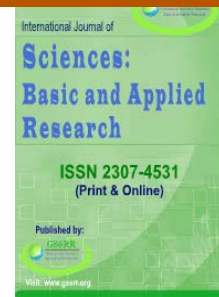




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## Higher Education as a Way to Empower Nation: An Analysis of Pakistani Society from the Perspective of 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Abstract

This article intends to analyze critically, the contemporary condition of higher education in Pakistan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It explores that the notion of higher education has received a great deal of attention for the last few decades. Talking about Pakistan, by considering higher education as a key source to empower nation, a great number of projects and programs have introduced to improve education from secondary to postgraduate level. To cope with the demands of the modern development, the USA Model of higher education and research has adopted by the Pakistani HEIs. The role of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is vital in this regard. There has been a substantial growth in higher education whether measured by the number of the students or the amounts spent. It is however, a matter of great concern that the progress of higher education is very slow as the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education, is only 3.8% (17-23 age group) which is one of the least ratios of GER in the world while India and China have 18% and 26% respectively.

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Further, at most of the HEIs, education is providing in poor and in traditional style while research is a less focused area. This research, thus, points out many socio-cultural and colonial constraints due to which the higher education could not progress in the country such as poverty, rigidity of culture, multiple educational system, coeducation, gender disparity, lack of access to higher secondary and higher education, and lack of the government concern etc. This research thus, suggests certain recommendations to reform the policy of the education throughout the country.

**Keywords:** Education; history; higher education as a way to empower nation; higher education in Pakistan; contemporary situation; analysis; conclusions and recommendations.

## **1. Introduction**

The term education is used in the meaning of a process of getting knowledge or learning in a systematic manner at a school or at a university [1]. The humankind has to bring into the world, inherited characteristics of mental and physical qualities derived from different direct or indirect sectors like parents, remoter ancestor, ethnicity and demographics of the society [2]. Thus, the parentage, ethnicity and overall environment of a society have great influence on the development of the personality of the humankind while the social factor that has a vital role in the character building and personality development is education and skills [3]. On the other hand, illiteracy or absence of knowledge is ever condemned even among traditional societies. Illiteracy in fact, not mere a problem takes place due to lack of motivation or access or occurs at random but it is typically the plight of the poor and powerless people. As Ila Patal in 2003 pointed out that illiteracy is essentially a manifestation of social inequality, unequal distribution of resources and concentration of wealth in few hands [4]. In this context and from the perspective of Pakistani society, this article first throws light on the historical development of the notion of higher education and its role in the empowerment of the modern nations. It also discusses the role of higher education in the development of Pakistani society. It explores all the socio-cultural, economic and religious constraints behind the slow progress of higher education in Pakistan. In the end, some conclusions have drawn and some recommendations have recommended to reform the contemporary system of education.

### ***1.1 History of the Development of Higher Education***

From time immemorial, knowledge and skill is considered as the most important social factor for the advancement of human society. The ability to read and write is ever been considered a need for the growth and the development of a nation [5]. It is also considered a great source of intelligence and wisdom. Further, education is ever remained an important issue of the jurisprudential debate of each society [6]. For instance, Plato discussed the issue of education from the perspective of the whole life and declared education a knowledge that begins with the ordinary curriculum of the Greeks yet extends to the life hereafter [7]. Plato then threw light on the importance of the education by declaring education as a continuous thread, which runs through the Republic, and implants a principle of intelligence which is better than ten thousand eyes [7: 67]. In this way, he presented the concept of

education based on the series of learning that ends with the end of the life and affects the life in the world hereafter. Another significant point of Plato's philosophy of education is that he suggests that at first, a child should be taught the false and then the education of the truth should be given to him [9]. The ancient societies, however, were not aware of many dimensions of education such education for improvement of agriculture, trade and business and governance system rather had little recognition for higher education [10]. In the same manners, the ancient concept of higher education was confined just getting expertise to preserve rituals to impart spiritual and mental excellence to the students. To achieve spiritual excellence many educational institutions were established like the university of Texila and Nalanda of the sub-continent [11]. This practice continued in the medieval period and higher education was permeated to infuse spiritual excellence in the students such as university of Al-Azhar, university of Fes and Rabat of Morocco and university of Oxford, Paris and Bologna [12].

