

ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING MAJOR PROBLEMS FACED BY HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Dr Nasrullah Khan^{*1}, Sadia Sharif Ch², Ifra Khursheed³

^{*1}Assistant Professor Education Department Poonch University Haveli Campus

^{2,3}Lecturer M.D College Kahuta Haveli AJK,

ABSTRACT

The study explores the major issues faced by universities in Pakistan in delivering quality higher education and identifies strategies for improvement. It examines the main problems related to curricula, financial issues, gaps between university-industry connections, and weak research culture. The study also highlights internal challenges, including untrained faculty, political influences, nepotism and lack of pure merit based policy. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for practical educational policies, proper use of the available resources, and promotion of practical training to enhance the academic and professional skills of learners'. Data were collected through a survey from 120 university employees, including both academic and administrative staff, using yes/no options questionnaire. The findings underscore the necessity for reforms to bridge gaps in quality, governance, and accountability, in order to bring Pakistan's higher education system into compliance with international norms.

Keywords: University, Problems, Faculty, Curriculum, Administration.

INTRODUCTION

Universities are the places of higher learning and the place for getting professional, social and economic benefits in life. There are many excellent universities in Pakistan which offer quality higher education to the masses but still it is far behind from the developed world in the field of quality education. After 76 years of independence, we are unable to seek the best path of giving standard and useful education to the community. The major problems of higher education in Pakistan are the political leadership and lack of adequate interest in education. Education system in Pakistan is facing many problems regarding the use of modern technologies and strategies; therefore, most of the affording Pakistani students' are striving to get higher education in the foreign developed countries universities. After the establishment of Higher Education Commission in Pakistan the quality of higher education has considerably improved and developed as compared to past but still it needs

further efforts to make our higher education system standardized.

Jawaid et al. (2008) expressed that larger part of universities students begin smoking and so forth and the components that connected them to these terrible practices are companion connection, joy looking for, scholastic anxiety, fatigue and closeness between persons of inverse sex created by water channel sharing and so on. Therapeutic calling can assume a crucial part to control the use of smoking and to make mindfulness about its unsafe impacts however the understudies and the educators of medicinal schools and colleges are likewise required in this risky movement. Higher instructive associations are impassive about the issues of the instructors which as results make many other issues which included inspiration, execution, educators' and learners improvement. Therefore, the teachers should be made responsible

for all the related areas to bring changes and to upgrade the system.

The major factors that hampering the link amongst government, industry and university are lack of trust, government made guidelines, policies and procedures as well as technologies but nearly all such rules and regulations are just made in documents and not implemented by any of the government till now (DART Newsletter, 2011). Research is the spine for advancement of any country so we have to develop the examination society in a long run prospects so for this we require vital arranging, good atmosphere and the most imperative conferred initiative. Through all that we can bring positive changes and enhance our advanced education establishments as an examination arranged higher learning focuses. It is fact that there is lack of economical, physical and human resources for advanced level education in Pakistan but it is also a reality that we are not utilizing the available resources properly and with justice. The quality of education is poor because of many political and policies weaknesses reasons but at the same time the role of the internal staff of the universities may not be kept aside because they are the same responsible for the poor quality of education in Pakistan. As most of the team members are not involve in malpractices but promote the culture of nepotism and other mean activities by using its efforts and offices. Therefore, there is a need for reforms both outside and inside university for bringing good change and improvement.

Objectives of the Study

To study the current problems faced by Pakistani universities.

To evaluate universities academic strengths and weaknesses.

To study management problems at universities level.

Research Questions

What are the current problems faced by Pakistani universities?

What are the major academic strengths and weaknesses at university level?

Literature Review

According to Rehman (2012) In Pakistan the focus is always on quantity and not on quality of higher education reason being that we are lagging behind the world in the field of quality education. One of the big problems is the problem of outdated curriculum, which affects our education system and cannot produced scholars to do compete the developed nations and to build the power of reasoning in them. All stakeholders in education felt the current studies as worthless because of old curriculum and traditional teaching techniques (Obaid, 2012). Syllabi/ Courses developed in our country are not according to the international standards, therefore, many useful and demanding courses are not taught at higher level yet in Pakistan and the teachers prefer to select those curricula's which are of their personal ease, interest and choice liking, disliking and expertise and not as per the demand of the learners (Haider, 2008).

Mukhtar (2012) stated that in developed countries the budget for higher education is very high. In Pakistan education sector is derived from getting its needed financial support from the government and unfortunately, the foreign aid in this sector is also very low. Government of Pakistan is spending 1.8% to 2.8% of its GDP on its education which is very poor. Khan (2011) stated that universities trying to solve their financial problems by giving more and more admissions to the students who may be weak in grades or may lack in competencies which ultimately creates bad impact on the overall performance of the universities because when it admits a large number of weak students then it must be its responsibility to pass it out.

