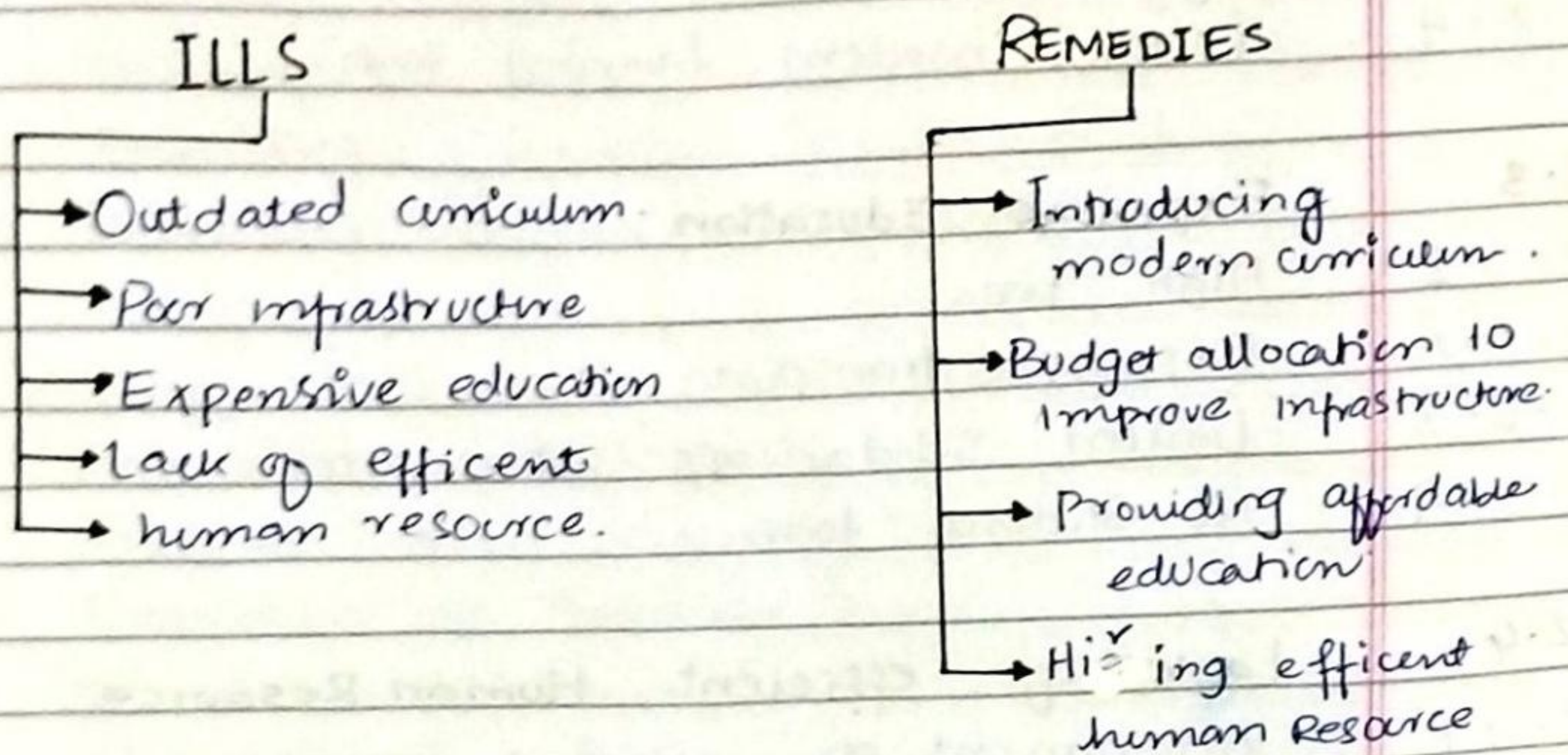


Higher Education in Pakistan: Ills and Remedies.

Brain Storming



Outlines

- 1 Introduction.
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 - 1.2 Background
 - 1.3 Thesis statement.
- 2 Ills of Higher Education in Pakistan.
 - 2.1 Outdated Curriculum.
 - 2.1.1 Old Syllabus
 - 2.1.2 Teacher Centered, not Student oriented.
 - 2.1.3 Lacking Analytical skills.
 - 2.1.4 Unsuitable for practical purpose industry academia link.

- 2.2 Inadequate Infrastructure.
- 2.2.1 Lacking purpose built Campuses.
- 2.2.2 Lacking modern laboratories and research facilities.
- 2.2.3 Hygiene Issues.
- 2.2.4 Lacking modern learning tools.