### ***1.2 Modern Concept Higher Education as a Key Sector to the Empowerment of the Nations***

The modern concept of higher education for professionalism was introduced in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to serve to fulfill socioeconomic needs and to develop scientific skills [13]. The term higher education is defined in the meaning of final stage of formal learning following by higher secondary education [14]. It is an advance level education where subjects are taught in detail and in advance manners and is used for education of 15-16 grades at a university that is considered a traditional institution of the higher education [15]. The word "University" has derived from the Latin term *universitas* that literally means a community of the teachers and the scholars [16: 23]. The notion behind the establishment of the university was that the students and faculty members should be able to pursue research free from all types of persecution and fear [16: 27]. The first university established in the Western Europe, was the University of Bologna at Italy in 1088 [18]. In 1862, The Land Grant College Act 1862 promoted the establishment of institutions of higher education for useful and mechanical arts [19]. After industrial revolution, Britain reformed the structure of education to cope with the challenges of the modern industrial development that later on followed by the United States and the Western Europe. Each stage of the educational reform was a direct response to the socio-economic demands of the industrial system, ideologically conditioned by the class conflict underlying capital production [20]. Manufacturers were in need of institutions that could socialize children into the production process as an agency of social, symbolic and moral control. Education not only produced the required skills but at the same reproduce the submission to the ruling ideology in the children of the working class while at the same time it prepared the children of the capitalist class to represent and manipulate the ruling ideology itself. The schools were established as a universal form of the educational device, concealed the truth of its own practice from the recruits [21]. In the same manners, in America every stage of educational reform was an inextricable part of a wider class conflict. As monopoly corporate expansion began by the turn of the twentieth century, and working class militancy increased, educational expansion was organized into tracks: A high tract to prepare a middle level white color bureaucracy for expanding big business; and a low track to trained skilled and semiskilled workers to maintain the expensive machinery of the new technology [22].

Further, the dynamics of the globalization such as culture, technology, economics, and the governance system also have great influence over education [23:70]. It has resulted in the multi-faceted and intricate dynamics of the globalization as identified Ball Stephen (2012) [24]. However, expanded education provided access to the worker class children to education so, that they could move into corporate bureaucracy. The expansion of American education in the post-war period was an important element in the development of the ideology of growth and consumption [25]. Schools played an important role and provided an ideological state apparatus for middle and working class participation in the growth process. With this development, secondary and higher secondary education became a consumption and as well as an investment good. The ideology of growth and higher consumption thus, permeated into education. By 1930s, the secondary education was politically, considered as a civic right by the most Americans including many working class families [26]. Talking about the introduction of the phenomenon of modern education at third world countries, it was in marked contrast to that in the developed countries. Here, industrialization and its associated socioeconomic development did not take place through internal cultural and structural pressure as for instance in the United States and Britain rather they were superimposed on the indigenous economy from the outside through the painful process of colonialism [27]. All this resulted in the development of two contrast systems of the education while there was a very little direct control between the two: The traditional system; and the modern system, developed through external pressure and interests, which produced sever cultural subordination and socioeconomic distortion [28:71]. Before colonialism, most of the Asian and Latin American states had their well-established system of learning and education. The colonialism destroyed that and established its own educational structure by ignoring the socio-cultural and religious environment of the colonial states. It was an entirely different system of education consisted of liberalism, value of competition, social mobility seeking of wealth and power and individualism that led in breaking down of the tightly knit indigenous community structures and related value systems [29]. The Colonial administrators were not very committed to education since the basic goals of colonialism was to augment exploitation and pump out large sums of resources [30]. British colonial educational policies were designed to objectify its needs of colonization to create lower level bureaucrats and to perform its missionary function in the costume of education. Schools were established gradually under a conscious policy not to make the school system mass based but only to cater a small section that would run its administrative machinery. Primary education was totally, neglected and in higher education, humanities was given a priority preference over technical education [31]. Moreover, the Colonizers neglected the cultural and socio-economic conditions of the people the colonial societies. Consequently, most of people of did not accept the educational innovations and reacted by rejecting the new imposed educational system that led the division of the people and continuation of the indigenous educational system at their own in pure traditional and backward style without the support of the government [32]. In this way, with the erosion of highly developed indigenous system of education, the new educational system resulted in the social division in the colonial societies and weakened their social solidarity. Further, it was based on a highly selective policy and mass of the ruled were kept deliberately out of its fold for obvious political and economic reasons. Due to their strong influence, the colonizers organized the educational systems of the colonies

