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UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: ITS RESTRUCTURING AND IMPROVEMENT

ABSAR AHMAD[*]

There is an old proverb which says that the pen is mightier than the sword. This of course classically alluded to the importance of ideas at the intellectual level. But fortunately in the case of the University of the Punjab a holy alliance has taken place between the pen and the sword as its present administrator – the Vice-Chancellor – is an ex-army General. He is dynamic, full of vibrant innovative ideas and genuinely concerned about the improvement in the University's educational standards. Nevertheless I have some qualms about the very first proposition of Annexure 'A'[1] containing the parameters within which the above topic is to be discussed. It reads: "Real improvements in education necessarily require that society regard education as a vehicle for change and progress instead of means of simply preserving tradition and culture." To my mind it is a substantive and normative statement and has conceptual content and tacit assumptions with which I will take issue for the sake of clarity and putting things in the right perspective. 'Education' and 'Progress' are the key words here and I shall first dilate upon the notion of progress and change and then move on to analyse and probe 'education' in general and the concept of 'university' in particular.

Optimism in Scientific Progress Vanishes

Few amongst us who know and have a feel of the contemporary state of affairs would deny that the entire humanity is in a pile-up on the highway of scientific and

[*]Dr. Absar Ahmad is Iqbal Professor of Philosophy and Chairman, Department of Philosophy, University of the Punjab, Lahore-54590 (Pakistan).

technological development. The undeniable fact is that we are involved in a global environmental *gotterdammerung*, a massive ecological crisis and alienation on account of a runaway, production-oriented technology which has led to the depletion of resources (such as energy, food and water pressure on land and environment, ever-increasing output of wastes, nuclear chemical and biological weapons). Our times have seen far more critical transactions, sharp changes and abrupt discontinuities in human affairs than ever before. As a result we, the inhabitants of the "Spaceship Earth", are fragmented into warring groups and thoroughly lost in the cobweb woven by the so-called scientific progress and development. Even there is no hope for the times to come: predictably we are in the grip of Toffler's "Future Shock",[2] of a mounting tragedy, a very dismal and bleak picture indeed.

The confusion in this pile-up is confounded by a thick fog of intellectual arrogance and philosophical blindness that has set in over the past few hundred years. The obvious choices in this situation are: (*a*) keep driving straight into the pile-up, still following the rules that caused the pile-up; and (*b*) stop, take stock of the conditions, and try to disperse the fog before driving on or attempting a major rescue operation. The first alternative leads naturally to making the tragedy still worse. The second alternative is the only sensible choice.

That the Western science, its civilization, and the intellectual framework, which is its necessary concomitant, has failed mankind is now openly admitted even by the intellectuals of the West itself. There is an ever-growing sense of the limits of modernity and scientific progress, found in many a nation around the globe including even the United States. A review of dominant currents of thinking and acting regarding the technological development over the last three decades reveals that something profoundly new is happening today. Development – indeed, the very concept of scientific development and progress – is under attack. Two shibboleths of development unquestioned in the past have come to be challenged. Firstly, it is being asserted that material goods are not worth accumulating:

that they are shabby, that they have no ultimate worth. Secondly, it has been forcefully argued that society is not defined by the development process, but that the developmental process tends to wash away the unique characteristics of each society or each civilization. A conflict between traditionalism and modernity is emerging that threatens the very basis of modern scientific ethos. The zero-growth movement, the limits-to-growth movement, the idea of zero growth as a positive good – all assert that there are spiritual values, abstract goods and services quite beyond those resulting from material scientific development. Indeed, the entire direction of the twentieth century science and technological development is in question. The measurement of society or civilization by a gross national product, by levels of industrial output, or by levels of consumptive activity has come under tremendous criticism.

In the 19th century, in the Western world a prevailing faith had developed in the "endless frontier" of modern science; in the scientific method as the best path to dependable truth, in the scientific mind as the ultimate agent for the solution of almost any problem that could be formulated; and in the notion that science and technology promise limitless progress. Technological optimism had become a prevailing frame of mind. Total victory for science and the scientific method was proclaimed by authors and philosophers of science. But now all these claims have been seriously challenged and discredited by thinkers in many quarters. Science .... technology .... progress .... growth .... development .... modernization: this pattern of interlinked ideas, once a central part of the operative value structure of the Western modernized world, is now being widely opposed and deplored. In short, some fundamental ideas about science and technology are being revised presently both by academics, social critics and planners. The idea of progress is being redefined to embrace something more than quantitative growth of goods and services. There is an increased awareness of limits to the capacity of science to resolve social and civilizational problems. And there is growing insistence that conscious guidance should replace indiscriminate proliferation of

technology. The rejection of scientific modernism is extending to a re-evaluation of the notion of what constitutes a good world.

