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English essay

The strengths and weaknesses
of education through the
open university.

Outline:

1 Introduction:

- Hook
- General Statement
- Thesis Statement.

2 Strengths of education through
open university.

(i) Provide flexibility.

- Blessing for those who cannot
acquire education regularly.
- Students can earn as well
alongwith studying.

(ii) Education through open univer-
sity is affordable.

- Affordable fee of open universities.

· 1) difference of fee structure between private and open universities

(iii) Save time travelling to university.

· Students can attend lectures everywhere.

· Students can continue with their jobs.

(iv) open universities offer diverse programmes to students.

· Students are offered with diverse programmes from matric to postgraduates.

3 Weaknesses of education through open university.

(i) Limited access to resources.

· Such universities do not offer research programmes.

· Lack of well equipped labs.

(ii) Lack of face to face interaction.

· Limited interaction of students with instructors.

(iv) These universities do not offer any financial aid.

- No Scholarship for students
- Less salaries offered to teachers

(v) Perceived lack of Prestige.

- Distance learning is considered a inferior.
- Candidates from traditional universities are off for job.

4 Conclusion.

Essay

AS Nelson Mandela said; "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Education is the most important tool that the nations can use for their progress and development. The nations which are well-aware of the power of education, those nations can exactly use this tool to change their fate. The educational institutes are equally important. Especially in the era of science and

technology, the distance or online education is becoming popular among the students. Open universities can be best defined as "the universities that offer courses through distance learning, employing either traditional, technology-integrated, and sometimes entirely online methods. Education through open universities has some advantages for students including an opportunity to get education along with performing other duties. Moreover, through open universities the students can get affordable education with less fee as compared to regular university. It's also time saving as students have no need to go to universities. Lastly, open universities offer diverse programmes to students starting from metric to postgraduates programmes. But as every thing has some pros and cons, the open universities

have also myriads of disadvantages. Some of which are; these universities offer limited access to resources, limited interaction between students and instructors. Also these universities do not offer any financial aid to the students and teachers as well. The most obvious disadvantage of these universities is perceived lack of prestige.

This essay will reflect on strengths and weaknesses of education through open universities.

Starting with the strengths of education through open universities, these universities are a blessing for those who cannot acquire education regularly due to family or financial problems. Especially for those, living in remote areas, open universities provide educational opportunities.

Moreover, the students with any

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kind of disabilities can be benefitted as well. The girls who are not allowed to go to universities for higher education can get quality education from open universities. Even the students who cannot afford education from regular universities can not only get education from open universities, but also can continue with their job. So, education through open universities is truly a blessing for some people. Allama Iqbal open university, the first open university in Asia and 2nd in the world, is providing education to the Pakistani students as well as international students. Almost 1.3 million students are graduated from AIU. This is the proof of the fact that many students are taking advantage of open universities

Secondly, the education through open universities are easily affordable to the students, as there is a clear difference of fee structure between the open and regular universities.

For instance, the Allama Iqbal open university offers an undergraduate degree Programme for between PKR 20,000 to 40,000. Similarly, virtual university is also affordable option with relatively low fee.

But the average fee for a undergraduate Programme in a Private university is PKR 500,000 to 12,00,000. Hence the open universities are also affordable for the

students. Moreover, open universities allow the students to study from anywhere, saving the costs associated with hostels etc. Additionally students do not have to buy books as open universities provide online resources which are far more

cheaper than purchasing physical textbooks.

Apart from affordability, the distance learning is also time saving. Unlike the regular education, in online education students do not have to move from one place to another. Students can attend the classes from anywhere. Students can also choose when in their day they can study. Some students are early birds and perform better in the morning. But at the same time, some students are night owl and prefer to study in the evenings. So students can study according to their plans. In addition to this, as students can study from anywhere so, they can also start a job along with studying, and can set their study schedule according to that.

Last but not the least, the online ^{education} has also an advantage that the open universities offer diverse programmes to the students. As we can see, there are many regular universities which are offering very few and selected programmes. For example, if we compare Allama Iqbal open university and well-known university of Pakistan "Arid agriculture university". There is a clear difference in them regarding the programmes offered. As Allama Iqbal open university offers myriads of programmes starting from matric to postgraduate degree programmes. So, here students have variety of options to choose and they can choose and study any programme with affordable fee as well.

Along with many advantages, the distance education has some disadvantages as well. First of all these kind of universities offer limited access to resources. The open universities often provide online library resources, so students may not have access to physical libraries. Moreover, there may not be any well equipped laboratory, which the students can use to boost their learning. The lack of well equipped laboratories has impeded the research work of students, and research work plays a pivotal role in the learning of students. But due to these factors the students do not have access to labs and research work. Hence in this perspective, the online education is unable to provide quality education to the students.

Moving further, another weakness that the open universities has, is the lack of interaction between the students and teacher. As the students attend online and recorded lectures, so there is no direct interaction of students with instructors and peers.

Furthermore, these universities have a large number of students so it's difficult for the teacher to pay individualized attention to the students so, online lectures are not that much effective for the students. In a regular university, the students have a greater chance to interact with the teacher, and teacher can also pay individualized attention.

If the students have any question regarding their topic or subject, they can discuss it with their teacher at

any time. But distant learning does not provide such benefits to the students.

Thirdly, the regular universities offer many scholarships to their students such as the scholarship for exceptionally talented students, scholarships for orphans and some other scholarship.

Not only the students, but teachers in the regular universities can also enjoy the perks of being a regular teacher. But in the case of open universities, the students and as well as the teachers do not get any financial aid. No scholarships are offered to the students. The instructors also get low salaries. Even these teachers have to perform some extra tasks and they are more burdenized as compared to the regular

teachers The instructors of open universities have to attend seminars, conferences and they also have to travel from one place to another to fulfill their duties. But still they are not offered good salaries. The salary of an assistant Professor at Allama Iqbal open university is 90,000 PKR. But the salary for the same post at Arid agriculture university is 60,000. So, the open universities are not providing any financial aid to the students and teachers as well.

Apart from aforementioned weaknesses, the open universities have one more weak point. That is, the lack of prestige. Whether an open university is providing quality education

or not, but there is a common misconception about open universities, that they are not so good for the students especially in Pakistan, distance learning is considered inferior to the regular education. For instance, if there are two candidates who applied for a job in Pakistan. one student is graduated from open university and the other from a regular university. so, preference would be given to the one who is graduated from regular university. so, the open universities lack the prestige and are considered inferior.

Conclusion:-