

INFLUENCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE OF PAKISTAN

AbuzarWajidi*
M. Akram Sharif**

Abstract

During the recent decades, some countries in the continent of Asia have emerged as strong economic powers, for example, China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. During the same period, however, Pakistan has experienced alarming increase in its challenges that have vigorously influenced its socio-economic as well as political system. Issues, whether economic or social, can be deeply attributed to the system of education that demands large-scale shifts in its direction. At the higher education level, too, the conditions are not different. Consequences of this state of affairs have so far led to a vulnerable present and continue towards a more indeterminate and illusive future. Wise nations are focusing on their education systems including the higher education to turn their human resource into a real capital. Reviewing ten years (2003 to 2013) of higher education in Pakistan with reference to the identification of its quality on the human resource development, this research paper is an attempt to mention some causes of the issue and suggest some measures with the belief that a quality higher education is a vital means for the survival of Pakistan's economy and its growth.

Keywords: higher education, human resource development

* M. Abuzar Wajidi, Meritorious Professor, Former Dean, Faculty of Management & Administrative Sciences, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan

** M. Akram Sharif, Research Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the present state of affairs of higher education in the institutions of higher education in Pakistan
2. To shed light on the deficiencies prevailing in the system of higher education in Pakistan
3. To state the benefits of an effective system of higher education, by offering instances of a few other countries
4. To relate the higher education with human development and economic growth.

Introduction

In present times the most significant function of higher education is that it transforms human resource into human capital with the help of training. Equipped with higher and quality education, the graduates acquire a sound position to share their contribution in the economic development of their respective countries. The scope of the advantages of their education extends to advancement of social development by serving in different sectors like industry, education, public health and social work etc. Since research and development is a very important function of the higher education institutions (HEIs), the higher education of these institutions serves as a strong and basic source of new discoveries and innovations. The HEIs, through their research dynamics, motivate their graduates prepare research projects for innovations and continual development. According to Hoenack (1992) the universities remain in a good position to support different sectors of the country by their research publications and also employing their researchers as consultants.

According to the World Bank Report (1998-99), with the advancement of the process of globalization in a number of fields including finance, trade and information, the environment in the world has turned the competition intense. It is feared that the communities remaining aloof from the globalization process shall be driven far behind than the others. The poor countries on this earth are marked with slums and rural areas where even basic necessities (like clean drinking water, electricity, schools and health centers) of life are missing. It will be in the interest of the entire world community that basic issues of these slums and villages are attended to so that they become part of the development process. For the developing nations, it is imperative that they update and improve their policies in order to reduce the knowledge rift that keeps them apart from the wealthy nations. Well planned, organized and generous public investments need to be made in the education sector and similar vigor is needed to acquire sufficient advancement in the telecommunication sector.

Literature Review**Significance of Higher Education**

Development of a society and development are inclusively reliant on each other. Building and sustainability of nations largely depend on education. Higher education is of prime importance in the economic and social development of any nation of the world.

According to Clark (1983), all over the world the institutions of higher education prepare graduates into knowledgeable, talented and skillful human resource. Salmi (2002) suggests that making use of modern knowledge and communication techniques, higher education in modern times serves as an effective source in the process of globalization.

The United Nations issued in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the preamble of this Declaration it was reaffirmed by the member nations that equal rights would be given to men and women to ensure social progress and better life quality. Teaching and education of these rights to every individual and society was also promised in this declaration. Article 26 relates to the right to education in pursuit of full development of the human personality and for the promotion of understanding and amicability among the peoples of the member nations, aimed at global peace and harmony.

In modern societies, employers recruit and select people who are in a position to offer their best and the most. This approach has assigned the higher education a very high and important place in all spheres of employment. According to Darren DeTorres (2012) ('higher education can be both mentally and spiritually rewarding'. Results of a survey conducted on 601 government officials, business leaders and college deans in the US revealed that 97 percent of the respondents were of the view that higher education is significant for the well-being of the society. Higher education transforms ordinary human being into useful citizens for a society. The world is changing at a rapid pace, and in order to competently tackle the challenges of change, people need higher education. Darren DeTorres (2012) suggests that education is one important factor that marks a distinction between the developing and the developed nations.