even after independence that created an educational dependence on western intellectual thought and models [33]. At present in the role of higher education is vital in building the human capital that in turn builds the very institutions of life. Education that was preserved only for elites, wealthy and privileged class has been transformed into a global industry particularly, in developed countries and higher education is considered as the most significant element of social activities [34]. In fact, the world-class research and the innovative ideas leads to the best future academic and research talent as Simon (2015) pointed out that “Of course investing in education leads to improve incomes, but that’s just too simple a model to account for real development in the real world” [35]. Education is an effective and powerful means of modernization and directly related to the pace of development and modernism [36]. Modernization is a process of bringing change and education is the only medium through which the traditional people and institutions can be modernized in an advanced manner [37]. Nelly & Karen (2014) observed that the modernization in education creates a new approach not only to the aims and the process of education but also to the totality of its entire program so as to relate it to the national development, national needs and national inspiration” [38]. Due to increasing demand of skilled labor, demands of experts in technology and higher education to support foreign investment, and industrialism in the third world countries, the World Bank joined by US foundations started in the late 1950s to assist the schooling as an investment [39]. The US academics and economists started to convince the US foreign policy makers that investment in schooling was a necessary input in economic growth and after WWII, the US foreign assistance in the field of education permeated neo colonialism [40]. Consequently, the developing countries increased their education and gave a major share of expanded education an increase of one third of total enrolment despite their great economic constraints. By the close of 1970s, the educational development at all the three levels of primary, secondary and tertiary made big strides. However, the enrolment growth rate in developing countries was greater in the secondary and higher level than in primary level [41]. The phenomenon of higher education also supported by US ideology of industrialism. To establish US oriented educational philosophy, the foreign students particularly, from third world countries were supported financially to study at US higher education institutions and universities. US launched many innovative and educational programs around the world to train managerial persons, skilled labor, qualified work force for the development of US industrialism in the third world countries. During 1980s, the US oriented universities were established in the developing countries, which led the governments to focus on higher education. In this way and since, 1980s, the institution of the higher education got much importance among the nations and is considered as an indispensable factor of development in each aspect of the life in medicine, accountancy, engineering and education [42]. In this way, the forces of international economic order played an integral role in molding educational system on world scale. By subordinating nation states to their own determinate interest, the forces of international capital produce structural condition and cultural convergences in the meaning and values of development [43]. The education however, does not function in a vacuum rather exists as a sub-system within a large social system and interdependent with the culture, political and socio-economic systems of a society [44]. The culture economic and political system thus, affect education at different levels in different ways and the long-term planning of higher education is ever set out in the light of the culture and socio-

economic conditions of a society [45]. However, a nation can bring desired changes in the culture and socio-economic system through education. At the same time, education plays a positive role in bringing changes in the culture [46]. The modernization of education demands excellence by way of good quality and proper evaluation [47]. To govern the institutions of the higher education and to exercise a collective control a collective society is being formed by the governments and the governance reformed at higher education has been a frequent item on the political agenda of the most of the states due to pressure of internationally changed context and International organizations [48]. Every aspect of higher education is being reorganized and remodeled in the light of the changed context and changed phenomenon of globalization. The higher education is being made accessible to the poor and the middle class people by different organizations by way of funding. The issues associated with the higher education such as management, quality assurance, accountability, relationships with industry are being discussed through international collaboration programs. Certain innovations are introduced to reform the ways of research and teaching at gross root level. If these reforms succeed, the breadth and depth of the change will be transformational [49]. Every year millions of students are enrolled at higher education's institutions. For example, in 1991, the global tertiary students number was 68 million and by 2004, it had nearly doubled to 132 million [50]. It is also estimated that this number would reach to 150 million by 2025 [51].