I shall substantiate my claim by citing a few eminent writers on the subject. After a lifetime of studying the interactions of technology and civilization, American social critic Lewis Mumford[3] reached a glum conclusion when he wrote: "Nothing less than a profound reorientation of our vaunted technological 'way of life' will save the planet from becoming a lifeless desert." The renowned microbiologist and essayist, Rene Dubos put aside his customary optimism to discount the prospect of technological solutions to contemporary social problems. "Technological fixes," he wrote, "usually turn out to be a jumble of procedures that have unpredictable consequences and are often in conflict with natural forces." From France, sociologist Jacques Ellul asserts: "Technique (scientific technique) has become autonomous, it has fashioned an omnivorous world which obeys its own laws and has renounced all traditions."

The sense of the limits of science and the contemporary malaise has structural and methodological no less than historical roots. It is a complex phenomenon which requires both analytic clarity and historical specificity. I shall venture to point out that the modern science, though a heir to all scientific traditions of the past especially to the works of the great Muslim scientists, is distinctively European. It is an embodiment of the Western secular ethos and has its foundations in the western intellectual history. Thus to have in-depth and firm understanding of the nature of modern science, we must examine very schematically the philosophical tradition which is the fulcrum of modern science.

Philosophers and scientists separated natural science from metaphysics during the Renaissance in Europe. The intellectual and scholarly tradition which is responsible for the present status of science and technology has its roots in the Enlightenment which by many is considered to be the beginning of modern times. The Enlightenment was the work of the *Philosophes* – the intellectuals who conceived and perfected it. The *philosophes* looked at science and exploration not just for new knowledge but

also for new attitudes towards knowledge. From science they acquired the sceptical attitude of systematic doubt, and from exploration a new relativistic attitude towards belief and used them as ammunition against traditional norms and values.

New Awareness about Methodology

My brief and sketchy excursus into the history of ideas vividly explains why for so long we have succumbed to the notion that human beings can progress by means of a single methodology only, the famous so-called *Scientific Method* and that ensuing from that there is only one type of rationality to be used as the yardstick for determining the validity and scientific respectability of a theory. The idea of only one type of science of nature being possible, through the use of the scientific method, greatly influenced the whole way of looking at the pre-modern sciences, including Islamic sciences. One of the most important conclusions established by Professor Hossein Nasr's pioneering works on Islamic Science, is that there is no single methodology that is used in that science to the exclusion of all other. On the contrary, the Islamic sciences have sought to pursue different methods in accordance with the nature of subject in question and modes of understanding that subject. Muslim scientists have relied upon every avenue of knowledge open to man, from ratiocination and interpretation of Sacred Scripture to observation and experimentation.

In the contemporary western science and philosophy itself the idea of a single, value-free and linear type of scientific methodology has been forcefully questioned by the numerous works on the methodology of science which have appeared over the last decade or so. Instead, the idea of pluralistic methodology – culturally varied alternative strategies – has now gained wide currency among contemporary historians and philosophers of science. Some of them have gone to the extent of even accepting Sacred Scriptures to be integrated into this pluralistic methodology. Most notable amongst them is Paul Feyerabend.[4] Similarly, a number of professional scientists, mostly physicists, from R. Oppenheimer and E. Schrodinger to Frithjof Capra,[5]

have turned to Oriental doctrines in the hope of finding solutions to certain dilemmas and problems encountered at the frontier of modern physics. Viewed as a whole, it can be said that one of the most interesting and significant development to have taken place in contemporary science is the realization that the creative process which has produced that science is far more complex than what has been popularised as the 'scientific method'. The 'official' method of science has been too reductionistic and exclusivist. It acted like a one-eyed giant, bringing with it the characteristic split and blindness which were at once its strength, its torment, and its ruin. However, the last quarter of the 20th century has witnessed an epistemological upheaval in the form of post-modernism in which thinkers and even scientific theoreticians have suggested numerous "non-modern" alternative strategies which are more genuine, humane and sympathetic towards people's spiritual needs and moral values.[6]

