

DETERIORATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES A Review Article

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The word 'education' is derived from the Latin words 'educate' and 'educere', which mean to bring up and to bring forth. It is defined as "to educate is to lead out or bring out and that which is brought out and developed can only be capacities that man has but that remain more or less dormant and embryonic until some thing acts him that awakens nourishes and exercises them."¹

Education is considered as the shaping and moulding activity. Education is a human activity, influencing physical, mental, social and spiritual development of child. The most comprehensive and appropriate view of education is defined by Aristotle. He says: "Education is the preparation of the body and the mind for life. Knowledge kindles the lamp that guides a man along the difficult and dark road of life. Ignorance holds man in a prison wherefrom education sets him free and equips him with the means of physical existence and spiritual development."² The educationalists define six characteristics of education. First, education creates curiosity because without it man is not man in real sense but a cold hopper. Second, it develops imagination that is compulsion to carry out task. Third, education imparts

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efficiency. To be efficient is indispensable for outer use and inner happiness. Fourth, education teaches piety. Piety means reverence for others. Fifth, education must generate a sense of humour. The sixth feature of education is defined that an educated person should know where to find what he wants.

The basic aim of education is to help the individual to be the real human being. Sir Percy Nunn describes: "We must hold that a scheme of education is ultimately to be valued by its success in fostering the highest degree of individual excellence of which those submitted to it are capable."³ The formation of character as the whole is the person's tendencies in both physical and mental activities. According to Socrates, life and its values were the freely play of magnificent mind, the fulfillment in thought, person's tendencies in both physical and mental activities. According to Socrates, life and its value were the freely play of magnificent mind, the fulfillment in thought, feelings and practice of a great intellect and a great heart.

From the point of view of an individual, it is said that education is the characteristic of the personal growth; and from the point of view of society, it is defined that the need and function of education is to transmit and renew the culture. Swami Vivekananda says that the character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass through his soul, they leave on it different picture and the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man's character.⁴ One of the main purpose of education is to bring out all the potentials of a man. Sound education is that which enables a man to think independently, judge severely, and evaluate matters correctly. A healthy mind is always open to receive new impressions. This is a quality which only education infuses in a person. Common people have a notion that schools and colleges are the sole sources of education. This is true to some extent but I am of the view that human mind is not a bottle in which wisdom cannot be rammed during the years he spends in an institution. The mind develops slowly through many years in the light of experience and keen observation.

THE CONCEPT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Sophisticated societies have struggled for many centuries to develop their institutions of higher learning for the training of their leaders. In the modern age, the concept is developed that no nation can ever be able to progress without a well-developed system of higher education. The nature of technological advancement and changing pattern of scientific development have introduced the concept of life long learning in the fresh world. Therefore an individual has to continuously update his education. (Jacks 1931) argues that man could be complete in real terms through the acquiring the complete human knowledge. Gasel (1968) says that Knowledge and skill is necessary for the development of an individual. Steiner (1972) says that knowledge of arts, science, religion, and probity has a collective role to play in the development of a complete person.⁵ All these modern educationalists acknowledge that science is the dominating part of education today. In the modern world the higher education plays a vital role in the advancement of a nation. The higher education is also important for broadening the exposure of leaders of a nation.

The idea of all round knowledge in the present world is not practicable because of the vast explosion of knowledge. It is age of specialization; therefore, one has to concentrate on the specific field. So the higher education is necessary to create expertise.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

In developed countries, two major changes have clearly taken place since the World War II. First is the expansion of knowledge and second is the establishment of a relationship between theory and practice. After 1960s the number of students increased so sharply in many developed countries. The existing universities were expanded in size and scope and a number of new universities were opened. The vast field of knowledge led to a degree of specialization, which became an effective means to the advancement of knowledge. In the process of growing departmentalization, the sub-division of knowledge resulted in a

multiplication of courses with an elective system of choices. The increasing students' enrollment presented educationist with a challenge to meet the serious resultant administrative and financial problems. Moreover the increasing ramification gave rise to a special skilled, expected to make an increasing contribution to the development of science and technology.

