

Crisis in Academia : Declining Student Interest in Universities.

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'The Essay'

Date _____ 20____

Sir Syed's biographer Graham said that his motto was to "educate, educate and educate. Education was the reason of upliftment of Muslims in subcontinent to the point that they got their independent country. Education is such a powerful tool that for any country to prosper, especially in contemporary times, it needs good human capital. Such as, Engineers, doctors, Sociologists, and other professionals. Higher education led to the discovery of cancer treatments to what is constituted in the universe beyond our world. However, Universities are experiencing declining student interest. Biggest university in Pakistan, The Punjab University saw a major decline in overall enrollment but especially in physics department. Students who are getting enrolled don't possess the skills and intelligence that student used to get enrolled two decades before possessed. Decline in university enrollments is due to higher fees, low academic quality, rise in unemployment with alternative opportunities of money making without higher education such as, freelancing.

To begin with, universities today lack the quality of education. Teaching method at university level is below par. They only teach from slides, or course books. Teacher teaches from narrow perspective, no dynamics or extra



effort involved ~~and~~ similarly, student only regurgitate what they are taught. This led to unskilled professionals in market who ultimately could not score good job opportunities. Moreover universities are gradually increasing their fees, which students cannot afford. Thus some quit their education and other sought student loans. People who get student loan get so burdened that they can't pay their loans even after years of passing out and getting jobs. ~~Thus in~~ In countries like USA, people stopped getting loans and stopped enrolling in universities ultimately. Furthermore, universities in many countries lack basic facilities, they take lot of fee, such as Quaidi Azam University Islamabad takes 1 lak 40,000 rupees per semester, and provides no facilities. University doesnot possess Air conditioning in its library, washrooms are unsanitary and unavailability of hygienic cafeterias makes it worse. Finally, universities are offering bogus courses, there are no sufficient skillfull courses to get enrolled, and get good employment opportunities later.

Rise in Inflation world wide has resulted in shutting down of many



Startups and companies leading to less employment opportunities. It creates higher level of competition among professionals to ~~bring out~~ ^{bring out} good jobs. For example, in Pakistan on 110 seats of Assistant Election Commissioner have got 78770 applicants. This massive level of competition and applications for few posis is indicator of how much unemployment and less opportunities are there for university students. This leads to lesser people getting enrolled in universities. Since inflation many companies are laying off their workforce leading to more unemployment. Those skillful professionals are now forced to do either ~~job~~ jobs such as cashiers, waiters, as freelancers. Leading to perception among ~~no~~ young people that getting education is waste of time and money.

Third major cause of low enrollment in universities is availability of alternative opportunities of money making. As universities take lot of time effort and money to get graduated from and leading to no fruitful outcome. People are now exploring opportunities take less time



Such as freelancing platforms. These platforms are easy to use, people can make good money and they don't require any CV or specific degree. The more good skills person possess, more they can earn through platforms like Upwork. Moreover, the skills needed here can be easily acquired through online short courses or youtube videos. Similarly, there is rise in unofficial trading platforms, though controversial but since they are quite easy to use and invest than stock exchange people are using and learning them quite frequently in these days. Furthermore, these trading courses are also short easily available on youtube. Thus, people are getting uninterested in formal education leading to less enrollments in universities.

Social media has played significant role in declining enrollment in universities. Social media promoting materialistic and unrealistic life style lead to thinking of easy and quick money methods among masses. Moreover influencers promote their own or paid collaborations of platforms

requiring no higher education - People get influence from fake life on social media and get involved in such platforms to make easy no hassle money. This fake social media life often gets hyped up leading to perception that higher education is not necessary and is waste of time ultimately. In pursuit of money making morality and personal life often gets compromised. Furthermore social media is also filled with games, apps, promotional stuff of easy making of money sitting in home. ~~Now~~ Similarly, short courses to learn skills such as Amazon and other online shops where people can earn well from ~~at~~ home. Thus, less and less people are now interested in getting higher education.

In Pakistan, a developing country some other issues are also adding to this crisis in Academia. Sometime ago, HEC on following western education system implemented this policy of BS-4 year programs only. Before that people were allowed to get 2 year program degree thus more people got enrolled in universities or colleges.



People could get a "Bsc degree" of 2 year could land job and continue their education afterwards to "Msc" and further higher education. ~~Also~~, Moreover, people from far rural areas could also afford 2 year programs. However, since program is full 4 year long, with quite fee hike, inflation lesser facilities of hostel and other lesser people are now interested in getting enrolled in universities. In ~~pa~~ Pakistan, the gradual rise in fees and overall inflation made it impossible for many rural student to travel to universities. Daily cost of conveyance in urban is also too much to bear. Furthermore, in urban areas competition to get jobs is also extremely high with lesser opportunities. This makes getting higher education less favourable for students in Pakistan.

To overcome this crisis in Academia there is dire need to make structural changes in universities. Promotion of out of box thinking, offering and dynamic medium of education is need of hour. Less burdenise

Professors with administrative works and more inclination policies towards practical learning experimenting and availability of funds for all these things to get accomplished. Government should make policies of easy student loans and more offers of scholarships can ~~make~~ ^{over} the crisis. Furthermore good employment opportunities for people with higher education will change mindset of people. Moreover government should make use of social media in promotion and enhancement of higher education so that the more and more students get inclined towards getting higher education.

Declining rate of university enrollment, less interest of people in getting higher education or formal education is an alarming situation. When the world should progress towards development and pursuit of technology and advancement humanity is unfortunately regressing to materialistic standards of quick money making opportunities. Social media and rise of freelancing and trading platforms are adding fuel to this crisis.

