

An Instrumental Perspective of Higher Education in Pakistan: From Public Good to Commercial Commodity

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Abstract

Instrumental reason as a cultural ideal in the context of Pakistani higher education institutions has been analyzed in this study. Qualitative research design was adopted to conduct this content analysis. In instrumental reason, higher education is no longer seen as socially valuable knowledge, but as a private commercial commodity whereby its value is determined in terms of financial returns. Like other commodities, higher education is also considered a commercial commodity (degrees) which are sold at numerous price levels by the private higher education institutions. Which have no objective of social welfare of society, rather it has detrimental implications in terms of its repercussions like development of instrumental thought in individuals. A shift could be observed, from public interest to private interest, replacing academic, social, and ethical values by commercial considerations, and collective social equality to individual instrumental thinking.

Keywords: Higher Education, Public Good, Commercial Commodity, Instrumental Reason

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Introduction

Higher education serves as a key driving force envisioned to turn the dream of a knowledge-based economy into reality and it also contributes in the attainment of social goals of humanity, creating cohesiveness, and building good human beings (NEP, 2009). Moreover, it has been playing phenomenal role in the development of nations, in the form of public good, enlightening individuals with cultural values, norms, national interests, and enabling them to serve humanity. Traditionally, it has been considered as public good, benefiting not only the individuals who got education but whole society in terms of its huge returns to the society. This standpoint about higher education has been a dominant school of thought regarding functions and role of higher education as a public good, and it was considered a basic human right in United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (1948).

Since 1950s, higher education is neither seen as socially valuable knowledge nor basic human right in many locations around the world, but lucrative commercial commodity (Kauppinen, 2013), which is being traded in the market whereby it's value is determined in terms of financial returns to the owners of private higher education institutions. Insensitively, the implicit objectives of private higher education institutions are to gain maximum market share in order to earn maximum profits by selling degrees at various price levels, at the cost of quality. In Pakistan, there has been an exponential growth in the private higher education institutions especially after the establishment of Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2002. The primary role of HEC in Pakistan was to work for the evaluation, improvement and promotion of higher education, by articulating the culture of research and development among the higher education institutions. Moreover, HEC also formulates rules, policies, principles and priorities for higher education institutions in Pakistan for promotion of socio-economic development (HEC Ordinance, 2002).

Moreover, despite HEC regulatory policies and rules, higher education as a commercial commodity is being traded at numerous price levels by the private higher education institutions in Pakistan, which have no objective of social welfare of society. Consequently, just in the last few years, privatization of higher education in Pakistan has caused perplexing concerns. In terms of vanishing higher education as public good, commercialization of higher education as private commodity whereby its value is determined in terms of financial gains. Where by its quality is being compromised over these financial gains. Moreover, privatization of higher education has turned into profit seeking organizations, which are compromising morality and ethics over short term financial gains, embedding the sense of individualism, instrumental rationality, selfishness, greed and superiority in the society (Ball, 2004; Tilak, 2006). According to Khan (2015)

“education has been converted into a commodity just like many other necessities of life to be bought and sold with the sole purpose of generating profit, and this has led to drastic changes in how society perceives the role of knowledge in human life and how it is imparted and acquired”. This paper analyses the shift in the purpose of higher education in Pakistan from public good to commercial commodity and its implications upon society.

Functions of Higher Education

Higher education serves as a key driving force envisioned to turn the dream of a knowledge-based economy into reality and it also contributes as well in the attainment of social goals of humanity, creating cohesiveness, and building good human beings.

Thus, supplying a skilled labor force, creating new knowledge, and service to society are the key functions of higher education, which led towards sustainable economic development, and socially organized society (NEP, 2009). Traditionally education also serves to generate the moral, ethical, and economic foundation of any society. From this perspective, Jandhyala, (2008) demonstrated the following functions of higher education which were also endorsed by other mentioned scholars.