Kyllonen (2012:85) insists that higher education is of great worth for the individual and beneficial to the economy and society. Card (1999) notes that higher levels of education enhance better earnings, and reduce unemployment. In support of this claim, with the help of a table Kyllonen (2012:86) shows that in the year 2011, at an average, a high school diploma holder earned \$638 per week, a bachelor's degree holder earned \$1,053, a Master's degree holder \$1,263 while holder of a doctoral degree earned \$1,551 per week. Significance of higher education also reflected similarly in the unemployment rate in that for high-school diploma holders the unemployment rate was 9.4%, for bachelor's degree holders it was 4.9%, for master's degree holders 3.6% and for doctoral degree holders the unemployment rate was 2.5%. The difference of higher levels of education is clearly significant from these statistics and the same is true for other countries as well. Another benefit is that higher levels of education lower crime level (Kyllonen (2012:96)

Scott (2013) observes that innovative institutions of higher education have managed to offer degree programs that are competency-based. This refers that at the beginning of a course the students should know what competencies they need for such courses, and what competencies they will be possessing at the completion of their degree courses. It will be no exaggeration to claim that knowledge and education is to a human society as oxygen is to human life. Higher education has acquired pivotal position in the economic wellbeing of nations and also on individual levels. The faculties essential for smooth functioning of a society are developed by higher education (Dearing, 1997). Isani and

Virk (2003) describing the significance of higher education relate that '*The dividing line between the developed and the developing countries is the capacity of educational and scientific attainments and its appreciation for economic progress and prosperity.*'

Impact of higher education on quality of life is an undeniable reality. Quality of life certainly relies largely on economic prosperity. Quality of life, whether on individual, group or the entire societal level, owes significantly to economic well-being. Better health is also an important indicator of better quality of life which improves with higher level of education. Other advantages of higher education levels include more security, higher-paid employment opportunities, greater job satisfaction, limited reliance on government assistance, more volunteer work and low rate of crimes in society. Moreover, college graduates cause higher voting rate thereby strengthening democratic values and more participation in healthy activities (Allen, 2007).

Importance of higher education can be overlooked only at the cost of grave national loss. A broader approach visualizes that such loss may turn into a global disaster. Higher education is of essential significance as, based on the quality higher education, human resource is to be transformed into a value-added resource. The present-day human resource concepts visualize human resource as human capital that carries certain attributes like skills, professional knowledge, decision-making and leadership qualities. Changes in the definition of human resource development and HRD procedures would require changes in the human resource management. Emily L. Weinacker (2008) mentions eight areas which are influenced by value-added approach applied to HR, as follows:

- Human resource roles and activities;
- Design of the HR function;
- Shared services units;
- Outsourcing;
- E-HR;
- Talent management;
- HR skills and
- HR effectiveness.

Higher Education in Pakistan

Geographic location of Pakistan – being at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East and China – makes this country of great strategic importance. This also turns this country into a regional market with an enormous human resource and diverse natural resources. A well-planned trade strategy can transform its poverty into prosperity. However, severe economic and political challenges impede its development. An effective education system, especially higher education, can be of great help in resolving grave issues like economic, political and social instability faced by this country for several decades. On account of the key role of higher education, in research in all spheres of sciences, it acquires a more meaningful place in any modern society.

Institutions of higher education are the main providers of leadership to their respective communities, and in this context higher education becomes even more indispensable for the advancement and prosperity of a society. People with higher educational levels are assumed for this reason to transform into more knowledgeable and competent leaders. The present day societies and communities need capable leaders. In case of Pakistan it seems imperative for our people, not the government and its functionaries alone, to realize that acquisition of appropriate knowledge and technology at higher level of education is no more any option in the pursuit of some job to earn a living, but a matter of existence. We do not need merely to become literate but we must educate ourselves.

In August 2013 Pakistan government and people of Pakistan have celebrated the 67th Independence Day. Keeping aside several other sectors of life when one focuses on higher education in Pakistan during the last six decades, concrete doubts emerge about satisfactory progress in this sector. One need not rely on official figures and statistics to judge the conditions in the higher education sector in the country. Rather, the quality and capability of the graduates coming out of universities and their share in the construction and building of the nation and country offers a candid reflection of the standards of higher education. The gap between a developing state like Pakistan and the developed states of the world appears to widen as the time goes by.