- 2.3 Expensive Education
- 2.3.1 High fees.
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- 2.3.3 Limited Scholarships opportunities.
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- 2.4 Lack of efficient Human Resource
- 2.4.1 Appointment of visiting faculty.
- 2.4.2 Absence of teachers training Programme.
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- 2.4.4 Irresponsible attitude of Permanent faculty.

3 Remedies for the ills in Higher Education

- 3.1 Introducing Modern Curriculum.
- 3.1.1 Revising Syllabus every year.
- 3.2.2 Engaging Subject experts.
- 3.2.3 Promoting life skills based education.
- 3.2.4 Establishing industry academia link.
- 3.2 Budget allocation to Improve infrastructure.
- 3.2.1 Building Purpose built Campuses.
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3.3.4

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3.4 Hiring efficient Human Resource.

3.4.1 Appointment of Permanent faculty instead of visiting.

3.4.2 Promotion of Teachers Training program

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4: Conclusion

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"Higher education is one of the most important pillars of prosperity and development in the state as well as world level." (Pakistan Language and Humanities review organization). HE is vital for national progress as it fosters innovation, critical thinking, and skilled human capital. In Pakistan, however, the sector faces serious challenges that limit its potential. Despite having over 240 universities, only around 9% of college age youth (17-23) are enrolled in higher education. Many graduates lack the skills needed in job market due to outdated teaching methods and poor academic planning. According to World Bank, Pakistan's higher education system suffers from weak governance, inadequate funding and limited industry relevance. As a result, the system fails to meet modern educational and professional demands. ^{according to Dr. Atta} that without improving our education system, particularly higher education, Pakistan cannot hope to achieve sustainable development. Pakistan's higher education system suffers from several major ills that include outdated curriculum, poor infrastructure, high costs, and inefficient faculty.

To address these, reforms must focus on curriculum revision, modern infrastructure, affordable access through Scholarships, and hiring trained, committed teachers to ensure quality and relevance.

One of the fundamental issues affecting HE in Pakistan is outdated curriculum that fails students to equip with 21st century skills.

Many degree programs still heavily rely on rote learning and decade old books. Such as Biochemistry in all medical field is not revised from 1999. In field of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, all the books are of 1990s and no ^{Pak} book to cater cultural Preferences and needs.

According to HEC 2022 60% of the syllabus not revised from last 5 years. This has lead to a significant gap b/w academia and industry requirements. The Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics advised by HEC to ~~can~~ do internships after 4 year completion due to which students lack skills related to field / practical work.

As per Gallup ^{Pak} survey, 51% of employers report that graduate lacks critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Instead of being

Student centered, the education system heavily rely on teacher centered practice. The majority of the universities, Teachers read power Point as a lecture, and not accept any thing new ~~other~~ in exam other than textbooks. (Hamdard university, Indus hospital university). Further more practical exposure is lacking, university academia linkages are weak, or non existent, and graduates struggle to find employment or require additional problems. A curriculum that does not evolve with time, does not link with industry and life skills then it becomes a liability rather than an asset.

Poor infrastructure is a critical barrier to quality education in many universities particularly in rural and public sector. The Rana Liaquat Ali Khan College of Home Economics ^{Karachi} does not have electricity supply and termite furniture is used by the students. A report by ~~education~~ Pakistan education statistics (2021-22) showed that nearly 40% of the public universities lack fully functional ~~laboratories~~ laboratories, libraries or adequate classroom space. ~~many~~ ZU Karachi, Department

Q HIND locus fully functional labs and libraries. Many institutions are operated in rented or shared buildings, lacking purpose built campuses such as Air university Mullan (and B2U Mullan also started in a rented building in 1975). In the absence of sufficient research facilities, Students are unable to conduct experiments or engage in innovation, there by limited growth. Hygiene and basic utilities are also neglected in many cases, clean drinking water, sanitation, and proper ventilation remain ~~a~~ serious concerns. accumulation of Rain water in FUDAST Karachi, University of Karachi, and main Sewerage Stream in front of FUDAST, UOK, and ZU Karachi. An Audit by HEC 25% of institutions failed to meet basic health and Safety Standards. Cafeteria ^{operated} in open Spaces causes severe health and gastrointestinal problems. Open Cafeteria operated in FUDAST ~~Karachi~~, RLAKCH, UOK and ~~a~~ in a few campuses of ZU. ~~The lack of modern learning tools such as e-libraries, smart classrooms hinder the learning of students and lagging in real world challenges.~~

A nation cannot rise without access to technology and infrastructure.