The aim of the education in modernization is imparting knowledge or the preparation of a finished product, awakening of curiosity, the development of proper interests, attitudes and development and the building up of such essential skills as independent study and the capacity to think and judge for oneself and to become a responsible member of a democratic society [52].

It is however, a matter of great concern that the current globalization context has made education as most important, yet education remains very focused to its contribution to the labor force, less based democratic decisions making, and through the notion of competition, less supportive of reflexivity on the directions of contemporary society [53]. In this way, the contemporary structure of the world development from the perspective of education can be understood as consisted of four types of states: The first group is of all low-income countries having high-fertility yet lag behind in the educational development. The second group consists of lower-middle-income countries that succeeded to reduce fertility rate, promoted education and consequently, offer remarkable prospect for growth in future. The third group comprises mostly upper-middle-income countries that experienced rapid fertility declines in the 1960s, expanded education yet now facing the problem of reduction in the working-age people. The last group is made-up of mostly high-income countries that have some of the highest shares in the world development through an effective movement of global education since at least the 1980s [54]. All this leads that the states that focused on spreading higher education developed rapidly within a short period while the countries that ignored education could not get prosperity and remained as developing or under developed. It is this reason that most of the industrialized states have 35-50% ratio of higher education while the developing countries have only 18-26% ratio of higher education. In the under developing Asian countries, the higher education is lesser than 15% [55].

Talking about the education in religious context, almost all the revealed religion motivated its followers to get more and more knowledge to explore the secrets of the universe and to contribute positively in the development of the society. As far as concerned the Islamic concept of getting knowledge, both the Qur'an and the Sunnah (pbuh) have declared getting education as one of the primary obligations of a Muslim and the word "knowledge" has mentioned in the Qur'an in 161 times [56]. It is however, a matter of great concern that the majority of the Muslims is illiterate and only members states of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) constituent 72% of the total illiteracy of the contemporary world. The whole Muslim world has only 500-700 universities while only India has 8407 universities [57]. In the same manners, in the Christian countries, the primary education ratio is almost 95-100 while in the Muslim countries this ratio is only 50%. Among the developed (Christian) countries, the higher education ratio is almost 40% while in the Muslim world this ratio is only 2% [58]. The USA has an unparalleled reputation for Academic excellence at post-secondary level, containing an incredible seven of the top ten universities in the world and 47 of the top 100 [59]. For the development of education and technology, the Muslim world is dependent upon foreign aid. In this regard, the USA launched a program for the growth of higher education at the Muslim countries. Accordingly, in 2003, the USAID Office of Development Evaluation and Information carried out a three-month research study to look into the strengths and the weaknesses of the secular and Islamic educational systems in the 12 Muslim countries [60].

### ***1.3 Development of Higher Education in Pakistani Society***

Pakistan came into being in 1947 with very poor condition of the education at all three levels, the primary, secondary and higher education. The situation was that there was only one institution of higher education "the Punjab University at Lahore". Most of its faculty members were Hindus and all the top administrative positions were in the hands of the Hindus. After their departure to India, the university became manage less institution with few faculty members [61]. Talking about primary and secondary level of education, until 1970s, there were only 3000 schools and colleges in the country that included all private and public institutions [62].

During the first three decades of its establishment, Pakistan faced many crucial challenges in the way of spreading education [63]. Initially, Pakistan adopted the British model of education. Pakistani government blindly followed the British educational policies introduced during the colonial period that applauded the education only for the elite by ignoring the middle and poor classes of the society. Accordingly, more attention was paid to the development of the education in the urban areas while rural areas were totally ignored by the state policies of reforming education by ignoring the fact that more than 70% of the population of Pakistan was living in rural areas [64]. As Philips (2004) pointed out that "the colonized Asian countries chose the western academic model rather than relying on their indigenous intellectuals and academic traditions"<sup>[64]</sup>.