The scientific enterprise following from the separation of knowledge from metaphysics and its method is not, in an important sense, valueneutral but harbours within itself a preferred mode of empirical rationality and particular outlook on efficiency, development and problem solving. Genuine alternative methodological strategies, however, require a non-instrumental handling of indigenous values of a society, a recognition by the social reforms that it is from within the latent dynamism of a particular indigenous value-system that group development goals must emerge. The normative image of rationality underlying the classical scientific and technological cast of mind is quantitative, cumulative, verifiable and disaggregative, "objective" rather than "subjective". The contrary image supports and sustains moral value-systems: their rationality is more holistic, and stresses subjective perceptions, quality in relationships, linkages, symbols and evocative meanings. This view of rationality does not initially assume that every statement has to be demonstrated or verified to be considered valid. It holds contrary assumptions regarding what is right, reasonable, and meaningful. Unlike the positivistic-scientific methodological principles of knowledge and development which display murderous cultural arrogance and

cognitive disrespect for people, theorists like Fred Riggs, Lloyd and Suzanne Rudolph, and Mirrit Boutros Ghali[7] assert that much value destruction is unnecessary: they contend that traditions can coexist with modern practices in societies undergoing change. This approach acknowledges that cultural values and moral notions are essential to people's identity and their sense of meaning, and to their purposeful continuity with life around them. Science and technology must not be idolized as some new Moloch permitted to devour all values standing in its way. Too many modern scholars, following the positivistic philosophy, wrongly assumed that traditional religions and moral values intrinsically possess a low developmental coefficient, an assumption which has been radically questioned. Richard Falk, for one, observes acutely: "No amount of tinkering can fix up the present international system .... The future prospects of the human species depend upon internalising an essentially religious perspective, sufficient to transform secular outlooks that now dominate the destiny of the planet."[8] In a similar vein writers such as William Ophus, Willis Harman, and Herman Daly[9] call for a new piety toward nature and society in their search for values to guide social policy. They have begun to understand what traditional wisdom has always known, namely that holistic posture must be founded on reverence for the universe and for living beings within it. This means in effect that a metaphysical world-view and teleological resolutions of life are not to be taken as a challenge to the technology and progress necessary to cope with the continuation of the developmental impulse.

In the above lines I have tried to unpack the rather misguided assumptions with regard to one's attitude towards progress and development. The focal idea in the rest of the propositions of 'Annexure A' is 'the main aim of the University'. I have a feeling that in speaking of 'focussing on the relation of education to employment' too much and rather unwarranted emphasis is laid on career and profession-oriented education, thus reducing the University into a polytechnique or professional institution. 'Making higher education more relevant to our society' is something which I accept and endorse wholeheartedly. Let me here expound the concept and historical

evolution of 'university' in the modern sense[10] as the seat of higher education, research and germination of ideas and cultural values.

Classical Concept of the University

The word 'university', according to the definition provided in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is derived from the medieval Latin term *universitas* which was employed to denote any community or corporation devoted to universal learning and education. The more ancient and customary designation of such communities or places in medieval times was *studium* and subsequently *studium generale*. It is an interesting historical fact that the "Studium Generale", later called universities, came into existence to replace the cathedral and monastic schools which had attained to the highest degree of reputation and influence with the mighty Church behind them. However, in the universities, side by side with the Faculty of Theology, the Faculty of Philosophy now asserted its right to independent and free inquiry. And soon it came to be realized that philosophy covered the entire field of knowledge including theology and natural sciences, and as such, determined the character of the university.

The very idea of university includes and encompasses the entirety of knowledge as an integrated whole. Though historically it is true that Bologna started with law and Paris was originally concerned with Theology and Arts, yet both of them gradually appropriated the whole universe of knowledge and ultimately became composite bodies consisting of all the Faculties – Theology, Law, Medicine, and Arts. The last, however, served as the necessary means for the mental training for the study of the first three and thus acquired an independent status on the Faculty of Philosophy which included in itself all the social and natural sciences. Thus it is quite clear that the very idea of the university represents the totality of knowledge. The conception of an institution devoted to the cultivation of universal knowledge is not only an 'imperative necessity' as Rashdall, an eminent British philosopher, has so aptly insisted; it,

in fact, provides the only justification for bringing together all the faculties to one place in order to promote and preserve the universality and totality of knowledge.[11]