The rising cost of higher education system is another ^{serious} hurdle, especially for students from middle and lower-middle income families. On average, a Pakistani student spend 80,000 - 150,000 / semester including tuition, transport and living expenses in a Public sector institute. A survey

A by Pakistan ~~Bureau~~ Bureau of Statistics, 38% of students drop out after intermediate due to financial constraints. private universities are even less accessible, with annual fee ranging from PKR 300,000 to over 1 million. This include all the medical colleges (private), Engineering Colleges. Universities like LUMS, IBA, AKU, ^{and} ZU Karachi. The Department of HND fee raised from 117,000 ~~in~~ ~~to~~ to 210,000 within 4 years. (2021-2025) and semester fee increases annually. Despite these costs Scholarships ~~are~~ availability remained ^{extremely} limited. In 2021 only 7% of university students received any form of scholarship or financial aid. There's no national level student loan system. unlike neighbouring countries like India, China

Moreover, transport cost and accommodation in urban areas significantly burden students from remote regions. The

University Road of Karachi where all the universities located is far from the center, and to crown that the universities are developing their new campuses in education city ~~near~~ in Gaddap. These universities are the Ziauddin University, Aga Khan University, Salim Habib University, and SIUT, ~~these~~ ^{and} universities are heavily charging for transport.

As Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah emphasized, "Education is a matter of life and death for Pakistan". Making it inaccessible to the majority is a grave and injustice.

~~Also~~ A major issue plaguing higher education in Pakistan is the lack~~ing~~ of competent and motivated teaching staff. Many universities ~~are~~ rely heavily on visiting faculty due to hiring freezes. According to HEC data, nearly 42% of faculty in public universities are employed on a temporary or visiting basis. This results in inconsistency, reduced mentorship and weak student-teacher relationship. Furthermore, teacher training is

rarely prioritized. The National Academy of Higher education (NAHE) has launched a few programs, but participation remains low. Many faculty members are also burdened with administrative duties, which limits their effectiveness in teaching and research. ~~There~~ A survey in Punjab 2021 by HEC, over 60%.

of teachers reported burnout due to lack of support and excessive workload. Some even show apathy towards student success due to job insecurity or lack of performance evaluation. The ~~dietician~~ Dietician

at SMBBIT (Shahid Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Institute of Trauma) oversees the three major hospital kitchens (SIUT, Civil Hospital and SMBBIT), each serving over 200 patients daily. Despite the workload she only engages trainee

dieticians (for 6 months with minimal incentives) and 1-month ~~free~~ interns (unpaid), without

creating permanent job posts. All responsibilities are handled by these temporary staff to secure her own position and avoid hiring full time professionals.

A university teacher should be a scholar and a mentor - not a clerk or an ^{over}overloaded bureaucrat.

one of the foremost remedies for improving HE in Pakistan is the introduction of a modern, dynamic curriculum. The current curriculum in many universities is outdated, theoretical, and disconnected from practical industry needs. To tackle this, syllabi must be revised annually to incorporate the latest developments in science, technology and global affairs. Subject experts should lead the design of new curricula, to ensure relevance and depth. Moreover it is essential to shift from rote learning to a life skill based approach that promotes analytical thinking, communication, digital literacy, ~~entrepreneurship~~ entrepreneurship, and problem-solving. Introducing project based and interdisciplinary learning can make education more applicable to real world scenarios.

The BSCS department of FAST University Islamabad based on practical learning. ~~and connect~~. Establishing industry-academia linkages is vital to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical learning. Universities should regularly consult with industry professionals to update course content and

and offer students internships, job placements, and skill workshops. LUMS, IBA, FAST, GIKI, AKUH connect their academia (students) with industry and which offered their students jobs before the completion of the program. Job market analysis also help in developing industry-academia link. The Pakistan Institute of Development and Economics ⁽²⁰²²⁾ ~~showed~~ reported that 31% of university graduates are unemployed because of ~~lacking~~ / limited practical skills, which are insufficient for the job market. Therefore, reforming the curriculum is not just about changing books, it is about the reshaping of entire academic vision. Modern curriculum will equip students with relevant competencies, making Pak's graduates globally competitive.

