is a high-level skill. Information is broken into parts in analysis level and establishes relationships, filter relevant and irrelevant material, and choose relevant one and discard irrelevant, select all vital points. In the analysis, relationships establish among different fragments, rules, and events.
5. **Synthesis:** To create new things, shape the knowledge and creativity are included in the synthesis. The learner builds his understanding through his intellectual skills and shapes new things.

6. **Evaluation:** Evaluating something means evaluation. The evaluation assesses the previous knowledge of the learner and makes judgments about him. A high level of thinking is involved in judgments. The cognitive domain has features about intellectual competencies recall and recognition of facts, ideas, and concepts of the intellectual development of critical reasoning, competencies in learners. From simple to complex, six major classifications are enlisted (Bloom, 1956).

### **Determine the Purpose of the Document Analysis**

All the aspects of teaching cannot be observed at a glance, what you want to learn, be focused, and start with specific goals. What document needed to review thoroughly or just as a part of the review to adjust instruction and evaluation will lead to your focus. The objective of the teaching of Pakistan studies in grade IX-X which is described in National curriculum 2006 is as follows

1. For independent state and sovereign, a sense of gratitude Allah Almighty is needed to be created. Emphasize the need for national harmony, integrity, and solidarity.
2. Enhancement of the students' reflection, analysis as well as creative abilities and trait of observation.
3. Endorse Pakistan's ideology, the endeavor of Muslims for independence, and to create a new Islamic state of welfare.
4. Students may familiar with the historical and political development of the constitution, which was faced during establishing Pakistan.
5. Enable students to appreciate and deal with the multi-disciplinary legacy of Pakistan for a better understanding of socio-cultural diversity as well as the idea of solidarity, unity in Pakistani's context.
6. Develop a sense of responsibility for the resources of Pakistan (physical, and human).
7. Make aware of the different elements of the social-economic scenario in the national context and for the development of society, the role played by Pakistan.
8. Acquaint students with the strategic position of Pakistan in "international politics exclusively relationship with Muslim and neighbor countries."
9. Inculcate the responsibilities and rights as a citizen of a sovereign and independent state.

### **Suggested teaching strategies in National curriculum in 2006 at grade IX-X**

Educators make sure the gratification of whatever the learner has been achieved as learning. Learners not only learning for evaluation purposes but also trained themselves as good citizens to face the risks of lives. Teachers and educators should adopt a strategy to attain these

objectives. By the use of proper pictures, charts, graphs, and multi-media the lecture should be prepared, problem-solving, and well planned. The teacher should ask thought-provoking queries regarding the topic of the unit to lessen the passiveness of children gets ready them active to give the response.

Group discussions and interactions also give opportunities to the learner to learn more. Discussion motivates the learner and provides massive information about the phenomenon under study, which polishes their assumptions with diverse opinions and thoughts. To share ideas and points of view everyone should be provided with an equal chance of discussion. Thought-provoking questions must arouse from the teacher which further elaborates on the topic of study such as what is your point of view regarding the topic? And at the end of the entire discussion teacher must briefly summarize or conclude the discussion.

One approach which is known as cooperative learning is the best one, via learner work together in teams and shape groups to boost learning of their own and others as well, students learn lots of techniques via this approach, for instance, sharing, critical thinking, sense of roles and responsibilities and management. By adopting these approaches students, behavior becomes more responsible towards school, teaching, and learning. How to deal with diverse people and students all are taught by this cooperative approach.

Pakistan Studies is taught as a compulsory subject at the secondary and higher secondary level to disseminate knowledge about history, establishment, geography, resources, climate, industry, foreign policy, administrative structure, human and constitutional developments in Pakistan. As students feel Pakistan Studies a boring subject. Teachers prefer to teach this course through the lecture method instead of applying activity-based teaching and discussion method. Students, school administration as well as parents give more preference to science subjects. Textbooks contain more facts and less explanation. Teachers only consult textbooks for their teaching purpose which may restrict the learning process of students.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Followings were the research objectives of the study:

1. To evaluate the question papers (2015-2017) group-I at the secondary level regarding knowledge, comprehension, and application category of the cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy.
2. To identify the errors and omissions in Pakistan Studies question papers (2015-2017) at the secondary level in the light of basic rules of test item construction.