Indeed this idea of the university can be justified in another way also. If, as the Rationalist believe quite legitimately, the universe is really an *universum*, a cosmos in which all the part have 'turned to me', that is, are interrelated, interconnected, and integrated into one, forming a system (system means parts set together), with no loose, insulated items, then surely the knowledge of this universe must necessarily be a system, unified and integrated, *i.e.* cosmic in its structure as well as in its scope. To say that the university is a composite body of scholars and students in the merely legal sense, means nothing if their knowledge taken together does not constitute a unified whole. All knowledge derives its ultimate meaning and validity from the totality of knowledge in the context of which it must finally be evaluated. If the different disciplines remain apart in the university, they would not produce a cosmos of knowledge because none of them would reflect in itself the cosmos which is a systamatised and unified whole. Unity of the universe calls for the unity of knowledge. Particular sciences, natural as well as social, are by their nature restricted in their approach and fragmented in scope, and as such, they cannot overcome or transgress the limitations imposed upon them by their respective subject matter. The knowledge gained by each one of them individually is partial; it is valid only in respect of its particular subject matter and does not reflect the ultimate truth in an integrated form. Universal knowledge can be attained only by a discipline, which inquires into the ultimate nature of reality taken as a whole, that is to say, by a discipline which deals with the most universal and widest possible concepts, applicable to the whole of reality and experience without in any way setting aside or discarding the parts.

University Education in Pakistan

Viewed in the background of above submissions education, higher education in particular, must have some culture-specific

aims. Education is always subservient to knowledge-claims or to a philosophy of life. It signifies a process by virtue of which a given community tries to transmit to its succeeding generations, its ideology or vision of life and the ideals that are embedded in its philosophy of knowledge – the metaphysical foundations and the overall *weltanschaung* or world-view. In other words, if our university education system is reflective of our belief in God and belief in the Day of Judgment it will positively cultivate in both the teaching faculty and students a specific psycho-moral attitude – an attitude of *Taqwa* (God-consciousness) or a deep sense of accountability to God, something which is directly opposed to the secularist and nihilist attitude. University education is supposed to provide intellectual and honest leadership in various walks of national life. It offers to all thinking and reflective minds a seminal guideline in variegated disciplines and encourages creative human intelligence to work out details and ramifications in particular areas of study. As Muslims we take the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet as the mainstay and sole anchorage of our ideology and our system of education should be defined and restructured in the light of these two immutable sources.

It will be generally agreed that education forms the most important link between man's past and future. In fact, it constitutes that process of evaluation and transmission, of coping with the present and planning for the future, which determines a community's survival. It is through education that the cultural heritage, knowledge, and values of a social group are preserved and the continuity of its collective life ensured. In short, education imparts meaning to the existence of a culture and helps it sustain its world-view. As such, it cannot be equated with a mere inventory of the paraphernalia and instruments of instruction, including even institutions and external structures. On the contrary, in every meaningful and constructive way education is inextricably linked with the general intellectualism of a culture, the principal task of which is to provide a forum for self-analysis, criticism, and search for authenticity. Educational philosophy, therefore, not only shapes the destiny and identity of any historical community in its functions as the guardian and

cultivator of values, it is also the very basis of all culture and civilization.

Endorsing the above ideas, the well-known Pakistani educationist, the late Dr. Mahmood Hussain, writes in a collection of excellent articles entitled *Education and Culture*: "Education is a social process and it receives its meaning and essential logic from the human society of which it is a part. In its broadest sense the totality of human experience within the society, whether tangible or intangible, is called its culture .... This consensus within a society, which is both emotional and intellectual, is what gives a culture its inner source of strength and motive force .... The cementing force within a society is a system of sentiments which we can call its value-system. The system of values is essentially a set of inter-related ideas, concepts and practices to which strong sentiments are attached. The value system is nurtured and reinforced primarily by the system of beliefs of a group and by its sense of history and tradition."[12]

In a similar vein the above-mentioned ideas are emphasized by A. K. Brohi thus: "By education we understand a participation in a cultural process by which successive generations of men and women take their place in our national history upon the foundation of an ideological commitment to the Islamic way of life, and a certain manner of thinking and action conforming to its tenets and commands."[13] Indeed education is the synthesis of tradition and change. Preservation of culture is not the end-all and be-all of education. Its equally important function is to reconstruct the cultural tradition in the light of modern empirical knowledge to keep pace with changing time, as stressed by Iqbal in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.[14] Education is not only an instrument of social stability but also a vehicle of social change, and in either of its two roles, it serves one and the same purpose – that of the continuity and growth of society and stability and expansion of its culture. A society must be stable enough to give it a foothold in the world of perpetual change, but at the same time it must be resilient enough to adapt itself to the changing needs of time. Howsoever firm, steady and stable a

society might be, it does not and cannot rule out the possibility of change in its cultural tradition, specially in the present day age dominated by science and technology, rightly called the age of explosion of knowledge; if it does, it becomes static and loses not only its vigour, but also its hold and is finally wiped out of existence.[15]