In the developed countries the educationists emphasize both the development of vocational skills as well as the social development of an individual. The term 'educated man' is now used in a "sense of training as well as developing the Potential qualities of person in order to mature his or her moral and intellectual behaviour.⁶ The universities in the developed countries are giving qualitative education up-dating their curriculum according to the requirements of the modern age. Their degrees are widely recognized through out the world. The developed countries give vast financial opportunities to their students of higher education.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

As far as the system of higher education is concerned in developing countries, it seems to be lacking both in diversity of knowledge and an appropriate relationship between theory and practice. The universities in many third world countries are offering less variety of courses as compared to those in developed countries. For instance, the directory of subjects of Pakistan and Bangladesh shows that there are fewer courses being taught in these universities than in any British university. Four out of the six universities in Bangladesh offer more or less the same 29 courses, eleven of these being devoted to the study of languages.⁷

The different policies and strategies adopted in developed countries are likely to bring different results. The most developed countries have shaped the learning in the universities as well as in the research centres in order to meet the demand of the labour market in particular, and the demands of society in general. The expansion of higher education in many developing countries,

giving little consideration to its relevance to its demands is likely to give rise to educated unemployment. Another factor involved in making education less useful in developing countries than that in developed one in terms of its potential contribution to socio-economic development seems to be the lack of curriculum revision. Universities in the developed countries change their curriculum according to time. In order to cope with the demands of the society the changes in the developed countries are put forward by the educationists working within the system. On the other hand, in the developing, the bureaucrats make suggestions to change the curriculum. These bureaucrats are a small portion of influential people and are trained from the foreign countries and they seem to impart the aims of education of developed countries in their own countries.⁸

The unplanned and poorly planned budgeting of higher education and the budgetary limitations facing poor countries appear to have created at last two major problems. The first is concerned with the qualitative deterioration in higher education and second to make education relevant to the real world with the various measures taken by the government which has proved unsuccessful. Thus higher education in developing countries has not only failed to play a significant role in meeting the national needs, it has also given rise to unemployment. The South Asian countries are under pressure to provide jobs for thousands of arts graduates on the one hand and yet are unable to meet their labour markets, pressing demands for highly skilled personnel.⁹

THE PROBLEMS OF FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PAKISTAN

Education plays an important role in the development of a country. It is the development of knowledge that better evolved approaches are brought in the social set up of a society according to the need of time. An educated person can play better role in process of transition of social and political systems of country. Louis D. Hyes writes that education is considered very important in the social priorities of all countries, third world countries in particular. Education is assumed to "provide passage to a more

promising future.”¹⁰ There is strong relationship between education and economic development of a country. The World Bank Report 1998-99 indicates that the knowledge gap between developed and developing countries leads them to the economic gaps. A study prepared by the Task Force on Higher Education 2000 explains that higher education has never been as important to the future of the developing countries.

A very small portion of budget is allocated for education in the developing countries. While higher education is expensive in developing countries. As in the most of developing countries, the financial capacity of people is lower, so they cannot afford to get admission in the higher education institutions. The job opportunities for students are very short. Unemployment is rapidly on increase.

In a society where majority of people live below the poverty line, leading a sub-standard life and strive hard to get the basic needs of life, the concept of higher education is totally unconceivable. Because in such society even the general education is considered unaffordable. So much so the cost of vocational and technical education is very high.

Pakistan belongs to the category of those developing countries where the education sector is not given due attention due to the shortage of economic resources. Higher education is imparted in both public and private sectors. The government-run institutions are comparatively affordable by students having the middle class background but students of lower middle class and least class can never think to meet the expenditures of institutions.

In Pakistan about 80% people live under the poverty line, who make their both ends meet. Their daily average income is less than one US dollar. Thus, parents cannot afford education expenditures and consequently a large number of children remain deprived of education. And similarly a bulk of children discontinues their education after middle and matriculation.

The general social attitude towards the education of woman is not appreciable. In a backward society it is considered that

education prevents women from ethical norms. And higher education for women in such society is totally ruled out. It has been generally observed that during the last one decade job opportunity in the public sector has been narrowed down owing to many international strains upon our economy. For example the international monitoring agencies like IMF and World Bank are not ready to advance further loans and the recovery of the previous loan is mounting.