### **Research Questions**

Following were the research questions of the study:

1. How far the question BISE question papers (2015-2017) truly assess the cognitive levels narrated in the national curriculum of Pakistan Studies?
2. What are the errors and omissions in Pakistan Studies question papers (2015-2017) at the secondary level?

### **Methodology**

This section includes research design, population, documents, and a sample of the study, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis procedures. The study was qualitative in nature in which the document analysis method was used. The cognitive domain with the reference of Bloom's Taxonomy was assessed at secondary level question papers (2015-2017) group-I of 10th class. The population of the study was comprised of all previous question papers of Pakistan Studies. Pakistan Studies' BISE Lahore question papers (2015-2017) of group-I of grade -X were sample of the study.

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

Question papers (2015-2017) of group-I of Pakistan Studies of grade -X where the instruments for this study. A self-developed checklist was administered which comprised the following aspects such as cognitive domain, objectives, ideology, social and cultural changes, political struggles, sacrifices of leaders, physiographic and climatic conditions, constitution, cultural heritage, power plans, languages, and philosophical and socio-cultural norms. For this purpose, the objectives were enlightened with the curriculum.

Research articles, dissertations, thesis textbooks, and grade-X question papers (2015-2017) of group-I and all other available documents of Pakistan Studies were consulted for the collection of data in this present study.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

In the present study researcher measured every question item of question papers (2015-2017) of group-I of Pakistan Studies of grade- X against Bloom's taxonomy. Three years past question papers (2015-2017) of group-I of BISE Lahore and were measured students' abilities in objective items of question papers according to Bloom's taxonomy and researcher analyzed how it was measured. In subjective type, questions researcher adopted the same procedure to assess the questions.

Table 1

*Analysis of MCQs of Question Papers (2015-2017)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>Total</b>
2015	100	-	-	100%
2016	100	-	-	100%
2017	100	-	-	100%

Table 1 shows the overall percentage of about MCQs of past papers (2015-2017). It was shown that in question papers (2015-2017) 100% of items were related to the knowledge ability of the cognitive domain. The MCQs assess the knowledge ability of the students. All the MCQs did not cover the curriculum as prescribed instructions are given by BISE as all the questions asked basic definitions and remaining abilities like comprehension and application abilities are not judged. Different verbs are not used most of the questions start from what, which, why, etc. All the chapters are covered according to prescribed instructions given by BISE Lahore but most of the questions are based on knowledge ability.

According to the rules of making MCQs options of each MCQ is not written in ascending order. Dates and names were written randomly and MCQs were also not written in list form as they did not follow the rule for making MCQs.

Table 2

*Analysis of Short Questions of Question Papers (2015-2017)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>Total</b>
2015	83.33	16.66	-	100%
2016	66.66	33.33	-	100%
2017	94.44	5.55	-	100%

Table 2 shows the overall percentage of short questions on past papers (2015-2017). It was shown in the paper (2015) 83.33% of items related to the knowledge category and 16.66% of items were linked with comprehension ability. Therefore no item was found to assess students' ability of application level. In the paper of Pakistan Studies (2016) 66.66% of items related to the knowledge category and 33.33% items were linked with comprehension ability. Therefore, students' application ability was not found to be assessed. In the paper of Pakistan Studies (2017) 94.44% of items related to the knowledge category and 5.55% items were linked with comprehension ability. Therefore, students' application ability was not found to be assessed. The abilities that are described in NC 2006 that are 'comprehension', 'application', 'analysis', 'synthesis', and 'evaluation' were to a great extent ignored.

Table 3

*Analysis of Long Questions of Question Papers (2015-2017)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>AP</b>	<b>AN</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Total</b>
2015	-	66.66	-	33.33	-	-	100%
2016	-	100	-	-	-	-	100%
2017	-	100	-	-	-	-	100%



Table 3 above shows the overall percentage of long questions of past papers (2015-2017). This table shows the overall percentage of short questions from past papers (2015-2017). Results revealed that 66.66% of items related to the comprehension category and 33.33% of items were linked with analysis ability. Students' application ability was not assessed. In the paper (2016) 100% of items are related to the comprehension category. In the paper (2017) 100% of items are of comprehension ability. Therefore no item was found on the assessment of students' knowledge and application ability.