- Basic and crucial objective of higher education is to build the builders of the nation, by giving awareness, providing contemporary intellectual thought, and serve as think tanks to public and private sector (NEP, 2009).
- Most important function of higher education is to create, and disseminate new knowledge through quality research, as higher education institutes are considered to be scientific, and social labs of knowledge creation (Marginson, 2004).
- From economy perspective, higher education should meet the demands of industry by providing better quality human resources having professional and technical skills.
- By and large, higher education institutes are supposed to build moral character, by inculcating ethical and moral values, attitudinal traits for socializations of individuals for the protection and development of societal values.
- Another important function of higher education is to cope with global challenges (Ali & Tahir, 2009), by proving viable and pragmatic solutions to national and international issues and problems.
- In nutshell, according to Jandhyala, (2008), higher education should serve the public interest from all perspectives-socially, economically, culturally, and politically.

Hence it is regarded as a noble public service, and higher education institutions are beacon houses of learning and it could be concluded that the primary objective of higher education institution is to create a society where most of the students are skilled and higher education institutions are capable to generate new knowledge.

Privatization of Higher Education

Private higher education institutes have been fastest growing sector in many countries across the world. In the past two decades, more private higher education institutes than public sector higher education institutes have been established especially in the countries of South Asia (Agarwal, 2008). Privatization of higher education is a global phenomenon and it was adopted simultaneously by the various countries of South Asia especially in the start of 21st century when the task force on higher education of developing countries was arranged jointly by “The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)” and World Bank (Task Force, 2000; page.9). The experts of 13 countries participated in the Task Force to articulate the future of higher education in developing countries. The Task Force had a mission to provide practical solutions in the areas of governance, resources and funding for the promotion of higher education in developing countries. However, in the pursuance of said objective the Task Force realized, there were many difficulties in achieving the objective and proposed that the strength of public and private sector must be used (Task Force, 2000; page.10) in order to provide strong and coordinated support with the help of international community.

Pakistan was also included among the countries studied by the Task Force as the quality of higher education as very low in terms of teachers’ education, research contribution (publications), and participation in international conferences (The World Bank (MTDF), 2006; page.28). Thus, in Pakistan Higher Education Commission (HEC, 2002) was established in order to streamline the higher education institutions both in public and private sector. Hence role of private higher education flourished in the provision of education and there was significant growth in the number of private higher education institutes after the lifting of ban which was endorsed in education policy of 1972. Supportive legislation was passed out in the national assembly and provincial assemblies of Punjab, Sindh, and NWFP (The World Bank (MTDF), 2006; page.41). Privatization of higher education in Pakistan was the part of international agenda of World Bank and UNESCO, whereas its contextual implications were never realized. Apparently, this sector plays a crucial role for the promotion of higher education, but have it been ever realized its detrimental outcomes by assigning it commercial commodity nature? Are private HEIs are really promoting education or striving to earn maximum profits? Are private HEIs are really striving to provide quality education or they are running for quantity (maximum enrollments)? In this study an attempt is made to analyze this phenomenon. Next section provides a complete context of higher education since the inception of Pakistan.

Context of Higher Education in Pakistan

Higher education in Pakistan has gone through various developmental initiatives since the inception of Pakistan. In 1947, when Pakistan got independence, there were only two public sector universities, the University of the Punjab, a teaching institute, situated in Lahore, Pakistan.

In 1951, the University of Sindh, another teaching institution was created in Karachi. This university of Karachi was later moved to Hyderabad. Initially these two universities catering to the variety of different needs throughout Pakistan as majority of the qualified teachers, and experienced staff members belongs to Hindus community, and at the time of partition they left their jobs and settled in India (Hood BhoY, 2009). In 1947, based upon the recommendations of various academicians, and other stake holders in national education conference presided over by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah established the University Grant Commission (UGC) as a federal regulatory institution constitutionally. In the said conference, the famous words of Quaid-e-Azam was as (Bengali, 1999) were the following:

“The importance of education and the type of education cannot be over-emphasized. There is no doubt that the future of our State will and must greatly depend upon the type of education we give to our children, and the way in which we bring them up as future citizens of Pakistan. We should not forget that we have to compete with the world which is moving very fast in this direction.”

In this national education conference, several developmental initiatives were taken which resulted in the formation of various committees, for primary, secondary and adult education. Subsequently in 1960s, the UGC with its extended powers established by the federal government, put a special emphasis upon the development of higher education in terms of granting existing colleges, a degree awarding status and full-time research bodies to public and private universities (Isani, Major Education Policies and Commissions). Furthermore, in 1971 after the war with India which lead to the separation of East-Pakistan as Bangladesh, an incumbent at federal level designed a new education policy with the implementation of a nationalization program under that policy all two years colleges were granted the status of university under the state-owned regulations, and all private varsities were also nationalized. During this tenure, higher education achieved exponential growth in terms of enrollments in the universities.

