

The strengths and weaknesses of education through Open University

OUTLINE

I. Introduction:

- a. Hook
- b. Concept of Open University
- c. Background information
- d. Thesis: While education through Open University in Pakistan has some strengths like flexibility, Accessible for All, familiarity with technology, innovations, no discrimination in class, but it has more weaknesses as well such as lack of direct interaction with teachers, Resource constraints, Digitally divide, Lack of funds for research, Overburdened faculty, lack of perception and recognition of degrees. The government of Pakistan should take immediate steps to resolve these issues.

II. Main Body:

E. Strengths of education through Open University:

1. Flexibility (Flexible time (at which) for study, No need to travel on campus, ^{balancing work life,} recorded lectures can listen again)
2. Accessible for All (No age limit, minimum or no previous academic ^{excellence} ~~score~~ required, cost effective)
3. Familiarity with technology (More exposure to technology).
4. Innovations (variety of courses offered, Students can customize according to their needs)
5. No discrimination

F. Weaknesses of education through Open University:

1. Lack of direct interaction (Participants write kept off, less question and answer session, lack of immediate corrections)
2. Resource constraints (Practice less, No library and laboratories facility available)
3. Discipline Issues (Difficult for teachers to maintain discipline, students need ^{self-}motivation and discipline to attend lectures)
4. Lack of funds (No scholarship for research and other purposes)
5. Over-burdened Faculty (Low wages, attending seminars, workshops, no time for research)
6. Lack of Perception and Recognition (less recognition to degree for job purposes)
7. Isolation from peers (leads to depression, anxiety, suicidal cases)
8. Network Issues (Poor connection hindrance to education)

G. Way forward.

1. Provide more resources to Open Universities.
2. Provide more funds to Open Universities.
3. Provide recognition to degrees
4. Improve Internet connectivity especially in rural areas.

III. Conclusion

THE ESSAY

During the second world war, Churchill received a message from Hitler. Hitler made him an offer if Churchill did not bomb German Universities, he would also not destroy his ones. Churchill immediately accepted his offer and said if England was destroyed and Cambridge and Oxford Universities were spared then English culture would also survive. This is the importance of higher education. Even after defeat, Germany restored its position on the victory stand only because of her universities. So, both Traditional and Open Universities are very important for any country. Open University is a university with an open door academic policy, with minimal or no entry requirements. Open University may employ specific teaching methods, such as open supported learning or distance learning. First ever Open University was established in 1858, (University of London External Study System). Then, Ireland, South Africa and other countries established their Open Universities. But Asia's First Open University was founded in 1974 in Islamabad, Pakistan as Allama Iqbal Open University. Till now, it is working and provide benefits to our education by allowing flexibility, accessible for all, familiarity with technology, innovations and no discrimination in classrooms. But, it has weaknesses as well such as lack of direct interaction with teacher, resource constraints, Digitally divide, lack of funds, lack of perception, overburdened faculty and lack of recognition of degrees. Unlike Pakistan, developed countries are successfully dealing with these issues and make their country progress. So, government of Pakistan should also take some immediate steps to resolve these issues.

To discuss the strengths of education through Open University, first comes Flexibility of time and travel. Students can study the course materials anytime they desire. There is no restrictions on time limit so that students can manage their family or work life. If they are doing any job along with study, then they can do study at night or at whatever time ^{that} suits them. In addition, there is freedom of space as students can study at their homes or even office. It is a life long learning in Open Universities. Online learning opportunity provided by Open Universities give benefit to students by cut down their expense of travel. Moreover, recorded lectures also provide the opportunity to listen again and again because there are some students that needs to take time for complete understanding so it is very beneficial for them. In Pakistan, the number of Open Universities are quite low so government should initiate some more work on this side.

Next comes accessibility, Open Universities serve as beacons of accessibility, breaking down barriers to education and empowering learners from all walks of life to pursue their academic goals. Through their inclusive admission policies and flexible learning pathways, open Universities welcome students irrespective of their age and academic background. It is a life long learning - no age limit is required. Anyone can study at any phase of his life. Furthermore, Open Universities required no academic excellence. If any student ^{at secondary educational level} unable to get good score for any reason then he still have a chance to get higher education through these Open

universities. Majority of students desire for higher education but could not get admission in Traditional universities due to either ^{high} merit or ^{high} fees. But this problem is solved by open universities by giving admissions at low merit and at low fees which is a very good contribution in our education system. As, Allama Iqbal Open University, enroll around one Lac students yearly.