Isani (2001) after review of constitutions in Pakistan and the importance assigned to education in various five-year plans of Pakistan concludes that education has not been given its due status throughout the history of Pakistan. The right of education, in the constitution of Pakistan, is not described as a fundamental right which, if not delivered, can be sought through a court of law. In case of the free primary and secondary level education, the constitutions of 1962 and 1973 mention such education only under the Principles of Policy, but not under fundamental rights. It is irony that education in Pakistani law is considered no fundamental right. This refers that education cannot be enforced through a court of law. This approach is clearly indicative of the seriousness about promotion of education and knowledge by the state among its citizens. As for higher education, the assessment of its quality was realized quite late. Financial auditing of the institutions of higher education is conducted but the academic audit remains largely overlooked (Isani & Virk, 2003). The consistent decline of the quality of teachers, students and the feeble institutional structure have served as severe hurdles in the way of quality higher education in Pakistan. At present when the process of globalization has developed an environment of a very tough competition in all spheres of life, improvement in the quality of higher education has become even harder and this state of affairs will further deteriorate if levels of education at lower levels (primary, secondary, higher secondary) are not reformed enough to meet the present-day demands. Productive and firm interaction between universities and the industrial and business sectors needs to be established and set on strong footings.

Pyshorn and Huisman (2011) are convinced that higher education symbolizes a strong professional independent spirit which is observed in academic freedom. They opine that the HR practices may be impeding the academic freedom and hence administrative attitude may have to be criticized by the academic professionals. They propose that the academic professionals need to be free in their ideas and implementation of these ideas,

without any pressure from management executive. It would be interesting and quite relevant to observe what difference the higher education has made to the economic conditions of some of the countries (Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan) that until a few decades back were considered smaller than and behind Pakistan in terms of economic stability and development.

Higher Education and its advantage in Singapore

Education is a dynamic force that can transform a corrupt society into a successful nation. Spar (2009) relates the story of Singapore – a country that was severely afflicted by corruption prior to 1960 – which in the coming years emerged as a strong economy in the region. Under the honest, visionary and vibrant leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, the government's intervention in the spheres of economy and culture helped the entire society to change. This change was largely reliant on education from beginning to higher levels. In Singapore, Lee had developed such an environment that education acquired key priority among the Singaporean families. In this case, where education has been instrumental in the societal change, the role of leadership has been imperative to the story of success.

Higher Education and its benefits in Malaysia

Yaakub and Ayob (1999) relating the impressive role of higher education in Malaysian economy describe that there has been a tremendous progress in the field of higher education in Malaysia during the past forty years (since 1957). The umbrella of development has taken into its fold all the key components of higher education including the faculty and staff, the curricula and the physical structure. They are convinced that higher education and socio-economic development are inevitable for each other. In the post-independence period, the Malaysian economy steadily transformed from a commodity-based one into an industrial-based one. In the late 1980s industrialization came into focus in the national policies. During the 1980s and 1990s, the university graduates holding higher education in managerial and technological sciences caused a speedy uplift of the Malaysian economy. The process of industrialization opened increased employment opportunities to the university graduates. The universities have played a very instrumental role in strengthening and developing the Malaysian human resource.

Higher Education and its blessings in Taiwan

A study of the state of affair of higher education in Taiwan reveals that higher education in this country has contributed fabulously in its economic growth. The study shows that a raise by one percent in the higher education enhanced the industrial productivity by 0.35 percent. Moreover, one percent increase in the number of engineering or natural sciences graduates brought about a raise of 0.15 percent in the agricultural productivity. Wolff and Gittleman find that productivity of human resource goes up with the escalation in the number of students acquiring higher education.

Methodology

For this research paper, qualitative method of research has been adopted. The discussion is supported by literature relevant to the title of the paper. On the basis of this literature and authors' opinion formulated in the light of the text contained in discussion, conclusions have been presented at the end of this paper. Hatch (2002) is of the opinion that qualitative method of research assigns significance to human beings. Moreover, this method of research is suitable as it also takes into account the cultural aspects of a society.

Financial and Policy Snags for Public Sector Universities

It is of paramount significance for the development of higher education in a country that the government concerned places this sector among its selected top priorities. Such priority would mean that appropriately adequate budgetary allocations would be made for the higher education sector. In Pakistan, the situation may be termed, with certainty, as dubious. During the past few years, allocation of funds to the public sector universities has been going on decrease. The Higher Education Commission, which is responsible to provide financial grants to the public sector universities in Pakistan, has announced a further cut of 30 percent in the grants allocated to universities (The daily 'Express', Karachi, August 15, 2013, p.9). This is an outcome of curtailment of budget allocations (Budget 2013-14) by the Government of Pakistan for higher education in the country. The new cut in the funding is likely to place the universities in grave financial hardships influencing not only their academic and research & development projects but will deteriorate even the payment of salaries to the staff of these institutions. This implies that human resources of the institutions will suffer in financial terms. What is expected as outcome is the loss of motivation, loss of trust and the realization of ownership of the institutions and insecurity among the human resources in the sense of monetary benefits.