Moreover, in 1979 president Zia-ul-Haq formulated "The National Education Policy" in which higher education was synchronized with Islamic concepts and national ideology (Isani, Higher Education and Five-Year Plans) and the decision to ban all private higher education institutes was also reversed. Thus, two private universities named Aga Khan University in 1983 and Lahore University of Management Sciences in 1985 were established and Pakistan became the first South Asian country to allow establishment of private universities (Agarwal, 2008;). Later in 1992, in Nawaz Sharif regime, the National Education Policy was implemented to streamline the process of higher education.

Based upon the above snapshot of higher education and lack of a sustainable policy infrastructure, various contemporary issues were accumulated due to inconsistency in proper policies, inadequate funding, implementations issues, and mismatch between heralding demands of industry, economic realms, national and global emerging practices. Which eventually lead towards the establishment of Higher Education Commission in 2002 in the interest of improvement and promotion of higher education by the president Pervaiz Musharraf, and the conventional UGC was amalgamated into HEC, 2002.

The establishment of HEC was meant to diligently monitor all aspects of higher education promotion and quality. It was established to serve educational institutes, as controlling authority, to formulate policies, regulate principles, accreditation to concerned institutes, guide and advice federal, and provincial governments regarding the charter awarding to public and private institutes (HEC, Ordinance 2002).

Table 1

Total Public and Private Higher Education Institutes Affiliated with HEC in Pakistan

Region	Public	Private	Total
Punjab	25	24	49
Sindh	19	29	48
KPK	19	10	29
Baluchistan	6	1	7
Federal	24	6	30
AJK	5	2	7
Total	98	72	170

Source: HEC Official Website, July 2015

Global demand for higher education has accelerated in the 21st century (Halai, 2011) due to development in human resources, advancement in technology, and innovation in means of production, services, and operations. Moreover, a significant profit margin in higher education sector across the world, and the same exponential growth in private sector is evident specifically in the last two decades in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

This study employed critical theory paradigm to analyses instrumental perspective of higher education in Pakistan. Concept of instrumental reason as a cultural ideal was taken from Bishop (2007) famous book *titled* “The Philosophy of Social Science”. Moreover, qualitative research design was adopted and content analysis was undertaken to analyses the shift in the nature of higher education from public good to commercial commodity. For content analyses article were selected by using purposive sampling in which following criteria was adopted to select articles for review I) Articles should address the instrumental perspective of education, II) filed of study higher education, III) design both empirical and

conceptual. Researchers critically selected the 30 articles which addressed the phenomenon of higher education with reference to instrumental reason. Based upon analysis of the selected articles researcher analyzed the private higher education institutes from instrumental perspective with reference to cultural ideal and neo-liberal policies.

The private higher education institutes in Pakistan have grown exponentially especially after the establishment of HEC in 2002. As per 2015 data source, there were 72 private varsities operating their various campuses in Pakistan operating mostly in national and provincial capitals.

Philosophical Association of Cultural Ideal: Instrumental Reason

Concept of higher education as commercial commodity is based upon the concept of instrumental reason of cultural ideals. According to Taylor, (1991) instrumental reason is defined as *"the kind of rationality we draw on when we calculate the most economical application of means to a given end. Maximum efficiency, the best cost-output ratio, is its measure of success"*. The use of reason as an instrument for determining the best or most efficient means to achieve a given end is the hallmark of this approach. This commercial commodification of knowledge has been the most important structural change in the field of higher education, in which like the commodities in the market, educational degrees are also considered the same (Kauppinen, 2013). For some, this equates to not seeing the universities as a place to gain social knowledge, but rather how much direct material benefit it will give to the investor. In the proceeding narrative, instrumental reason is discussed from its historical perspective, and its association in higher education as commercial commodity with respect to process and product.