In the present circumstances most of the parents feel that their purse does not allow them to send their kids to the privately managed institutions, *i.e.* LUMS, NUST, Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute, where the quality of education is at par with the international standards and the job opportunities are available to the cherished level of the scholars. The financial strivings on the parents are immense particularly on those who bear the brunt of financial problems and most of the parents who belong to the salaried class are trapped in this cruel cycle. About 75% employees in the public and private sector fall in this category of low paid employees. They do not have resources to increase their resources either by unlawful means like corruption, bribery and under-hand deals. The institutions for the higher education are centralized in the big cities like Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Peshawar. Students have to come from the far off places to these big cities. They had to bear the additional burden of lodging, messing and transport which is also a growing headache for the parents who have scant means of income. Hostel facilities in the big cities are not sufficient and this disturbance creates displeasure among students. In the western societies books are provided to the students at the subsidizing rates or through the libraries for the sufficient period of time or on the payment of nominal charge. An average book on scientific or vocational subject like medicines, surgery, accounting costs from Rs. 500 to 1500 which is not affordable for children. Books published abroad no doubt promise a fine quality or an excellent publication but their prices are exorbitant but the books which are published within the country are of substandard value with the omissions and commissions and their prices are unaffordable by a large number of parents. It is the natural desire of the

parents to find their children successfully installed in life but it becomes very hard. It is a common observation that parents have to make a selection while allowing their children to seek the higher education. This is the burning question to study the conditions of the parents whose children are seeking higher education. As M. H. Razi¹¹ says:

I would like to start by asking the question what are the sources of funding for the Pakistani universities. I propose that there are three sources illustrated. The first source is government which has a public responsibility. I believe to provide education to the advance social mobility and then to build up some kind of intellectual human capital in the country. The second source comes from the household in which parents pay for the fees of their children. Unfortunately in Pakistan and other countries of the third world parents want that higher education should be contributed by the government. And the 3rd one is the market.

There are several ways of financing private and financial system in different countries. Pakistani education system is facing crucial situation. There is a vicious system which has trapped our educational system. We have to achieve and I think without achievement we cannot be a good nation. He further says,

Poverty is returning to Pakistan in a large way. The growth rate has dropped from 6.1% to 4.3% in the recent years. The export rate has increased from 15.5% to 16.8% but wages has increased as well as from 74% to 87% and remittances have decreased by billions of dollars. Food subsidizing has been withdrawn. Accordingly to the UNDP Pakistan ranks 134th of 180 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI). If one studies low-income countries, one can easily realize that the return of higher education is inversely proportionate to the state of human development at the time of investment.¹²

Government should take radical steps to increase the higher education and also do for its expenditure. A review of the contribution of the higher education of the government is very interesting. In England about 90% equity come from the government but it has now decreased to 60-70%. But indirectly funding comes from the government via research Centres. In Sweden there is 50-50% contribution from the government and the private sources. In Germany there is a substantial contribution from the parents (about 40-60%). In Pakistan small jobs are available to the students at the college and university campuses. Some students arrange for their personal level tuitions to self-sufficient but it is very hectic. They have to teach tuitions far off from their campuses which is a very drab routine and they become disgust of this routine. In Korea where the private sector contributes heavily the observation is that every one has either a job or does evening study but students pay from their own pockets.

Our society is basically an agricultural society with industries centralized in the big cities like the developing countries. The economy of our country is neither independent nor self-sustaining in the modern source we are a society of consumers rather a society of manufacturers and consumers. In this situation the role of higher education becomes very vital but regrettably in our field it is limited to a few circles of society.

Half a decade ago, the public sector was the main agency which provided the job-opportunity to the educated class but now the emphasize has shifted to the private sector with this growing realization that without the participation of the private sector, the wheel of industry can not have at a speed which is essential for the progress of the country, not it appears in the coming years, the role of the public sector would be further restricted and the private sector would emerge as a major job-providing agency.