It is important to note here that after the creation of Pakistan the first national conference held in the life of Quaid-e-Azam was on education. Pakistan was born in August 1947 and the national conference on education was held in November 1947. In an informal meeting on a dinner table the Quaid said to the delegations of this conference: "We, the Muslim League, has created for you a new country by the name of Pakistan. Now we expect from you, that is, the teachers and the educators, to create for us a new nation by the name of Pakistani nation." This statement not only signifies the importance that the father of the nation attached to education, but also underlines the overriding objectives of education as envisioned by the Quaid-e-Azam. The question is; how far have we lived up to the expectations of the founder of this country? Have we created a new nation, or simply fragmented, divided and polarized, whatever little we have had and have virtually defeated the very foundations of our independent nationhood?

A brief observation about the general malaise of education in Pakistan will not be out of place here. Every thoughtful person would realize that quite diverse systems of education are operative in the country. We have English medium schools which boast of their linkage with some of the British universities or foreign methods of teaching. We have Urdu medium schools and also we have the traditional Madrassa system wherein conventional religious education is imparted in accordance with time-worn methodologies. These different systems are producing different minds so much so that they cannot communicate with each other. In all other civilizations/states, education has always been used as a source and promoter of national integration. Pakistan, however, is a very unfortunate exception where education is used as a source of national disintegration. Our

leadership must address itself to this problem and evolve an integrated and uniform system of education which in turn could ensure the production of well-integrated minds and ensuing societal cohesion. If this unwholesome trend is allowed to continue, I am afraid, we might have a very bleak future. Fusing together of the two parallel secular and religious education is essential so as to provide Iṣlamic vision to those engaged in education and enable them to reconstruct human thought in all its forms on the foundations of Islam. Allama Iqbal highlights the importance of welding the two streams of education into one single stream in a couplet thus:

University Education and Employment Opportunities

Conservation and promotion of national identity and general intellectualism should have occupied top most priority in our educational planning at the university level. However, majority of the educational planners in Pakistan are inspired by, and obsessed with, a vision of progress, material progress, which is completely associated with industry, economic expansion and employment opportunities. Our education does not lag behind in this respect. Agricultural and engineering colleges in the country have become full-fledged universities, with a mushroom growth of polytechniques, commercial institutes, BBA, MBA courses, producing trained manpower for running administration, economy, industry, business in the public and private sector. Not shortage of trained manpower, but its overproduction is sapping the foundation of our economy leading to unscrupulous employment of manpower on political basis irrespective of demand in government departments. Federal and provincial governments are now faced with the massive problem of reducing the size of each division and department and abolishing many units to cut down their expenditure to rehabilitate their shattered economy. That is also the reason why we read news of 'downsizing' in various ministries and departments of government as well as in private sector projects. We should definitely match higher education with the requirements of the country. Overproduction of trained manpower is the bane of our education system and of the unimaginative education policies

framed by the bureaucrats instead of the educationists. These bureaucrats know nothing about education and intellectual culture except the imported vision of progress, unmindful of the menacing conditions of the country and the moral fibre of those charged with the responsibility of spearheading the project of progress – the dream of the economic well-being of the people.

Generally speaking, even in the technologically developed and economically affluent West, the progressive academic specialization of recent decades has evolved to a point not only of diminishing returns, but some negative ones. Specialization itself has become part of the problem. Narrow, fragmented, isolated vectors of research, when pursued without regard to a broader sense of the living enterprise and national aspirations, build false bastions of intellectual confidence. There is a deep public scepticism toward the ideal of "pure" scientific research. There is doubt as to whether more knowledge will actually improve the quality of life, in part because many problems that now bedevil humanity – the ecological fallout of technological progress, for example – appear to result from increases in knowledge.

The days of the "ivory tower", if they ever existed, are over. Ivory, for that matter, is a predatory product whose trade is now widely prohibited. Towers were an architectural feature whose original purpose was military: a high tower commanded a wide view of surrounding countryside and enabled far-reaching surveillance that could give early warnings of danger. In a medieval castle, command of the physical surroundings was paramount. Topography was destiny. But in the current information landscape, consciousness, not geography, controls the future. As always, knowledge is power – and the university's capacity to create new knowledge affords it a vital niche in society. To sustain the support of society and tax-payers, the university must continually give evidence of its social value. That imperative will only gain force in years to come. The large amounts of time and money that society spends on research and higher education must be justifiable as prudent investments. Accountability will be a watchword of the future. The destiny of

the university is yoked to that of the wider social and cultural world: value-added contributions must flow in both directions. There is a way to rekindle the treasured spirit of innovation, and universities can play a key role, creating the climate to foster towering human achievements.

