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Title: "Higher Education in Pakistan: Ills and Remedies"

### Outline

1. Introduction

2. The Situation of Higher Education in Pakistan

3. Ill's in Pakistan's Higher Education

a- Inadequate funding

b- Teaching quality is below par.

c- Outdated syllabi

d- No focus on innovation and Ideas Generation.

e- Outdated Infrastructure

f- Lack of research oriented culture

~~t- Remedies to cure the ills in Higher Edu~~

t- The impacts of distorted higher education structure in the country:

i- unemployment

ii- increase in crime rate

iii- brain drain

## 5. Remedies to cure the ills in Higher Education in Pakistan:

- a- Increased public funding for universities
- b- Teachers' training and refresher courses
- c- Updation of syllabi in line with modern day requirements
- d- Increased focus on skill enhancement and technical education
- e- Providing scholarships through a competitive process.
- f- Student and Teacher exchange programs nationally and internationally

## 6. Conclusion

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"The primary purpose of a university is not to prepare students for a career, it is to prepare them for life," said I. Ben Nelson.

It implies the concept that the sole purpose of a university <sup>education</sup> is not to get grades or degree, but rather to prepare the students to confront the challenges of life. At present, the situation is ~~not~~ does not comply with

Nelson's idea. ~~The education~~ ~~at~~ university and college level education does not fulfill this purpose. ~~This~~ The education imparted at this level; the higher education, ~~is~~ presents a grim picture in Pakistan. This sector is neglected and there are multiple reasons of setbacks to higher education in

Pakistan. It operates on outdated syllabus and teaching methodology. Moreover, research culture is being pushed at the backstage, with ~~no~~ little or no focus on innovation and ideas generation. Ultimately,

as there is no compliance of education and industry; a large population of youth <sup>being</sup> ~~is~~ unemployed. This leads to serious socio-economic hurdles for the country. The dilemma

can be sorted by introducing reforms in this sector ranging from teachers training to increased <sup>ing</sup> focus on skill enhancement and technical education. In short, Higher Education in Pakistan is in peril. It is facing serious challenges such as outdated syllabi and ~~lack of research~~ <sup>cutting</sup> in absence of innovation, which need to be dealt with reform process to pave way for its progress and effectiveness.

The situation of Higher Education ~~of~~ <sup>in</sup> Pakistan is alarming. ~~Edue~~ This sector has been neglected since inception. The increasing political and economic disturbances in the country shifted the focus of policy makers from education to other affairs, resulting in a distorted <sup>standard</sup> ~~version~~ of education in universities and colleges. They ~~present a picture of~~ <sup>seem</sup> more like political wings rather than centres of excellence in research and skills. It is due to this reason that not even a single Pakistani university could secure a position among top universities' rankings

2024. The Higher Education standard, thus, portrays a dismal outlook in Pakistan.

Among the various ills in Pakistan's Higher Education, inadequate funding is the foremost issue. The insufficient budget allocation results in limited access to quality education. It results in lack of resources, the technology and equipments, which are necessary to learn modern techniques used worldwide. As a result, the students ~~lag behind their~~ could not get the required exposure to compete with a market ~~where such tools are used and~~ where their competitors are highly skilled.

According to HEC, only 0.24% of GDP is allocated to higher education and less than 2.0% to education overall in Pakistan.

This is how, lack of funding exacerbates the educational crisis in universities.

Moreover, shortage of qualified faculty is another challenge. A lack of well-trained and experienced teachers affect the quality of education at higher levels. The teachers who are not well-equipped

with the usage of modern gadgets could not prepare a generation with techno-friendly research ~~and~~-based frameworks.

These are the ultimate need of ~~current~~ present world. A low phd-faculty ratio in Pakistan is the indicators of ~~research~~ their constrained potential to mentor students in advanced research or produce high impact publications. (HEC, 2023). Thus, the unproductive faculty brings educational ~~&~~ downfall in the country.

Another challenge in this regard is the outdated syllabi that doesnot ~~complete~~ comply with the knowledge required for the individuals accessing job market. The curriculum is hardly revised. The inclusion of practical-based courses is negligent. It thus prepares a youth bulge ~~who are~~ lacking critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity - the social skills which are the minimal requirement of any professional ~~at~~ worldwide. Techno-vocational Educational Training centres in Pakistan fail to produce employable graduates due to lack of practical

~~thinking~~ training and outdated curricula. The outdated syllabus, thus holds a top position in replenishing the quality of higher education in the country.

Furthermore, little or no focus on innovation and generation of ideas in gives rise to crisis situation. There are hardly any efforts made to align the learning with one's credibility. As a result, no novel ideas, ~~to~~ to enhance the quality and of education seem to emerge. The students are not enriched with modern tools and practices to think scientifically or and perform openly their experimentation and experiences, in order to make them aware about every aspect of <sup>their</sup> ~~a~~ finding. Yuval Noah Harari in his book 21 lessons for 21st century says that we no longer search for information. Instead we Google. And as we rely on google for answers, so our ability to search for information by ourselves diminishes. It implies the concept that our <sup>higher</sup> education system follows the similar track of non-innovation and

restricted experimentation.

The infrastructure constraints further add to the crisis in higher education in Pakistan. The poorly stocked libraries, ~~ineff~~ insufficient laboratory supplies and lack of research centers retard the learning process. The students who are not well-read about their past, the ~~past~~ history, the successful nations' histories ~~do not~~ could not get the courage to adopt these models of successful nations ~~in order~~ to flourish. Consequently, these barriers affect the learning process and delimit the quality of education in the country. Kami Garcia, an American writer, quoted in her book "Beautiful Creatures" that "without libraries what ~~we~~ have we? We have no past and no future." It thus holds importance in maintaining the quality of education.