It was during 1970s when the government of Pakistan launched a movement for mass education. In March 1972, the government of Pakistan pronounced a policy of educational reforms and declared

education free to all up to middle level. To ensure implementation of the policy, an eight years plan (1972-1980) was made by the government. Another development regarding education occurred by way of Constitution of Pakistan 1973. Articles 8-20 deal with the fundamental rights of the citizens of Pakistan that declare getting education as a primary right of each citizen. Moreover, principles of state policy (Arts 29-40), article 38 of the Constitution declares that the state shall provide basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, and education to all the citizens of Pakistan [65]. Certain steps were taken by the government to comply the provisions of the Constitution regarding education.

In this way, Pakistani government showed its serious concerns towards the improvement of the education. However, soon it was realized that the government did not have capacity to provide education to all particularly, to the rural areas [66]. In that context, some support however, was provided by the international organizations but it was too small to meet the end. All that led the government to call upon the rich segment of the society and to allow them opening the educational institutions in pure commercial style. In the same manners, the clerics of Pakistan were invited to contribute in spreading education. Consequently, private school system and madaris system were established throughout the country. During 1980s, the government supported madaris system on large scale by providing finance to help the needy and poor children in getting free religious knowledge and to make them religious scholars [67]. In 1990 Pakistan signed the Jomtien (Thailand) Declaration titled as “Education for All” to provide universal primary education to all [68]. Pakistan also signed the World Bank educational plan the “Millennium Development Goals” that aimed to achieve its target of providing universal primary education free to all by 2015. This plan was designed to measure the primary education by primary school completion rate and the proportion of the children completing the primary education. The prime focus of which was the attainment of 100% enrolment and completion of the primary level education by 2015[69]. Accordingly, Pakistan framed a “National Plan of Action on Education for All (2001-15) that aimed increasing primary level of education up to 91% and adult literacy rate to 68% [70]. Under the 18th Constitutional amendment Act 2010, the task of educational reforms up to higher secondary level of education has been assigned to the provinces. Each province has been declared responsible to improve the standard of education while higher education and research, and establishment of scientific and technical institution has been declared a federal subject and covered under Federal Legislative List [71]. However, despite many efforts, Pakistan could not achieve its target and only 50% of the children got enrolment at primary schools. The ratio of those who complete their primary level education is very low almost 20-25% while in other developing countries, the primary education completion rate increased from about 79% in 1990 to **91%** in 2013-15 [72].

#### ***1.4 Contemporary Condition of Higher Education in Pakistan***

Like other Asian countries, Pakistan has discarded British model of education and adopted academic model of America. To improve the prevailing condition of higher education at universities, Pakistan is following American system of higher education [73]. At present, there are almost 177 degree awarding universities and 95 campuses that are spreading higher education through the country while India has



660 universities and 33000 colleges of higher education. In Pakistan, only 128 universities offering PhD level of education. Among them 57% are public sector universities while 43% are running under the umbrella of private sector. The total enrollment at the universities is 1.595 million and among them 86% students are enrolled at public universities while 14% students are at private universities [74].

This data includes both public and private sector higher education institutions recognized by HEC. Some foreign (About 60) private universities like University of London, Sunderland University are providing external degrees through affiliation with the UK universities. Likewise, many private institutions (about 1000) are also offering higher education yet not recognized by HEC [75]. In this way, the total number of the institutions that are offering higher education is almost 3992 yet most of them are situated at large cities of the country. The universities however, constituent only 0.06% of the educational institutions and most of the students particularly, at tehsil level are getting higher education from affiliated or from degree colleges that are 2660 in number [76]. However, the quality of education given to the students is very poor particularly, at public sector universities and colleges. The level of teaching at majority of the higher education institutions is traditional by style and mode of delivering lecture is mere dictation of the material gathered by the teachers during their studies. There is no system of refreshing subject courses and scheme of studies. Examination is the name of testing the memory of the students and lacks analytical and critical evaluation. In the same manners, there is lack of regular training and refreshing courses for the teachers and faculty members. As faculty members are supposed to be involved in research publications so, given relaxation in their availability at campuses, yet there is no system of accountability in absence of lack of research. As Pervez Hoodbhoy (2009) pointed out that none of the Pakistani public universities comes even close to being a university in the real sense of the word if compared to the universities in India and Iran, the quality of both teaching and research is far poorer [77]. It is however, a good news that six Pakistani tertiary institutions have been considered among the 800 best universities of the world (QS,2015-16) [78].