Pakistan is hard hit by energy crisis. We can find an immediate relief by the development of nuclear energy. Nuclear energy can help us to broaden our industrial base and overcome poverty and economic depression that our society is beset with. Of course, it can help in the development of our defence potential as well. Unfortunately, Pakistan is being pressurized not to develop nuclear technology even for peaceful purposes. The West is obviously apprehensive that if Pakistan is allowed to develop this technology, it would help the country to control its brain-drain and use its own natural and human resources more effectively. It may also help Pakistan develop nuclear arms and thereby strengthen its defence potential – as of now, they are simply speculating about our nuclear deterrent. Western fears not withstanding, we do need to develop its infrastructure and this cannot be done unless we restructure our system of education with a strong edge for basic sciences in the universities. It is heartening to note that scores of scientists educated at the University of the Punjab are now working in the prestigious top-notch research laboratories and institutes of our country. We need self-sufficiency in the fields of science and technology and our education curricula must be designed to meet this demand. Further, our national leadership is obliged to pursue this goal and persuade the West that we are not likely to pose any threat to anybody. In any case we cannot compromise our national future goals to alley the baseless fears and apprehensions of the Western world and its hostile media.

Ideally speaking, a university should offer students a springboard to a fulfilling future, enabling them to develop the self-confidence and skills they need for life. I would suggest that our University should set up an Employment Opportunities Bureau (or simply Placement Bureau) which should collect information of vacant positions both from public and private

sector. It should have a database regarding the manpower requirements of the region and province and thus help its alumni in securing respectable jobs commensurate with their qualifications. The University of the Punjab should forge mutually beneficial links at local, national and international level with industry, commerce, the professions and educational and research institutions. This is a very important task that has been ignored so far. In this connection, I would recommend the following practical steps:

1. Research conducted by the University should be oriented towards the benefit of the society and point out the issues and problems to the relevant government agencies.
2. Special seminars on community problems be conducted by the faculty outside the University campus thus bringing 'town' and 'gown' closer.
3. Programmes should be chalked out by the University to involve the students and faculty members in useful community service in various areas of interest and specialization.
4. Research must be made compulsory with definite weightage in the final grades to induce inventiveness, creativity and critical thinking. All master programmes should be turned into dissertation programmes. Our education is suffering from rote learning and defective methods of teaching. This has resulted in, more or less, total lack of original and creative thought in our graduates.
5. Our education system should encourage critical thinking and should produce in students the ability to apply theories learnt by them. We should initiate an indigenous tradition of science and technology which has been called 'appropriate' technology by some writers and scholars in the West.

6. For effective transference of current knowledge/theories from teachers to students, the teaching methods must be modernized. Besides the lecture method, audio-visual aids, computers and all modern gadgets should be extensively used. Seminars and open-house discussion and exchange of ideas should take place regularly and frequently.

7. Teachers should engage in research activity and should also include their students in experimentation as well as the fieldwork so as to encourage the use of observational methods. In order to provide incentive for research the government should give research allowance to the University teachers as well.

Measures Urgently Needed in Crucial Areas

Earlier on I referred to the First Education Conference held in Nov-Dec 1947. However, the recommendations of that Conference could not be implemented for financial and political reasons. First comprehensive education policy was launched in 1959, followed by Nur Khan Policy 1970, 1972-80 Policy of Bhutto, National Education Policy 1978 and then Education Policy of 1994, but none of these policies could be fully implemented, as a new policy was launched before the implementation of the previous policy was completed. So there is no gainsaying the fact that Pakistani education at all levels has been turned into a muddle either by continuous shifts in national educational policies or by our failure to implement these policies efficiently. In fact, the continuous shifts in our national educational policies seem to stem from structural confusions, lack of clear perspective on the goals of education in modern times and little concern for the religious perspective and ideology.

Our textbooks, curricula, libraries and laboratories etc. must all reflect the dynamic character of knowledge. They must be up-to-date reflecting the current state of knowledge in various areas. Otherwise, we would be simply transferring outdated and obsolete ideas to our students. A society in which thought is

stagnant is a dying society: it cannot look forward to a future. The task of a university is the creation of the future, so far as rational thought, and civilized modes of appreciation, can affect the issue. Universities are created in the hope that they will not only help preserve the traditions of a community but also provide a group of scholars and an atmosphere of scholarship where ideas and values are continually tested by the freeplay of thought. LIFE IS ENRICHED WHEN THERE IS TIME TO THINK AND A SUITABLE PLACE TO DO IT. THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL JUSTIFICATION OF UNIVERSITIES.