The question can asked whether or not the new generation is alive to the task of keeping pace with the new trends at the global level. It goes without saying that real education is the education of the animal instinct, but at the same time, any branch of

knowledge which does not cater to the practical needs of the students and does not prepare them to the realities of life.

For quite some time, I have been watching the sad spectacle how parents invest their hard-earned money on the education of their children in the hope that they would be able to start a brilliant career after the completion of their studies, but their hopes are lost in the sand when they find their daughters and sons roaming in the streets and roads in quest of the employment. Only a handful number of highly educated group men succeed in getting the job but the rest of them are left to the mercy of the winds. It is said that a hungry man is an angry man because a person who has no job, creates displeasure in society by showing aggressive attitude, agitation in the streets and home.

We are ultimately driven to a state of usefulness, which aggravates our feelings of unrest, anxiety forcing us to commit violence and cultivate feelings of bitterness against the social system, which does not treat us in a just manner. It is a common observation that our students even the ones among them fall a victim of terrorist activities or drug addiction. They become trigger-happy or join criminal gangs of car-snatchers, dacoits and robbers. A general survey of the middle class families and their financial conditions revealed this bitter fact that most of the children of this low income group are forced to discontinue their education after matriculation or intermediate or are forced by the compulsion of circumstances to earn their own living by working as bus conductors, driving rickshaw, working in the factories and teaching students at home. This results in the poor quality of their academic output, their physical health and attitudinal balance. Physical health is as necessary for the pursuit of knowledge as other factors mentioned above. Only a healthy body can produce a healthy mind. The factor of the social inequalities, the widening gap between the rich and the poor classes and the straight structure which is least patronizing and being to the deprived families and their children and the causes of the brain drain in our country and mass exodus of highly educated and skilled people to the other parts of the world, is directly associated with the discussed above.

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNTRY

The following factors support the development of the Higher Education:

1. Rapid Growth in Income

Higher Education plays a very vital role in the establishment of a nation. It contributes to the labour opportunities and the quality of life. It is said that there is a close relationship between the higher education and the economy. If a nation has got rapid development in the higher education, its social system will also be improved, because people will get jobs and the society will be prosperous. The frustration and the anxiety will be removed and the brain drain will also be controlled. The World Bank Task Force Report, "Higher Education in Developing Countries," for 2001 observes:

New knowledge, a catalyst for the rapid development and by providing a safe space for the free and open discussion of the values that define the character of a nation's development. Economic growth is a powerful determinant of the poverty alleviation and improvement in the people's lives. Higher education's contribution to growth therefore better mean of living in the society.¹³

2. Progressive Leadership

Higher education can give leaders the confidence, breath of Knowledge and the technical skills needed to effectively confront the economic and political realities of the 21st century. The well-educated leaders can understand the economy and the politics in a better way and they can try to create innovations. It can also generate cadres of well-trained teachers for all levels of the educational system.

3. Intensifying Choices

Expanding Development is fundamentally concerned with the expanding choices of the people who can make an accessible higher education system offering a high range of quality options

for study which is a major achievement bolstering social mobility and helping the talented people to fulfill their potentials.

4. Increasing Relevance Skill

Higher education is very necessary for training the scientists, engineers and others to help and operate modern technology in all fields of life. So when the scientists in a developing country are asked about the local problems, they can easily understand the things in a better way. For example, environmental protection, the prevention and the treatment of the different fatal diseases. According to the World Bank Task Force Report:¹⁴

These benefits are not automatic. They are linked to the characters of the higher education systems and institutions as well as to the broader social, political and economic systems within which they are situated. Even a well-functioning higher education system operating under the most favourable circumstances, is not sufficient for social and economic development. But better higher education system is necessary in most of the countries, if more vibrant development is to take place. In some countries, especially those with extremely low levels of per capita income, higher education initiatives will not dominate the policy agenda for the foreseeable future. Higher education will remain important for these countries but they may do best by relying for the time being, on institutions outside their countries possibly with donors' assistance as a prelude to building stronger higher education system of their own.¹⁵

MAJOR OBSTACLES IN DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education in the developing countries is facing very dangerous situation. The lack of money, insufficient resources, deficiency of proper training of teachers, poorly compensated teachers, stereotyped methods and ill performance of institutions, the ineffective and inadequate management, and above all,

poverty and poor trend of masses to education, are contributing much to the deterioration of higher education.