### ***1.5 Problems in the Way of Higher Education in Pakistan***

In the field of education, Pakistan could not keep pace with the educational development of the modern world. There is lack of speedy and substantial progress and the ratio of higher education is still very poor and only 10% male (among 27% of male) and 5% female (among 26% of female) succeed to get higher education in Pakistan [79]. There are many socio-cultural and economic constraints behind this slow progress such as poverty, rigid and backward culture, colonial pathologies, early age marriage, misunderstanding of the philosophy of Islam about worldly knowledge, lack of equal opportunities and above all lack of political concern etc.

#### ***1.5.1 Colonial pathologies***

The root cause of the present dilemma of the higher education as obtained in Pakistan is the colonial pathology i.e., ignorance of the primary and secondary level of education due to which system of education could not develop. At this level, and like the colonizers, the government and the policy

makers take least stress, pay least attention and let the education at the hands of the economic stakeholders. Despite the so-called efforts regarding spreading education, this sector neither be reformed nor be improved. This sector is suffering from the issue of qualified teachers and efficient management. In rural areas, education is spread by under qualified and untrained teachers most of them are unable to read Urdu in its true accent. The scheme of studies is out- mode and lacks technological information. There are also ghost schools and teachers in remote areas of Punjab and Sind [80].

### ***1.5.2 Multiple systems of education***

Multiple educational systems is also a continuation of colonial system that was introduced by the British Colonial Empire for its own political and economic benefits yet Pakistani government could not resolve this issue. At present three noticeable and parallel educational systems are functioning throughout the country. The madaris system that was developed in the reaction of the English colonial educational system by some religious minded people. Here, education is spread in poor manners in the light of the guideline drafted in India under a particular political religious context [81]. There are 13,405 Deeni Madaris in the country. Out of which 393 (3%) are in public sector, whereas 13012 (97%) are in private sector. The total enrollment in the Deeni Madaris is 1.836 million of which 0.054 million (3%) is in the public sector, whereas, 1.782 million (97%) is in the private sector [82]. The second is Urdu medium government system that is also working in pure traditional style designed by the British Colonial Empire for the sake of its own benefits to produce workers to serve industrial states. The last category is of private or English medium school system, and due to economic constraints and co-education majority of the Pakistani people avoid it and thus, education here is confined to a very small segment/ the elite class most of their children prefer to get higher education from foreign universities and to get job over there. Only the graduates of the *madaris* and the government school system get enrolment at Pakistani universities for higher education yet unable to attain analytical approach [83]. Even after a long period of 70 years, the policy makers are unable to introduce a uniform system of education. Political instability and economic constraints did not let the then governments to adopt some substantive measures to establish a uniform system of education. It later on resulted in the poor quality of education at government educational system and widened the gap between the public and private institutions.

### ***1.5.3 Budget Deficit/Lack of Funding***

Since independence, the educational policy of Pakistan could not keep balance between its means and ends. The government of Pakistan is spending only 2.1% of its GDP on the education sector that is too little to improve the prevailing condition of education [84]. This amount however, is lowest among the countries of the region. Moreover, the annual increase in educational budget is very small such as during the fiscal years 2012-13 an amount of 57.03 billion allocated for education and expanded only 4% by allocating 59.28 billion rupees next year in 2013-14 [85]. Recently, the government pronounced increasing the educational budget up to 4.0% by 2018 [86]. The financial allocation for each

university is too small to meet the administrative expenditures and salaries. The system of fund for research programs and coordinated development rather ceased to exist. The increase in recurring funds for Universities is very slow such as it was Rs. 21.5 billion in the years 2009-10 and increased just to Rs. 29.05 billion in the year 2010-11 [87]. The government of Pakistan also sought an amount of US\$ 300 million loan from the World Bank (WB) to implement “the first phase of higher education development program” as outlined in the “Second Medium Term Development Framework for Higher Education for 2011-2015 (MTDF-HEII) [88].”