The compensation, money related remunerates and advantages for the staff are low as per the increasing average cost for basic items in Pakistan. HEC is striving its best to give offices to their competent and deserving instructors and it likewise procuring outside staff for the elevation of instructive gauges in Pakistan (Rao, 2003).

According to Khan & Bilal (2012) there is no connection between the learning organizations and industrial organizations in the developing countries like Pakistan which ultimately deprived the educated young from their proper induction in the industries.

According to Ahmad & Junaid, (2008) at present the universities is not producing the graduates needed by the industries because of the low quality teaching, lack of practical trainings and no link between universities and market place. Any foundation is famous through its employees yet the Pakistani universities are verging on frail in workforce improvement and have just 1800 PhD employees other than the necessity of seven thousands (Analysis of higher education in Pakistan, 2011-12). Rehman & Khan, (2012) stated that the technique for instructing is generalization and there is no prepping in the instructive framework because of the absence of expert educators this is on account of inclusion of legislative issues in instructor arrangement and the instructor instructs just to gain.

According to Haider (2008) there is no harmony between educator and students proportion in universities of Pakistan, the admission of learners' is consistently expanded yet no expansion in particular staff to experience the prerequisites of various ranges and a short number of universities teaching staff are holding simply MA/MSc degrees and have no advanced education experience and practical learning. It means that there is a lack of trust between seniors and juniors teachers about the knowledge and skills of research conduction and promotion (Lodhi, 2011).

Aly (2007) stated that assessment of education system should provide data about teaching, teacher's skills, teaching outcome, students' learning and their mental development. It should cover the total areas from classrooms to graduation at university level but unfortunately, Pakistan has no such valid evaluation system for all areas and it is only limited to the examination.

According to Ismail (2012) to guarantee the nature of training in Pakistan there is need to build up the criteria and benchmarks for inner and outside review to evaluate the nature of instruction at both office and college levels so for this, self-appraisal at both scholastic and organization levels must be the primary stair on the track of value. There is need to audit the organizations against the global quality benchmark by building up the assessment criteria to consider the universal shifted circumstance and to enhance the powerless zones of higher instructive foundations like educational

programs standard, base, innovation, authoritative arrangements, approaches usage, measures of understudy admission and exploration environment (Ullah et al 2012).

Wine and Miller (2012) expressed that individual's capacity and school level learning confers an incredible effect on the scholarly accomplishment of an understudy at college level.

Retallick and Mithani (2003) expressed that instruction can be enhanced by building up the instructive systems at school based level and the insufficiencies exist in both private and open organizations in Pakistan, which work without appropriate base, gear, proficient instructors, maturity instructive strategy and the nonattendance of libraries. Along these lines, this conventional instructive framework prompts low quality training and the system as whole will be very outdated and out work in today time. Sarwar (2011) stated that both the factors i-e internal as well as external influence the teaching learning process in universities, which ultimately deprived students from quality education. Sometime the administration approaches are positive towards some students' or teachers' and negative towards others, therefore, those blue eyed students/teachers threaten other teachers for marks or other such favors'.

According to Mukhtar (2012) DAIs ought to form the learners toward social work and lean toward those pupils who work for the advancement of the general public; however our university students are most of the time involved in politics and other deceptive and useless or harmful exercises.

Obaid (2012) reported that the universities comprise of various on-screen characters who make the inside and outer impact to control the basic leadership procedure, to pick up their own advantage and to accomplish their own destinations. In such type of teaching learning institutions the learners was most of the time found prone and inclined towards such negative activities. Therefore, learning institutions should be making free from all such malpractices and activities.

Hoodbhoy (2005) expressed that the greater part of the DAIs learners or even graduates can't talk or compose any dialect well, they can't express clear contention, are not figured out how to think and

have no inventive expression however are included in debatable and unhealthy unions and unfair means. According to Mukhtar (2012) some of the major academic problems faced by DAIs and other learning organizations are including improper utilization of the available facilities and resources, the distribution and services of faculties among Public & Private sectors, lack of proper supervisions and monitoring systems, lack of the procedures for making standardized Private Universities, emphasize on quantity rather than on quality education and lack of research culture.

According to Chaudry (2004) the HEIs in Pakistan facing severe management problem. Management issues to all learning organizations are due to political structure, lack of qualified leaders and lack of merit-based appointments.

