

ESSAY

Date: 15-09-2024

HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: ILLS AND REMEDIESOUTLINE:

- (1) Introduction
- (2) Ills of Higher Education in Pakistan
  - (a) Lack of sufficient funding
  - (b) Outdated Curriculum
  - (c) Lack of Quality of Research
  - (d) Shortage of Qualified Faculty
  - (e) Political interference
- (3) Remedies for ~~Impro~~ Higher Education in Pakistan
  - (a) Increase of Government-Funding
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Higher Education Commission is a cornerstone of national progress. It plays vital role to shape country's intellectual, economic and social development. Higher Education Commission was established in 2002. All the universities, degree-awarding institutions, and professional colleges comes under the umbrella of higher education commission. In Pakistan, Higher Education sector expanded very rapidly over the years. As per Economic Survey of Pakistan, there are 263 universities from

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154 are Public Universities and 109 are Private Universities. Despite this growth, Higher Education continues to face many challenges that slow-down its effectiveness and quality.

Higher Education in Pakistan face numerous challenges including under-funding, outdated curriculum and lack of professional training for faculty ~~to~~ hinder the ability to meet global standard.

However, these challenges can be addressed such as increased budget, modernization of curriculum, and introduce faculty development programs that can transformed higher education into more effective for innovation, research and progress.

One of the most pressing issue facing higher education is lack of funding to meet the requirements. In this FY 2024-25, only 2% of GDP which is around 69.7 billion rupees allocated for higher education. The insufficient budget affects the research facilities, infra-structure, faculty salaries and academic resources. Particularly, Public Universities are struggling to provide basic facilities. And this lack of investment suppress innovation and research.

In Pakistan, most of the universities following the curriculum that is out-dated and do not meet the trends of the global academic and market. Specially the information technology and technical fields, where frequently innovations and subjects introduced. So, this lack creates mismatch between education and industry demands. This cause high un-employment among graduates. As per PIDE 2022, 31% of the youth with degree is jobless.

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Universities of the Pakistan are good in the context of research quantity but the research quality is concern. Universities focus more on producing high number of research paper rather than emphasizing innovation, and impactful research. As per Global Innovative Index (GII) 2022, Pakistan rank 88 out of 132 countries.

Higher Education sector of Pakistan faces shortage of qualified faculty members. Especially, the faculty members who hold PhDs degree. In addition, many faculty members lack exposure to modern teaching methods and technologies. As per Economic Survey of Pakistan 2024, there are only 35.46% of PhD faculty members across the country.

Another hurdle, political interference which lead to mis-management in universities. The recruitment and appointment of faculty members is manipulated on the basis of nepotism and favourism. Even the appointment of Vice Chancellors is often on the basis of political grounds. These reasons cause slow-down the progress of university. There are more than 50 universities in different provinces, specially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, waiting for the regular appointment of vice chancellors, Daw Article, 2023.

To address the financial challenges, the government significantly increase the budget for Higher Education. At least, 4% of the GDP must be allocated to Education for research, faculty development programs and infra-structure. This will help to meet the standard requirements of the sector.

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It is very essential to update the outdated curriculum as per the global trends and job market demands. However, the HEC revised curriculum for after 3 years but it is not advanced as academic subjects and research innovation introduced in the world. In addition, it should be ensure to focus on practical skills.

Higher Education of Pakistan pay stronger focus on the research quality. Universities should encourage meaningful research and innovations that address national and global challenges. Providing research grants, establishing partnership with international institutions.

Universities should invest in faculty training, offer scholarship for advanced studies, and provide opportunities for faculty to engage with global academic practices. This will improve overall quality of education and research output.

Universities should need greater autonomy to make decision regarding academic programs, faculty recruitment and financial management. For this, limiting outside influence and inside monopoly.

Higher Education of Pakistan faces numerous challenges. That is ranging from under-budget to outdated curriculum. However, by solving these pills through increase funding, curriculum reforms and introduced faculty development programs. The higher education can be revitalized. The future of Pakistan development is closely tied to the quality of its higher education system making these reforms a national priority.