Analysis of Historical Perspective of Instrumental Reasoning

Instrumental reason considered being the most important feature of modern western society and it could be traced back to ancient times, when significant development in rational capacity of mind was emerged in the aftermath of scientific revolution. Moreover, Weber (1949) argued that an important characteristic of this type of structured reasoning results in outcome being achieved through rational examination. Such means-ends reasoning approach towards the achievement of goals or accomplishment of routine tasks is often found quite useful and beneficial. It is a useful method for the accomplishment of goals by most efficient and effective means. This approach was emerged in the 18th century revolutions associated to economics phenomena of utilitarian approach, and marginal utility, which emphasizes an efficiency and effectiveness of means as the predominating picture of rational thinking and action.

According to Bishop (2007) "Marginalists emphasized thinking systematically about optimal or maximizing choices of means for a given end. Hence, a profit-maximizing employer might respond to an increase in wages by minimizing labor costs through outsourcing as much of the production process as possible".

This means-end rational thinking was also called calculative thinking and many scholars raised the potential dangers, and harms of this approach regarding its application in the society. According to Heidegger (1966), this thinking is like a never-ending race, and it never reaches to its end. He further argued that this modern world is under the dominance of this type of thinking and consequently it is a threat to the world and human spirit. Furthermore, Bishop (2007) while describing the dark side of instrumental rationality approach in every human-action state that "the personal, social and physical worlds are reduced to mere raw materials for an individual's manipulation in order to achieve some pre-selected purposes".

Moreover, many great thinkers like Habermas and Gorden, (1987) have written numbers of volumes regarding potential dangers, and harms to society of this calculative thinking and believed that instrumental reason has been used as a great tool in a number of ways for the rational administration of modern society, and this tool is being used by the apex elite class of the society for their vested self-interests, and it suits well to the powerful segments of the society (Malkinson, 2015).

Hence, after the adaptation of neo-liberal policies, throughout the world, all the business ventures, corporations, and private higher education institutions, and corporate giants are using this principle of rational thinking, or calculative thinking, regardless of societal values, ethics, norms, religious concerns. Up to certain material extent, it sounds good to apply this concept while using material means or achieving economies of scale, but it is not equally applicable to all fields of life. Similarly, private higher educationists adopted the same policy of doing business of education, using resources efficiently and effectively for the attainment of goals, which is profit maximization. Ultimately, they found it lucrative in terms of earning profit from the process of treating higher education as commercial commodity, and also from the output, or outcome.

Based upon the reasoning and association of higher education with instrumental or calculative thinking it could be concluded that it is very unfortunate and eye-opening dilemma that higher education is being treated on the merit of instrumentality by the private education merchants. This concept considers the individual's actions in social realm as purely upon material cost-benefit analysis, and an urge to utilitarian maximization approach. Treating higher education as material gain is the ultimate objective of instrumental rationality, over the cost of ethical values, social equality, and social welfare at large, public good and living quality of human beings in the society.

Analysis of Change in Perspective of Higher Education

Even though higher education as a public good plays a significant role in society's development, there has been a paradigm shift in the nature of higher education from public good to commercial commodity. This change in thought could be traced back to the 1950s when a renowned economist Samuelson (1948) defined public goods and placed responsibility on the state for the provision of those goods. State involvement was necessary for the provision of such goods so that the responsibility of doing so should not be left to market. This concept emerged as the dominating thought which serves as fundamentals for the growth of modern higher education institutes.

On the contrary, opponents of this school of thought challenged this point of view and proposed a neo-liberal theory which states that provision of private investment can produce more effective outcomes than those of public investment in the areas of health and education.

Furthermore, neo-liberalism thinkers also presented the moral argument that individuals and communities should have the free choice of various alternatives (Morgan & White, 2014). Using these arguments neo-liberal thinkers advocate the withdrawal of state and the market liberalization of numerous social and economic sectors including higher education.

Another major development regarding the change of treating higher education as public good to commercial commodity is evidenced when higher education as a service, was included in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and World Trade Organization (WTO). It is considered to be the extension of neo-liberal economic policies (Jandhyala, 2008), found to be very attractive by the many governments and states (Tialk, 2007).

Despite of these two developments, many scholars argued that higher education must be taken as public good because it benefits the community as a whole and it should not be provided privately (Morgan & White, 2014). Barr (1993), argued that higher education could not be considered as an entirely public good because it demonstrates conditions of rivalry and it also serves both public and private interests (Levin, 2000).