It is believed that presently the higher education in many developing countries is significantly weighed down by four sets of conditions:

1. The absence of vision;
2. Lack of political and financial commitment;
3. Conditions of initial disadvantages; and
4. The disruption of globalization.

1. The Absence of Vision

The social and economic importance of higher education system and individual institutions within this system are insufficiently appreciated unlike primary and secondary education. There is very little recommendation to the nature and magnitude of the contribution of the higher education to the development. But this understanding is important in a sector that requires a long time investment in return of social benefits.¹⁶

2. Lack of Political and Financial Investment

In Third World countries mostly, in the wake of unstable political systems, the political upheavals are common practice, and every government sets policies according to its own requirements, which is ultimately not beneficial for a nation for its long-term developmental programmes. In these countries the policymakers have to face problems under the conditions of the severe financial constraints and complicated political settings. It is not surprise that education and the higher education in particular, are oftenly ignored in these countries.¹⁷

3. Conditions of Initial Disadvantages

In the developing countries, the higher education is severely disadvantaged by its poor baseline. Degrees are obtained for employment only. A fruitful scientific enquiry can only be developed oftenly by having a suitable intellectual culture. And a critical mass of scholars and teachers is often required for

development of higher education. In these countries, people do not bother, who is who, how is this, they only cram the theories and this cramming finishes the sense of creativity which is very necessary to save the society from stagnation.¹⁸

4. The Disruption of Globalization

Now world has become a global village. A developing country needs to accelerate the pace of development. Otherwise the institutions of a country are at great risk of falling behind if they do not keep up with the rest of the world. And consequently the education and economic systems of a country will be shattered. In this new global era, a developing country needs to take immediate steps to eliminate the obstacles in the way of advancement in the different fields. The World Bank Task Force Report has presented some suggestions which can help a developing country to upgrade the standard and increase the performance in the field of higher education. This Task Force Report's recommendations falls into the two categories, 'increasing the resources' and 'improving the efficiency.' Emphasizing on increasing the resources, the report recommends that a large and more diversified resource base is required for improving educational infrastructure, including libraries, scientific laboratories, computer and internet facilities, as well as the recreation and cultural facilities. The report recommends that there is severe need of designing, testing and implementation of the new curricula and academic programmes, according to the requirements of new age.¹⁹

The report also urges international donors to increase the support for the development of long-term programmes in the higher education. It also suggested countries for generation of their own resources and rational and effective use of them.²⁰

The report also has highlighted a number of approaches to increasing of the effectiveness and efficiency of higher education. It points out that the poor management practice is the main hurdle in the development of higher education. Management practice can be improved by adhering to the principles of good institutional governance. Equally large gains

can be enjoyed by designing a more rational and coordinated architecture for the system as a whole. This would help eliminate unnecessary duplication of efforts, and highlight the neglected social interests in areas such as curriculum, teaching material, admissions process, and information system.²¹

DESIRABLE FEATURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Effective system of higher education tends to have a following set of characteristics:

1. Stratified System

Higher education system is facing many problems. A stratified system is hybrid that marries the goals of excellence and mass education. Proper higher education will give us technicians and researchers who could be able to bring changes in the social, economic and civic lives of the people. Finally as specialized knowledge becomes in caressingly important to economic performance, they enable a higher education to produce a mix of specialized and broadly trained graduates. The policymakers need to be more explicit about expecting different contributions from different segments of a stratified system.

2. Adequate and Stable Long-Term Funding

The Higher education institutions can thrive only if their funding levels are adequate stable and subject to good performance to secure in the long-term. A government should allocate a huge amount for the development of higher education and research. In this way the higher education institutions will be prosperous. It also the duty of government to encourage the researchers and it must also help to create an environment conducive to the sustainable financing to the private institutions and help the whole higher education system, ensuring that the operating budget will be sufficient in future to run and maintain the new infrastructure that higher education will need.