According to Raza & Naqvi (2011) lack of proper internship and practical facilities for students of HEIs and Universities and weak sort of coordination and connection between Universities and companies or marketing places, there is no proper linkages in banking sector and the learners of professional organizations and also agricultural and other sectors of marketing and other companies. Mohanthy (2000) documented that unemployment of masses is one of the leading problems of Pakistan, in general, and those of educated people in particular, because jobless parents cannot afford the fee and other expenses of their children and also when there will be no job for educated peoples than how and why one should spend money on higher education. Therefore, students join businesses and most often drop out.

According to Shafqat (2009) most of university teachers are nonprofessional and untrained. They

don't have proper and required experiences and abilities toward the begin of their expert vocation and targeted career. It is tiny bit simple to instruct in instructive foundations in Pakistan, thusly, every informed adolescent would love to join showing field regardless of his/her absence of interest and experience which ultimately damage the profession of education. There is a great issue of language as a medium of instruction. English should be made as a medium of instruction for all levels of education and there should be only one medium for all types of schools and universities to improve the status of our education and make it in line to the world education system (Uddin, 2014). Adeeb (2000) expressed that the creating nations will be record for almost half of the aggregate world population as compared with 66% in 1950. The government should promote awareness about the population issue and take measures to stop the addition of further rapid increase in the country.

Methodology

It was a descriptive survey research. The data were collected from 120 university employees including both academic and administration staff.

Population and Sample

Population of the study were all the employees of the universities in Pakistan. The sample of the study was 120 faculty and administration staff.

Research Tool

A questionnaire with yes no options was developed for data collection.

Table 1. Responses of the university employees

No	Statement	Yes	No
1	Curriculum problems	60	40
2	Financial problems	62	38
3	Reward and Motivation	70	30
4	University-Industry Gap	55	45
5	Politicization and Conflicts	50	50
6	Recruitment, Retention and Method of Teaching	52	48
7	Corruption Problem	56	46
8	Accountability Problems	50	50
9	Research Culture and Support	40	60
10	Implementation Problems of Policies	52	48
11	Governance and Self-Assessment	50	50
12	Student Intake Problems	30	70
13	Internal and External Influences	52	48
14	Unfair Means/Activities	53	47
15	Academic Problems	55	45
16	Management Problems	56	44
17	Problems of Practical Work	57	43
18	Social Problem	45	55
19	Unemployment Problem	70	30
20	Non Professional Teachers	45	55
21	Language Problem	63	37
22	Population Explosion	60	40
23	Students' Unrest	51	49
24	Emotional Integration	53	47
25	Reappointments and extensions	75	25

The data reflects various challenges in education, highlighting areas of concern based on stakeholder responses. High agreement is evident on issues such as reappointments and extensions (75%), reward and motivation (70%), unemployment problems (70%), language problems (63%), financial problems (62%), population explosion (60%), and curriculum problems (60%). These issues signify pressing challenges requiring immediate attention and policy intervention. Moderate agreement is seen in challenges like the university-industry gap (55%), academic problems (55%), corruption (56%), and problems of practical work (57%), indicating substantial concern but not unanimous agreement. Issues like recruitment, retention, teaching methods (52%), implementation of policies (52%), internal and external influences (52%), and emotional integration (53%) also fall within this range, showing varying stakeholder perspectives. Neutral responses (50%-50%) on topics such as politicization, accountability, and governance

suggest a divide in opinion, potentially reflecting diverse institutional contexts or experiences. Low agreement on research culture and support (40%) and student intake problems (30%) highlights areas where stakeholders do not perceive immediate concern but which may still require long-term solutions. Conversely, concerns like social problems (55% "No") and non-professional teachers (55% "No") are seen as less critical by the majority.

Conclusion

The study's findings revealed some of the major challenges facing by Pakistani universities. It were included both academic and administration sections working at university level. The main issues were reappointment problems, financial constraints, lack of motivation, unemployment, curriculum shortcomings, and language barriers were widely acknowledged by stakeholders, highlighting the necessity for immediate policy measures to improve governance, accountability,

and resource management. The study found that the curriculum and current teaching methods were not meeting the needs of the youth to compete to the world. Challenges like the university-industry disconnect, practical work deficiencies, corruption, and ineffective teaching methods received moderate agreement, suggesting their prevalence varies across institutions. Meanwhile, neutral opinions on politicization, accountability, and governance point to a divergence in perspectives, potentially influenced by differing institutional environments and experiences. Although research culture and student intake were rated as less pressing, these areas demand strategic, long-term efforts to bring Pakistan's higher education system up to global standards. Similarly, issues perceived as less critical, such as non-professional educators and social concerns, should not be overlooked in the pursuit of comprehensive improvement. Addressing these issues and challenges with coordinated strategies and evidence-based policies, the quality and relevance of higher education in Pakistan could be enhanced. It was also concluded that university were using nearly the same assessment and evaluation processes which also need up gradation and modifications.