A critical remedy for the weakness
q) Pakistan's HE system is ~~to~~
increased budget allocation to improve
infrastructure. Many campuses lack
purpose built campuses (labs, libraries, basic
sanitation facilities. By increasing budget
for education development, the government
can initiate the construction of
purpose built campuses designed for
academic excellence. These should
include modern lecture halls, digital
libraries, seminar rooms, hostels, and
inclusive facilities for students with
disabilities. For instance, while the
institution like NUST, LUMS, AKUH,
and ~~UI~~ GIKI. Serve as example of
well planned campuses, universities in
interior Sindh () and Balochistan
(UOB, BMC, SBK) still struggle with
crumbling buildings and over crowded
classrooms. Similarly, upgrading laboratories
and research centers with advanced
equipment. is necessary to promote
innovation in science, engineering
and medicine. Govt and HEC
funded initiatives like the technology
development funds should be
expanded to all public universities.
Cleanliness is crucial for a healthy
academic environment. Several ~~and~~
Private sector universities in

Pakistan have demonstrated that maintaining hygiene and cleanliness on campus is possible. Aga Khan University ensures high sanitation standards with clean restrooms, ~~and~~ safe drinking water, and indoor cafeteria. LUMS and COMSATS Islamabad conduct hygiene audits and ~~provide~~ follow ~~hygiene~~ SOPs. Similarly, Ziauddin University maintains a clean, well managed environment supported by trained staff. These institutions serve as successful models, showing that a clean, healthy campus enhances student well being, academic performance, and institutional credibility.

Making HE affordable is essential to ensure equal opportunities and reduce dropout rates in Pakistan. Rising tuition fees, lack of transport, and ^{the} cost of books and hostels make university education inaccessible for many talented students, especially in rural areas. To address this, universities and the government must expand financial aid, offer need- and merit based scholarships, and promote subsidized services. Encouragingly, several

Institutions in Pakistan have taken effective steps. LUMS, through its National Outreach Programme (NOP), offers Scholarships to students from underprivileged area. NUST (Ihsantrust) and COMSATS Lahore campus (Qarz-e-Hasna) provide fee waivers, hostel subsidies, and interest free student loans for deserving candidates. Virtual University (VU) promotes online education at low costs, making it accessible to students across remote areas. Additionally, the Ehsaas undergraduate Scholarships Program, one of the largest in Pakistan, has benefited over 200,000 students nationwide by covering stipends & tuition fee. Such initiatives ~~should~~ should be ~~continued~~ expanded and monitored for transparency. Transport Concessions and free digital libraries can further reduce the ~~costs~~ costs. Affordable education doesn't just open doors for individuals. it drives national progress by cultivating skilled, empowered graduates. If such models are replicated and scaled, access to HE in Pakistan can be significantly widened, ~~bridging~~ ^{bridging} the socioeconomic gap in learning.

The quality of teaching staff directly impacts the standard of higher education. In many Pakistani universities, faculty members are overburdened, under trained, or lack of exposure to modern teaching methods. To raise academic standards, investment in faculty development is essential. Encouragingly, several universities have taken meaningful steps. The Agakhan University provides continuous professional development and pedagogical training for its faculty, ensuring they ^{stay} updated with global teaching standards. UMS and NUST both conduct regular faculty evaluations and offer workshops on research supervision, assessment techniques, and classroom innovation. HEC's faculty development program also supports scholarships for Ph.Ds abroad, helping build academic capacity. Furthermore, COMSATS has introduced peer-review mechanisms and teaching excellence awards to recognize quality instruction. To build on these efforts, public universities must adopt similar models. by conducting regular training, promoting research culture, and linking promotions to performance rather than seniority.

Faculty exchange programs with international universities can further enhance exposure. A motivated, skilled, and well trained faculty not only improves student outcomes but also drives institutional reputation and research output. Pakistan's path to educational excellence lies in empowering teachers with the tools, recognition, and environment they need to lead future generations effectively.

In conclusion, Pakistan's higher education sector faces serious challenges, including outdated syllabus, poor infrastructure, ~~high~~ unaffordable costs, and ~~under~~ inefficient faculty. These issues limit access, quality, and global competitiveness. However, practical and targeted remedies offer a way forward. ~~Revising~~ ~~Revising~~ Revising syllabus annually, improving infrastructure through increased funding, ensuring affordable education through scholarships and digital solutions, and enhancing faculty quality through training and performance-based evaluations are key steps. Positive models already exist in institutions like AKUH, LUMS, COMSATS, ZU, NUST

Proving that Progress is
achievable with Commitment and
planning. Nationwide expansion of
such practices, supported by
HEC and govt policies, can
transform the higher education
landscape. It is essential to
Prioritize merit, transparency, and
Student welfare in every
reform effort. A strong higher
education system is the
foundation of national development,
innovation, and leadership. With
Consistent investment and vision,
Pakistan can build institutions
that empower its youth and
contribute meaningfully to global
academic and research standards.