3. Competition

Competition creates innovation and it also brings good result. One common indicator of competition is faculty mobility between the institutions which tends to promote the healthy academic environment through intellectual cross fertilization. Too much competition is also possible, resulting in excessive faculty mobility and lack of loyalty to institutions.

4. Well-Defined Standards

Effective higher education institutions articulate clear standard and set challenging goals that are consistent with the needs of their societies and labour forces. International standards are especially relevant in a globalized economy. Some standards are needed for degree requirements when it comes to student performance, faculty qualifications, and achievements.

Mediocre institutions are not transformed in to great institutions merely by announcing world-class standards because a realistic approach that concentrates on promoting achievable improvements is needed.

5. Well-Defined Links to Other Sectors

A higher education system does not operate in isolation. It is time of globalization and no one can live without interaction with others. An affective system must pay attention to countries secondary education system in order to take account of student preparation. It will also benefit for primary and secondary education through training the qualified teachers. According to the World Bank Task Force Report, "strong links between country's higher education system and other systems both in the immediate region and beyond will have many beneficial effects, including significantly augmenting resources available to an individual system, helping to overcome intellectual isolation, and allowing the achievements of critical mass in a large number of specialized fields."²²

6. Role of State

A state can play a vital role in the development of higher education. The state must also ensure that the higher education institutions and the system as a whole should operate on the basis of financial transparency and fairness. The exact role of government in higher education has been subject to extensive debate and can range from extreme state control to total *laissez faire*. Under the state control system government itself finance and operate higher education institutes. Politicians frequently appoint Vice-Chancellors and ministries dictate degree requirements and curricula. Many developing countries have gravitated toward this model in the post-colonial period, based on the rational that governments are entitled to control systems that they fund. But state control of higher education has tended to undermine many major principles of good governance. The direct involvement of politicians has generally politicized higher education. Widening the possibilities for corruption, nepotism, and political opportunities.

Growing awareness of the disadvantages of the state control has many countries to adopt alternative models. State supervision aims at balancing the state's responsibility to protect and promote the public's interest with an individual institution's need for academic freedom and autonomy. So-called buffer mechanisms are important to achieving this balance. Buffer mechanisms generally consist of statutory bodies that include representatives of the government, institutions of higher education, the sector, and other important stakeholders such as student organizations. These bodies framing the buffer mechanisms require clear mandates, well-established operating procedures, and full autonomy from both government and academia. For instance, if a particular body allocates research funds to some research organization, through the competitive method base on the applications from research institutions, it must adhere strictly and transparently to a widely accepted set of procedures in soliciting and reviewing applications. It must have full control on the resources to be allocated and has the authority

to check institutions which do not follow the established procedures and criteria.

CONCLUSION

The state of higher education in developing countries is not satisfactory. The preceding pages have outlined in some detail the various problems and shortcomings of the higher education system in developing countries. The lack of resources, old stereotyped infrastructure and system of education, outdated curricula and ill performance of institutions are the real causes of degradation of higher education. With the passage of time, the matter is becoming complicated. If immediate steps are not taken, the state of higher education will be totally ruined. Developing countries need to adopt striking policies to evolve their higher education systems. They need to define the purpose and orientation of higher education.

In Pakistan's case, the state of higher education is not fine. An imminent Pakistani writer, Ijaz Nabi, analyzing the state of education in Pakistan, said that the education system of Pakistan has severely deteriorated. And broadly speaking, three main reasons were cited for this deterioration. "Firstly, the government is not investing enough resources given increase in population and therefore, in the demand for education. Secondly, the quality of teachers is poor. Thirdly, society is indifferent to intellectual pursuits and is interested in education only as a screening device for the limited jobs opportunities."²³

However, the present government of Pakistan has given priority to the up gradation of the higher education. For this purpose it has taken effective measures including the designing of new curricula, lifting the status of teachers, providing new opportunities for training and knowledge of teachers, offering huge number of scholarships to students for most graduation and doctorate. The Higher Education Commission has launched new striking plans to achieve these goals.

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