While keeping in view the circumstances of many underdeveloped nations, most researchers agree that people cannot depend solely upon state to provide higher education as public good, rather than the state assuming sole responsibility, the private sector should be allowed to produce public goods privately by effectively and efficiently so that the maximum community can get the benefits (Yin-Kua et al., 2014). Thus, proponents of this stance, making higher education privately available argues that it is leading towards efficiency and effectiveness by achieving economies of scale purely like commodity nature of higher education (Mok, 2000).

Moreover, some scholars also argue that with rapid advancement and broad-spectrum changes in the global environment, there was a dire need for creation of new knowledge, in order to meet the needs of human potential, facilitate individuals to acquire new skills and capabilities, and to pace with change, private higher educational institutes have played their role significantly (Yin-Kuaet al., 2014).

In this context, public sector higher education institutes could not meet the needs of the era, and failed to promote, nurture, and facilitate the masses regarding their concerns, resultantly private institutes took the lead and open the new horizons of higher education meeting needs of the hour. But what about those students who cannot pay the huge fee of these institutes, and will they get the opportunity? Do private sector higher education institutes provide this service free of cost? Will they consider societal needs as important? These questions clearly indicate that private higher education institutes serve the community who can afford their high tuition fees, and those who cannot afford, cannot get education because it's for sale like any other commercial commodity. If you have the resources, then you can buy it.

Currently, in international scenario private higher education institutes have achieved phenomenal growth in many countries, and it has existed for last several years, decades, or even centuries. Majority of the private higher education varsities and colleges are owned by the private individuals, investors, corporate giants, property tycoons, and so-called trusts (Jandhyala, 2006). Therefore, there is great competition among the educational institutes in order to earn maximum profits, treating education as purely commercial commodity available for sale in the market at various price levels at the cost of quality and at the cost of basic human right. They have their vested interests of making money out of education business, for them educational institutes are not centers of learning, or human capital, rather universities are knowledge factories, there is no difference between higher education and production of staple goods (Jandhyala, 2008).

The next discussion sheds a light on this construct of higher education solely as human right and public good nature, and its generic implications.

Analysis of Higher Education as a Public Good

United Nations official Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) article 26 states that *"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit"*. Thus, Higher education is human right and it should be made available to every human upon merit, easily accessible, and efforts must be made to make it free for all (Bienefeld, 2003). The

change in perspective of higher education from public good to commercial commodity is discussed in detail in proceeding paragraphs; In the next section, taking higher education a human right and looks to the answer to this question, what is public good?

Generally public good is perceived to be any activity which is done for the welfare of the whole society, but scholars have defined the term as "public goods are those which are non- excludable and non-rivalrous (Musgrave, 1959), such goods are not provided to particular part of the society, rather for all because that is the common need of all people; secondly, their consumption by particular part does not diminish other people consumption level of same good (Jandhyala, 2008). Simply public goods are for social or public benefits and they are considered equal for all. On the contrary, private goods are altogether different; they do not meet any above mentioned said criteria.

Furthermore, if the benefits of public goods are to be generalized for the whole world, they are called global public goods (Stiglitz, 1999), and if they provide benefits to limited region or country, then they are called local public goods (Tiebout, 1956). Moreover, scholars have argued that the finance or funding for production of public goods is to be made by state out of tax revenue, rather relying on prices, tuition fees particularly in higher education, which indicates that these goods are not meant for sale like commercial commodification in free market economy (Jandhyala, 2008). Thus, the state should have the monopoly over the production of public goods which are meant to economies of scale from economic perspective, and ensuring that producer surplus is returned to the society, rather if allowed in free market economy, the capitalist will gain efficiency in competition and will earn surplus gain over the production of those goods, which are subject to free market mechanism principles. Taking this stance to make higher education a human right, and its contribution to be considered as public good, there has been a much debate among the scholars regarding the numerous facets of higher education whether to take it as public good or to consider it as commodity for sale, considering education as lucrative industry for making profits similar to other business domains as this is happening in the majority countries in the world, has been much criticized.

If higher education is seen as public good, all the return or yield associated with it whether produced by public or private institutions should be returned back to the society (Bloom, Hartley, & Rosovsky, 2006). Researchers also argued that higher education could not be treated as sole public goods as it does not meet the above mentioned criteria of public goods which is non- excludable and non-rivalrous (Jandhyala, 2008). Whereas majority of the researchers have opposed this point of view, as higher education is a collective goods and it should not be judged upon simply mentioned criteria, rather it should be judged upon benefits and social contribution of higher education in society development which are mentioned in detail in the preceding discussion. Thus, higher

education is treated exclusively as public good and it is irrational and beyond any logic to consider education in terms of any defined criteria as it builds humans, and societies.