### **Discussion**

Pakistan Studies is a type of subject that is taught at every level as a compulsory subject. The whole history of Pakistan covers this subject e.g. movement, political, disaster, challenges, economic condition, tradition, values, customs, natural disaster, etc.

The importance of Pakistan Studies lies in the fact that through this an individual comes across the history of Pakistan. And he becomes aware of the political condition of Pakistan with the past and present things. The students know the contributions of their great leaders, which type of sacrifices they had given for achieving Pakistan.

Pakistan Studies is an important subject as it helps students to know about the history of Pakistan and to get awareness about the political establishment. They came to know about the contribution of their leaders, different strategies, challenges, and hardships that were faced in the building of Pakistan as a separate state.

### **Research Question 1**

How far the question BISE question papers (2015-2017) truly assess the cognitive levels narrated in the national curriculum of Pakistan Studies?

The main objective of the study was to analyze the Pakistan Studies past papers (2015-2017) at the secondary level. The results of the analysis revealed that students' application ability was not found to be assessed. The abilities that are described in National Curriculum (NC) 2006 that are "comprehension", "application", "analysis", "synthesis" and "evaluation" were to a great extent ignored in MCQs. The findings of the study showed that the maximum focus was limited to the knowledge and comprehension categories. The study was supported by Malik and Zaheer (2012) who found that "maximum focus was on knowledge, comprehension and analysis ability was assessed in Pakistan Studies at secondary level". As the MCQs, short and long questions assess the knowledge ability of the students in Pakistan studies past paper (2015-2017). All the MCQs did not cover the curriculum as prescribed instructions given by BISE as all the questions asked only on basic definitions and remaining abilities like comprehension and application abilities are not assessed. Different verbs were not used as most of the questions start with what, which, why questions.

### Research Question 2

What are the errors and omissions in Pakistan Studies question papers (2015-2017) at the secondary level?

As it is depicted that ‘application’, ‘analysis’, ‘synthesis’, and ‘evaluation’ abilities were not truly assessed. It also supported the views of Jafri and Arain (2012) who found that there was an imbalance in the proportion of knowledge, understanding, and application; it reflected inappropriateness and unsuitability of the weightage of the objectives covered by the paper setters regarding Bloom cognitive levels. The MCQs, short, and long questions also assess the knowledge and comprehension ability of the students in Pakistan studies question papers (2015-2017). All the questions did not cover the curriculum as prescribed instructions are given by BISE as all the questions asked basic definitions and remaining abilities like application ability are not judged. Different verbs were not used most of the questions start with what, which, describe, etc. in short questions, no repetition was found at all. There is repetition at all in short questions. All the chapters are covered according to prescribed instructions given by BISE Lahore but most of the questions are based on “knowledge and comprehension ability of cognitive domain by Bloom Taxonomy”.

Therefore findings of the study reported that students’ “application”, “analysis”, “synthesis” and “evaluation” abilities were not truly assessed through the question papers of BISE at Secondary Level.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings of the present study revealed that in the assessment of students’ learning achievement in Pakistan Studies only students’ knowledge or information gaining ability is assessed. The abilities that have been described in NC 2006 including comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation were to a great extent ignored. Students’ ability to analyze things and generate new ideas is not assessed.

As a result, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Findings of the present study reported that BISE Lahore assessed the knowledge and comprehension ability of secondary school students in the subject of Pakistan Studies and did not focus on the application ability of students. Therefore, it is recommended that BISE Lahore may revise their assessment process in the subject of Pakistan Studies.
2. The teachers who are experts in the area of Pakistan Studies may assign the duty to set papers for secondary school students who are familiar with Pakistan Studies’ assessment techniques. To measure various abilities of students; paper setters should be trained in writing items for Pakistan Studies question papers.
3. The criteria for students’ assessment mentioned in the National Curriculum document of Pakistan Studies are not adopted properly.

Therefore, BISE, Lahore would follow the assessment criteria for developing items.

4. It is recommended to develop the cognitive abilities of students, for example, 'application', 'analysis', 'synthesis', and 'evaluation'. Therefore, for this purpose teachers' training is required.

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