HEC is also contributing to play its role in running different scholarship programs to enhance academic qualification at various levels on merit basis in line with specified criteria. During the years 2008-14, a total number of 10,376 scholarships were awarded under different program of HEC [89].

#### ***1.5.4 Lack of Access to Higher education***

The global average of gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education is 27%, but most of the Asian countries do not meet this average such as India’s higher education gross enrolment ratio (GER) is about 18%, and China has 26% [90]. Both India and Pakistan has the same ratio of young population about 50% of Indian and Pakistani population is under 25 years old but there is great difference in access to higher education between the both [91]. In Pakistan the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education, is around 3.8% (17-23 age group) while of this 1/3<sup>rd</sup> is in the affiliated colleges and girls makes only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total enrolment [92]. The reason is that the access to secondary and higher secondary level of education is not available everywhere as 55% of the total educational institutions provide only primary level education while high schools are only 11.70% and degree colleges are only 0.42%. Further, about 70% of the population is living in the rural areas and despite certain efforts to establish the higher education institutions more evenly across the country, there is wide disparity, between urban and rural areas, and most of the universities are at large cities. Still a very small ratio about 5.1% of the persons (17-23 years age) is currently enrolled in higher education in the country and this ratio is one of the lowest ratios in the world [93].

#### ***1.5.5 Economic Constraints and Cultural rigidity***

Due to economic grave poverty and cultural rigidity, most of the parents discriminate their children in prospect of higher education. In case of boy’s education, parents have a strong stake in the education of their sons as it is attached with old-age security and leads employment of sons. While for daughters, education is considered least important and they are asked to sacrifice in favor of sons if there is economic issue. Further, due to cultural rigidity, gender discrimination, gender division of labour, and illiteracy of parents most of the girls cannot get higher education. Nelly and Karen (2014) opined that in a region

with rigid patriarchal norms, it is apparent that educational decisions are radically different for boys and girls” [28].

### ***1.5.6 Co-education at the Institutions of higher education***

The other hurdle in the way of higher education is that most of the higher educational institutions are providing co-education. In Pakistan, more than 96.4% of the population is Muslim and majority of those does not agree to let their children specifically, druthers getting education in co-environment [8]. Thus, the policy of co-education is against the cultural and religious context of the society on the one hand and as well as against the global recommended system of managing higher education on the other that leads that educational policy should set up in the light of the cultural norms of each society [17].

### ***1.5.7 Linguistic Constraints***

In Pakistan, education up to higher secondary level is providing in Urdu while English is considered as medium of higher education at university level. Most of the Urdu medium graduates are unable to understand English language and fail to maintain their interest in education, which later results in creating a trend of cheating, imitating and focusing on memorization/rata of what is taught to them rather than understanding. Moreover, due to linguistic barrier, the students cannot attain analytical approach for research and comparative studies. It produces the graduates who have little opportunity to develop a wider range of transversal skills, critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem-solving and collaborative working. All this led to the failure of the objectives of higher education.

### ***1.5.8 Disparity between rich and poor***

The disparity between the rich and the poor is increasing day by day that led inequalities in the education. Pakistan is suffering from the challenge of a sever disparity between those who have access to better education and those who do not. Due to high fee and accommodation expenditure, only children of rich class can get higher education. Poor parents can not afford higher education of their children. They do not have some better alternatives and the government has no resources to help them. A recent report reveals that Pakistan is continuously facing the problem of increasing poverty. It is among those countries who have low human development. Pakistan's HDI is 0.537, which gives the country a rank of 146 out of 187 countries in 2014 [97].