Table 2
Ranking of Pakistani Higher Education Institutions

Sr.No.	Ranking Category	University Status		Total
		Public	Private	
1	Overall Ranking	9	1	10
2	General Category	37	30	67
3	Engineering Category	17	4	21
4	Business Category	4	11	15
5	Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences Category	6	0	6
6	Medical Category	6	7	13
7	Arts Category	1	1	2
	Total	80	54	134

Source: HEC Universities Ranking 2014

Table 3
Ranking of Top 5 Pakistani Higher Education Institutions

Sr.No.	Ranking Category	Top 5 Universities		Total
		Public	Private	
1	Overall Ranking	4	1	5
2	General Category	5	0	5
3	Engineering Category	4	1	5
4	Business Category	3	2	5
5	Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences Category	5	0	5
6	Medical Category	3	2	5
7	Arts Category	1	1	2
	Total	25	7	32

Source: HEC Universities Ranking 2014

Above ranking of HEC, 2014 of Pakistan HEI's shows that in all the categories public sector universities are leading, and majority of public sector universities got high scores as compare to private sector universities, in business category private sector is leading, but not achieved the lead thereto. Whereas in table 3, top 5 universities wise ranking revealed that out of 32 universities, only 7 were from private sector, it clearly shows the commitment of higher education institutions towards provision of quality education.

Furthermore, meticulous analysis of majority of the private universities and degree awarding institutes, it is very repulsive revelation that they are charging high tuition fees, and their implicit objective deemed to cater maximum market share, enroll maximum students, thus private sector has a very limited role in providing good quality education which is socially relevant and contributes to national development (Tilak, 2008). Thus, according to Bok (2003) role of higher education institutes as to discover, develop, and transmit knowledge, and serve the community as a whole in terms of social returns, has left behind, rather to sell their services for profit maximization only, and education is only seen as private commercial good.

Consequences of Higher Education as Commercial Commodity

Finding regarding considering higher education as a commercial commodity, where students are fee paying customers, they pay to pursue their degrees in return to their fees paid. In fact, so called educationists are education merchants selling the degrees at various price levels, and striving to gain maximum market share. This phenomenon is more complex and dangerous than it looks apparently, it has number of horrifying consequences which effects society at large on various grounds (Jandhyala, 2008). The market mentality into higher education may have the following undesirable consequences;

- Treating higher education as commercial commodity which could be traded into national and international markets, the public good nature may vanish and disappear altogether, and despite of serving community and humanity, it has become an instrument that serves particular social class interests, this is called instrumental reason as cultural ideal (Jandhyala, 2008).
- Market oriented approach of higher education treating higher education as purely commercial commodity whose value is measured by comparing the cost of acquiring degree and financial gains over those transactions (Roy, 2013), which has led to cruel competition in the market, and quality of education is compromised over financial gains maximizations.
- Overwhelming response of education merchants for the provision of higher education commercially, has weakened the commitments of governments regarding their innate responsibility (Roy, 2013).
- Another important issue is privatization of state-owned institutions which is very common among many countries in the world, the institutions like health, higher education, and community services, are not meant for commercial purposes. In fact, privatization of higher education, turns into profit seeking commercial organization, converting an institution which is basically meant for non-profit making organization. By the passage of time, private sector higher education institutions dominate over the society due to their heavy investments, and public sector becomes invisible (Jandhyala, 2006).