Educating tomorrow's brightest scholars and leaders should be the guiding principle of education at the University of the Punjab. This ideal infuses a community that insists on vigour and intellectual excitement in the classroom. The cultivation of student interests is the true strength of any university and the present Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University is paying special attention to it. The commencement of co-curricular activities managed by students from all departments and faculties is a move in the right direction. The ideal Punjab University student should be capable of self-disciplined individual research and constructive corporate interchange. The first of these qualities should be reflected in tutorials and dissertation research, the second in seminars and colloquia.

The choice of curriculum should be the prerogative of the teachers of a particular discipline in the University. I personally believe that we should have 'proven' curricula but allow flexible focus to individual students according to their taste and calibre. There is a need for the university to revise the process of curricula development to make it simpler and dynamic. The departmental board of studies along with the faculty board should be given complete authority over all decisions regarding curricula and texts. The Academic Council and the Syndicate of the University need concern themselves only with broader academic policies. All teaching departments in the University must hold workshops at least once every two years on the curricula development in their respective fields for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. These workshops will

also provide opportunity for teachers to familiarize themselves with the state of the art discussions in their disciplines. These can additionally be excellent forum for training young teachers newly inducted into the university teaching service. These workshops and professional/academic meetings are important for a continuous review process and to make the courses more dynamic. Punjab University should also arrange linkage programmes with foreign universities in order to give boost to its academics.

One cannot possibly turn a blind eye to the economic needs of University teachers and their meagre salaries vis-à-vis present inflation and devaluation of money. I am firmly of the opinion that the service structure of University teachers should be reorganized and they should be given grades higher than other services. The teachers deserve it on the ground of their superior qualifications. Besides, it will serve as an incentive to attract talent from abroad to the teaching profession. The university service-structure should be forthwith restructured as follows:

Position	*Pay Scale*
(*a*) Lecturer	BPS-18
(*b*) Assistant Professor	BPS-19
(*c*) Associate Professor	BPS-20
(*d*) Professor	BPS-21
(*e*) Senior Professor	BPS-22

I have devoted much thinking to the examination system throughout my long career as a teacher in this University. At the moment the University has given option to departments with respect to following either the Semester System or the conventional/term (also called the 'annual') system. I strongly suggest that there should be uniformity in this and the University should enforce the Semester System in all departments for the conduct of examination at the MA/MSc level. The suggested details of the examination system are as under:

1. There should be an Examination Committee in each and every department responsible for the conduct of examinations.
2. Attendance should be made compulsory and those candidates who fail to make up 75% of attendance in aggregate and 60% in individual courses, should be dropped.
3. The duration of a semester should not be less than 18 weeks.
4. The distribution of marks should be as follows:

   (*a*) Mid Term 30 Marks

   (*b*) Final and Comprehensive Term 40 Marks

   (*c*) Presentation of Research Papers 30 Marks
5. All answer books to be used in the Mid Term and Final Term must be signed by all the members of the said Examination Committee.
6. There should be no improvement tests. The 'I' grade (Incomplete Grade) be abolished. A candidate who fails in a course may repeat it as and when the course is offered again.
7. Those candidates who fail in 50% or more of the courses offered in the first semester, their admission should stand cancelled.
8. The construction or structure of the question paper should be such as to evaluate both the content and concept of the course.
9. Answer books, after evaluation, should be shown to the candidates and in case of any objection or dispute the matter should be referred to the Examination Committee whose decision should be final. There should be no rechecking of paper after that.
10. Reasonable remuneration to teachers and the ministerial staff should be given.

11. All measures should be taken to expedite the evaluation of M.Phil. and Ph.D. theses. A special cell for this purpose should be constituted under the Controller of Examinations. Instead of snail-mail, letters to referees should be sent through e-mail so that their consents and reports are received expeditiously.

12. Convocation should be held regularly on the date fixed and given in the University Calendar as this is an important event in the life of students.