Recommendations

1. The university need to adopt modern teaching strategies and curricula.
2. The process of appointment and retention may be made more transparent and merit based.
3. Universities need to make affiliation to the industries for exploring new opportunities for the learners'.

Policies may be made more aligned to the developed world.

REFERENCES

Adeeb, M. A. (2000) Comparative study of developed & developing countries. Multan: Beacon Books.

Ahmad, S., H. & Junaid, F., A. (2008) A Conceptual Framework for Developing Strategic Partnership between University and Industry in Pakistan with Particular Reference to NWFP. In Proceeding of 2nd International Conference on Assessing Quality of Higher Education. University of

the Punjab, Lahore. From 1st-3rd December.

Aly, J. H. (2007). Education in Pakistan a White Paper revised - document to debate and finalize the National Education Policy. Retrieved 14 March 2007. from <http://www.moe.gov.pk/nepr>.

Analysis of higher education in Pakistan (2011) chapter 5, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, Pakistan, retrieved www.google.com.pk/ministry/highereducation/analysis/.

Chaudhry (2004) 'On the need for a multidisciplinary approach to education for knowledge management', Library Review, Vol. 52 , No. 2, pp. 65-69.

DART Newsletter (2011) "keeping a watch on economy, industry and trade"

Haider, Zubair, Syed (2008) Nonpartisan Education Review, Essay, Vol.4, No.2, 2008, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

Hoodbhoy, P. (2009). World Bank Help for Pakistan's Education - A Poisoned Chalice? Newspaper Article "DAWN", 18 January. Retrieved June 20, 2015, from <http://www.dawn.com/op.htm>.

Hoodbhoy, P. (2005). Reforming Our Universities. Lahore. The Daily Dawn (March 3,2005) .

Hoodbhoy, P. (1998). Pakistani Universities: Which way Out? In Hoodbhoy (Ed.) Education and the State: Fifty years of Pakistan. Karachi: Oxford University press.

Ismail (2012), "self-assessment & higher education. www.google.com.pk/self-assessment/notes/higher-education.

Jawaid A, Zafar AM, Rehman TU, Nazir MR, Ghafoor ZA, Afzal O, Khan JA (2008) Knowledge, attitudes and practice of university students regarding waterpipe smoking in Pakistan, International Journal Tuberculosis Lung Diseases, Sep;12(9):1077-84.

Khan, M. M. (2011). Issues of Access in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in Islamabad Pakistan. PhD thesis. University of Massachusetts – Amherst. Open Access Dissertations.

- Khan, I & Bilal (2012) Issues and Prospects Behind the Depressed Higher Education in Pakistan , Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business Vol 4, No 7, 2012.
- Lodhi (2011) A pilot study of researching the research culture in Pakistani public Universities: the academics' perspective" Vol. 31 PP.473-479.
- Mohanthy, J. (2000) Current trends in higher education. New Delhi India: Deep & Deep.
- Mukhtar Uzma , Zohurul Islam, Sununta Siengthai (2012), "conflicts in higher education and perceived quality of education: empirical evidence from Pakistan.
- Obaid, Zia,. (2012), "public university as a political arena" www.google.com.pk. 2015
- Rao, V. K. (2003). Higher education. New Delhi, India: A. P. H. Public Corporation.
- Retallick, J., & Mithani, S. (2003). The impact of a professional development program: Case study from Pakistan. Journal of In-service Education, 29(3), 405-422.
- Rehman, S. U. (2012) Measuring service quality in public and private sector university libraries of Pakistan. Pakistan Journal of Library & Information Science, 13. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/pjlis/pdf/pjlis-13-rehman.pdf>.
- Rehman. H, and Khan Nushad (2012), "flaws in Pakistan's educational system" Interdisciplinary Journals of Contemporary Research in Business Vol. 4 No, 1.
- Sarwar, Z. (2011) 'Project-based learning: overview and activities for large classes' (handout for TELC panel discussion at IATEFL).
- Shafqat, Ali Shah, Syed (2009) Impact of Teachers Behaviour on the Academic Achievement of University Students. PhD thesis, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi.
- Uddin, Naser Yacoub Adel (2012). "Suggested Theoretical Framework for universities Governorship and Indications of Implementing it in light of Comprehensive Quality Requirements", accepted research for publication in the coming numbers of

the Journal of Developing University Performance – Al-Mansourah University.

- Ullah, H., M.Ajmal and F. Rahman (2012), "analysis of quality indicator of higher education in Pakistan".
- Wine, R and Miller (2012 0, "the effect of individual and school factors on university students" ISSN 1329-2676.