Additionally, the lack of research-oriented culture is an ~~issue~~ notable issue in higher education in Pakistan. The students are not well aware of the importance



of research and the techniques used to conduct it, which seems to be the greatest cause behind the lack of research culture.

They, in turn, fail to develop research skills required for bringing reforms in the society. This ultimately could not bridge the gap between the problems and their solutions, necessary to work for progress of nation. International rankings show that Pakistan stands at number 20 out of 245 in the category of countries with most publications in scientific research. Thus, the death of research culture exacerbates the higher education crisis in Pakistan.

The higher education in Pakistan challenges in Pakistan pose adverse impacts on the socio-economic fabric of the country. It leads to various ~~problems~~<sup>crises</sup> such as unemployment, increase in crime rate in the society, brain drain and many others. They emerge due to the very problems in the higher education i.e. rote learning, below par teaching methods and curriculum issues. As a

result, the country becomes socially and economically vulnerable to ~~face~~ <sup>counter</sup> the challenges. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) estimates show that nearly 40% of Pakistanis want to leave the country, mainly due to economic difficulties, political uncertainty, lack of educational opportunities, lack of employment, inflation and terrorism. In this way, these <sup>in higher education</sup> ills <sup>negatively</sup> impact the country and add to the burden in its internal and external problems.

To counter the ills in higher education in Pakistan, the reform process needs to be materialized and strengthened. The foremost remedy in this regard is to ensure increased public funding for universities and affiliated colleges. It could help <sup>attain</sup> inadequate access to the resources, technology, laboratories, linguistic centres, and libraries necessary for the provision of modern education. It could ultimately pave way for attaining socio-economic progress in the country, and

reducing the ills present in the country i.e unemployment, brain drain and others. The example of Norway, which allocates highest percentage of its GDP to education, is considerable. It allocates 6.6% for education resulting in <sup>the</sup> country ~~with~~ at the forefront of global progress. This is how, sufficient funding could make improvements in the country's higher education.

Following the same argument, teachers' training and refresher courses at higher education level could benefit the system. Teachers' training regarding classroom environment, instruction and ~~course~~ learning strategies could foster social skills, as well as enhance the ~~per~~ problem solving and decision-making capabilities among students. This would help them in paving way for a career-oriented approach. Also, the training involving technology-friendly environment should be promoted, so that ~~the~~ expertise in <sup>this</sup> tech-domain could benefit both students and teachers to compete the international

levels. Therefore, refresher courses <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ training ~~sem~~ programs complying the present-day ~~needs~~ demands need to be promoted for enhancing the level of higher education at national level.

More importantly, updation of syllabi in line with modern requirements is also a need of the hour.

Reviewing the curriculum policies annually could allow the policy makers to <sup>update</sup> ~~make~~ the ~~modern~~ curriculum with the changing needs of market and society. Digital competence and technological literacy can be promoted by aligning the syllabus with ~~such~~ the contemporary <sup>ra</sup> needs.

This would eventually boost the educational standard and pave way for economic and social security of the country. ADB's appraisal of Indian model of education: Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS) scheme. <sup>It</sup> ~~which~~ focuses on financial literacy, digital competence and the skills needed in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, by adopting such

measures, the country could strengthen its educational merit.

Another remedial step in this regard is providing scholarships through a competitive process. It can be done to promote meritocracy and then selecting the well deserved students to come to the forefront. This step can enhance inclusivity of learners from ~~all~~ all backgrounds and ultimately would work hard for real-time learning and benefitting the society. Thus, it ~~so~~ would also encourage equitable access to higher education for talent but underprivileged students.

In addition to this, increased focus on skill enhancement and technical education is necessary. The worldwide demands account for proficiency in skills in 3 ~~are~~ areas: business, technology and data science. Unfortunately, Pakistan's higher education lacks these all. So, an increased focus through trainings, practicals, seminars and

conferences could be helpful. It could motivate and inspire youth to take interest and participate in the courses designed to boost skills. Coursera, the world's largest provider of Massive ~~Global~~ Skills Report Open Online Courses (MOOCs) publishes annual Global Skills report and placed Pakistan at 92 out of 100 countries in its global skills proficiency ranking in 2023. This rate is on decline. Thus therefore, active efforts by students themselves could pave way for reforms in higher education in Pakistan.

Similarly, student and teacher exchange programs nationally and internationally could reduce differences <sup>i.e. the</sup> ~~between~~ cultural and educational differences nationally and internationally. These exchange programs could foster healthy relations in terms of teaching methodology, students' acquisition patterns, learning outcomes and many more. They <sup>as initiatives</sup> thus need to be promoted so that Pakistan could

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enrich its students with the international models of teaching and learning and making progress in educational and socio-economic domain.

In a nutshell, Higher education in Pakistan is at crossroads. It is marred by multiple challenges including the outdated syllabi and teaching methods along with little focus on technovocational skills. A sturdy reform process needs to be materialized in order to raise its standard and work for the progress of nation. The insufficient funding, untrained teachers and primitive hard-core educational policies are the ill pollutants the higher education quality in the country. These pollutants give rise to various socio-economic disorders such as unemployment, brain drain, inflation and many others. They <sup>issues</sup> need to be dealt with iron hand by raising the quality of education through reforms such as upgradation in syllabi, tea-

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in the society.