We should by all possible means maintain academic accountability at the Punjab University. Feedback from students and surprise visits of the Faculty Dean and the Vice-Chancellor to the departments and seeing lectures and teaching in progress is also a good idea. It will definitely insure more punctuality, excellence and diligence on the part of teachers. The Punjab University has a long standing and we have much to celebrate in looking back at our achievements, the growth of the university, and its high standing among the universities of the South East Asia. The University has good reason to be proud but, as in all living institutions, it must look to the future, to the new millennium, and to what must be done to enhance still further its facilities and its academic standards. However, the most important part played in the University is that of the teacher and a good teacher is one who is himself really "educated" and emancipated – one who has achieved a sense of cultural and historical self-awareness and self-integration. Only he is able to change his inert and backward state, its mental and spiritual decadence into a dynamic state of making and inventing and into a state of moral, spiritual and social creativity.[16] To quote a very relevant passage from A. N. Whitehead here:

> "Apart from detail, and apart from system, a philosophic outlook is the very foundation of thought and of life. The sort of ideas we attend to, and the background govern our hopes, our fears, our control of behaviour. As we think, we live. This is why the assemblage of philosophic ideas is more than a specialist study. It moulds our type of civilization."[17]

And it is in this context that Pakistani educationists, academia and educational managers should assimilate Islamic teachings in their minds and hearts and adopt a true and authentic moral attitude in their behaviour. This in effect means that real disease, not just symptoms, should be targeted. Only in this way can the envisaged goals of the founding fathers of Pakistan be realized.

REFERENCES AND ENDNOTES

1 This essay was written in response to a prize competition to analyse various aspects of education system at the University of the Punjab and recommend measures to modernize and improve quality of education at the University. It was selected as the first prize-winning essay. The following parameters were supplied as Annexure for writing the paper:

Real improvements in education necessarily require that society regard education as a vehicle for change and progress instead of means of simply preserving tradition and culture. A rational restructuring of education priorities focussing on the relation of education to employment will be needed as well. Obviously this is a long-term programme, but how one does begin? To make higher education more relevant to our society, suggest measures urgently needed in crucial areas such as curriculum, textbooks, examination system and teacher training in our University. While we implement these measures we must ensure greater academic accountability, internal system of quality assurance and maintenance of academic standards in line with the main aim of the University. Analyse and recommend short and long term measures to modernize our education system.

2 cf. Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*, Bodley Head, 1970.

3 Mumford, Lewis, *Technics and Civilization*, Harcourt Brace & Co., New York, 1963, pp. 45-48 *passim*.

4 See P. Feyerabend, *Against Method*, Verso Edition (1982) p. 30. The whole book, as the title itself says, is an outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge. The introduction summarizes it as follows: "Science is an essentially anarchistic enterprise:

theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives."

5 E. Schrodinger, *My View of the World*, Cambridge (1964); Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, Shambhala, Boulder (1975) and also his *The Turning Point*, Bantam edition (1988) Chap. 9. Also see George Johnson: *Fire in the Mind.* New York: Vintage Books, 1995. See particularly Chapter 7 "The Dawn of Recognition".

6 In an extremely stimulating and thought-provoking seminar on "Social Sciences in the 21st Century", Prof. Dr. S. M. Ghazanfar of Idaho University (USA) spoke at length on the development of this trend in the Western academia. This seminar was held at University of the Punjab on February 3, 2000.

7 Fred W. Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), Lloyd and Suzanne Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Mirrit Boutros Ghali, *Tradition for the Future* (Oxford, England, Alden Press, 1972).

8 Richard Falk, see his article in *World Faiths and the New World Order*, eds. Joseph and William Ryan (Washington, 1978).

9 For a representative sample of such writings see, Dennis Pirages, ed., *The Sustainable Society* (New York: Praeger, 1977).

10 For a more detailed discussion of this topic see my article "The University: Repository of Universal and Total Truth" published in *Iqbal Review*, Oct-Dec 1985, pp. 89-95.

11 Rashdall, H., *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1895, pp. 175-180.

12 Hussein, Dr. Mahmood, *Education and Culture*, Royal Book House, Karachi, 1973, p.15.

13 Brohi, A. K., "Education in an Ideological State", in *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, ed. S. M. Al-Naqib Attas, Lahore, 1996, p.56.

14 *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is Allama Iqbal's philosophical magnum opus. His ideas on education are found scattered in many addresses and letters compiled and published in several books.

15 I have further developed this vitally important aspect of education in my article "Concept of Education in Islamic Perspective" published in *The Quranic Horizons*, Volume 3, No. 1 (1998), pp.2-8.

16 The Holy Quran speaks of mental and spiritual decadence as 'disease' (مرض). Cf. my article "Pathology of the Heart in the Quran", *Intellectual Discourse*, Volume 7, No. 1 (1999), International Islamic University, Malaysia.

17 Whitehead, A. N., *Modes of Thought*, The Free Press, New York, 1979.