### ***1.5.9 Constraints on research capacity and innovation***

With a very few PhDs, Pakistan has a very low quality of research and innovations. Further, the opportunity for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary work is not available everywhere. Public sector universities have a very weak ecosystem for innovation, research and uneven access to opportunities. Moreover, Pakistani institutions of higher education are facing problem of shortage of faculty. Reports estimate that 30-40% of the faculty seats are unfilled. There is no proper system of accountability and most of the administrative functions are done by way of discretion of the chancellors or head of the institutions. This has resulted in graduates with low employability, a common feature of higher education across south Asia<sup>32</sup>, and an insufficient basis for movement to higher levels of study and research. These problems are endemic across higher education institutions in India, including many of

the 'top tier' institutions, but particularly so in affiliated colleges and state universities

#### ***1.5.10 Low quality of Learning and Teaching***

At majority of the institutions of higher education, there is lack of early stage research and training of the faculty members. The current system is based on the outdated curriculum and poor manners of lecture delivering. The employers have no interest in course contents and skills development. There is high gap between students and teacher ratio. There is systemic segregation of teaching and research. Most of the faculty members do not encourage their students to do research or to get some experience or skill.

#### ***1.5.11 Lavish system of administration at HEIs***

Pakistani universities and other higher education institutions are occupied with lavish system of administration. Major part of the budget for higher education is spent on the administrative luxuries while little is spent on the research incentives and training of the faculty members. Administrative posts seem more attractive due to associated perks and privileges while faculty members are considered just teachers and are least facilitated segment at the universities. Further, there is lack of coordination between the administration and the faculty members. All this is against the objectives of the establishment of HEIs, the prime focus of which was to facilitate the faculty members and the students in their research and let them free from all types of exploitation and fear.

## **2. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This research thus, concludes that since the establishment of Pakistan, the colonial pathologies could not be determined and addressed by the government and by the policy makers. Almost half century has been passed since 1970s, when a clear policy of reformation & expansion of the education was adopted by the government yet system of education is still running under the influence of colonial evils and could not be reformed. It is also concluded that the prevailing policy of educational budget (only 2.1% of GDP) is least among all the Asian countries and is a continuation of the colonial policy of the education in the sub-continent. Co-education is also against the "global system of managing higher education" that leads that educational policy should be set up in the light of the cultural and religious norms of each society. It is concluded that both the faculty members and the students are provided minimum amenities in their research programs and activities. At present, the universities are attractive just due to their lavish systems of administration not because of quality of education and research. The current educational system is still based on the colonial educational policies designed to objectify its needs of colonization to create lower level bureaucrats. This research thus, suggests reforming the system of education around the country. It is suggested that up to secondary level, a uniform system of education should be introduced. The holders of madaris system should cooperate with the government in reforming the existing system and introducing a uniform system of education. Budget of education should be enhanced up to 7-8% of GDP and should be allocated to local bodies at each tehsil. To

reduce the financial burden of the government, the rich people of each tehsil should be motivated to build up schools by way of charity but under the control of the respective government. The government should declare higher secondary education compulsory and free of cost on emergency basis. The policy makers should bring the policy of higher education on the line suited to the genius of our people, consonant with our culture and religious norms by establishing separate educational institutions for men and women. Private sector should be made bound to invest on education by establish institutions of higher education at each tehsil and quality of education should be improved through an effective system of intervention by higher education of Pakistan (HEC). The institutions of higher education should be made free from political influence and approach system. It is also suggested that HEC should launch a movement to spread higher education to rural areas and to achieve this goal private sector should be utilized regarding establishing institutions of higher education at each tehsil. Faculty members should be trained by way of exchange programs and research activities, in collaboration with the universities of the developed countries. Through an effective system of accountability, HEC may ensure that its offices of ORIC and QEC may not be a part of any administrative politics at the concerned institution. To achieve the goals of higher education (research & innovations), faculty members should be provided all possible facilities for research. Education at HEIs should be research-focused and to make the faculty members research oriented, a compulsory research training should be provided to all newly inducted faculty members. Lastly, it is suggested that the incentives of the research should be enhanced by keeping in view that the prime objective of HEIs was to facilitate the faculty members and the researchers not to the administrative positions.

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