- In the race to gain maximum market share by the private higher education institutions, quality is compromised by pleasing students, relaxing them regarding their learning practices (Roy, 2013).
- Commodity nature of higher education invoke the capitalists towards short term gains, in which the student who is the product of higher education becomes the victims of instrumental reason (Roy, 2013), thinking about personal gains only, crushing competition, and so on. Does nations morality and ethics are built upon these products? It embedded the sense of individualism, rationality, selfishness, greed and superiority in the society.
- Another drawback of treating higher education as commodity may affects the production of knowledge, which could lead towards knowledge capitalism, curtailing the role of government over control of higher education markets, may cause a inequality among the communities. In Pakistan, higher education is beyond the reach of large number of students due to high tuition fee, in this context knowledge capitalism keeps large number of economically poor students of underdeveloped nations away from quality education. Resultantly, they will be bound to work at lower level jobs, and will be corporate slaves in their whole life.
- Higher education is a pure public good, hence its provision should be the responsibility of state, and an important feature of higher education is to create and extends the boundaries of knowledge through continuous research initiatives by the varsities (Daniel, Kanwar, & Stamenka, 2008). When knowledge is treated as commodity it can hinder the production of new knowledge, as private capitalist sees his gain only, and avoids any funding into research projects for knowledge creation.
- Commodification form of knowledge perpetuate inequalities in the system, society, which leads inequality in economic social classes in the society (Tialk, 2007).

Discussion and Conclusion

Higher education plays a pivotal role in the development of society. It serves humanity, but there has been a drastic change in the perspective of higher education, from public good to commercial commodity based upon instrumental reason as cultural ideal.

This paper was aimed to analyze instrumental reason in the context of higher education in Pakistan. Analyzing shift from public good to commercial commodity with special reference to instrumental thinking. Which emerged in the higher education sector after the dominance of private higher education institutions in the beginning of 21st century.

Higher education is a basic human right, as mentioned in United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 but it is being sold like a commercial commodity at national and international markets, which has caused much of the world population deprived from this basic human right. The public good concept or function of higher education is gradually disappearing globally due to the dominance of neo-liberal policies, globalization, lack of public funds, or priority of governments towards provision of higher education to the society, WTO (World Trade Organization) policies, provision of higher education as commodity in GATS and most importantly, privatization. Thus, the role of higher education as a public good, human right, social benefits to society, and nations building is vanishing, and it is now at risk. Pakistani higher education sector has also been the victim of these neo-liberal thoughts, and hence the sector is saturated by the private higher education institutions, which puts their utmost efforts to gain maximum market share providing educational degrees at various price levels usually very high prices with the name of tuition fees, and most importantly at the cost of quality.

This shift in the higher education from public good to commercial commodity, being sold as mentioned above at numerous price levels, and further reforms being taken by the state in higher education in the same direction which have no objective of social contract with society, there are dangerous consequences according to Jandhyala, (2008) with implications from public interest to private interest, replacing academic values by commercial considerations, collective social interests to individual interests, and long-term needs by short term.

The motive of profit seeking higher education institutions also influence the quality and academic texture of education which leads to offer marketable and revenue generating study programs (Tilak, 2006). Thus, higher education is associated with culture, values, norms, and welfare of the society in particular, and serving humanity in general, it should be treated accordingly, and it's a basic human right and the state should take certain measures for the provision of this basic human right upon merit.

Private sector can never ensure the provision of education purely upon public welfare or philanthropy purposes rather it has turned into lucrative business opportunity in Pakistan. Majority of the private universities are owned by the tycoons and inopportunely most of them are businessmen, and they are gaining high profit margins from this business. Pakistani government, HEC, and concerned provincial authorities should take stern initiatives on this aspect of private higher education institutions. By implying certain rules, and policies so that proper checks and balance could be imposed upon their working, otherwise the human resource will suffer from this instrumental thinking forever.

Recommendations

Based upon the critical perspective of higher education with reference to instrumental reason, following recommendations are made;

- Higher education should not be commodified rather higher education institutions should work for the welfare of the society by creating new knowledge, providing skills and human social development.
- Private Higher education institutes should be closely monitored by the HEC, regarding their high tuition fee, degree programs and enrollment into various programs without HEC approval.
- Accreditations bodies like National Accreditation Council for Teachers Education (NACTE), National Agricultural Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC), National Computing Education Accreditation Council (NCEAC), National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC), and National Technology Council (NTC) should be functional and should strictly control the enrollment into specialized degree programs like engineering, medical, teaching and business degrees.
- Govt, should regularize the tuition fee of private higher education institutes and should also provide financial grants so that private higher education institutes could work in collaborations with government.
- Regular audit of private higher education institutes should be conducted by the HEC regarding fee structure, enrollment, campuses, provisions of facilities, and quality of education so that public good perspective of higher education should not be compromised.

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