All the position explained above clearly indicates appalling trends for the present and future of higher education and its consequences on the entire society as a whole. The policy-makers and decision-makers need to be well-determined in the matter of education, including the higher education in the country, visualizing its consequences – both positive and otherwise. In order to turn the labor and workers of the country into human resource, the issue of higher education, together with knowledge of advanced technology, needs to be given due and definite consideration. Fortunately, instances of South Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia are available for handy reference.

We must remember one important point that the developed European nations enjoy the advantage of their centuries-long educational background that had enlightened their societies and cultures. Their understanding and approaches to education are far different than ours. We, particularly, the nations of the sub-Continent India-Pakistan cannot claim any such background. On the contrary, we have sadly century's long experience of slavery and foreign rule. We have no experience of educational philosophy and hence no constructive imagination and views about the role and function of higher education in our life. This situation makes it clear that we must realize that education is a source of human development, refinement of attitudes and conceptualizations.

Institutions of higher education usually desire more independence in their administration and operations and at the same time they want to establish their dependence on public funds. The governments, on the other hand, also want these HEIs to be self-sufficient in terms of finances, but they do want to keep authoritative control of the execution and operations of these institutions in government's hands. Until and unless there is a reasonable balance between the two (government and HEIs), it will be too hard to expect higher education institutions flourish in the developing countries. Some recent changes in the authorities with regard to the public sector universities in the province of Sindh (Pakistan) are reflective of the government's intentions to keep a firm grip on the authoritative controls of these universities (Newspaper, daily 'Dawn' (Express), October 25, 2013). The education is the most essential area to be assigned priority by the government – disregard of the fact what sort of government or regime be in charge of power in the country. It has been unfortunately our focus on acquiring degree, but not education. The poor country (Pakistan) has been led in the name of democracy for several years by people known for their political influence and powers only. If leaders' selection be based on vast knowledge, pertinent skills and expertise in some field of sciences (natural, social or management science etc.), we will be able to find only a few such persons in the so far about 66-year history of the country who were the right leaders. Last but not the least, higher education can get us all rid of the years long unrest caused in all parts of the country due to the terrible wave of terror. For sure the higher education can be of great support to overcome this burning issue that has disturbed the life of all the people of Pakistan, in particular, and of a number of countries in the world, in general.

Conclusion

Acquisition of knowledge and advancement in technology is no option but a precondition for a reasonable and fair survival of a human society in the ongoing advanced world. Without proper, organized and purpose-oriented education, it is too hard to dream of a prosperous and peaceful society. Pakistan with its large population has equally larger opportunity and, at the same time, larger scope and capacity for improvement of its people. Higher education must be assigned priority as, on the university graduates, depend efficient management and performance of organizations.

Moreover, higher education is the most important source of research and hence also of development. Higher level of education also ensures improved outcomes in the fields of technology and industries (which are reliant on technology). The concept of human resource needs to be propagated through education at tertiary level. The institutions of higher education should themselves become examples by transforming their obsolete style of personnel management system into human resource management. However, this transformation must be in real sense. Merely renaming of personnel management into human resource management will hardly make any difference in the thinking and working of the individuals as well as on the performance of organizations. Employees are to be considered human asset and organization's capital. This capital is to be invested in through training and education. To this end, higher education will play a key role in the individual development of human resource as well as that of organization, having the overall impact on the society which will reflect in the national development.

Higher education will start delivering its fruits once it is considered, at national, collective, level in a society, as a tool for developing knowledge and human conscience beyond the ordinary approach of thinking of it merely a means of earning a livelihood. By improving the standards of higher education we need more knowledge and training; with the help of better higher education we need to develop peace and fraternity in the society and to turn our haphazardly and confused gathering of a huge human population into a human society. Turning our people into a human society will mean the development of our human resource.

References:

- Allen, H. (2007), *Why is Higher Education Important*, [http: www.crosswalk.com/family/homeschool/](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/homeschool/) ret. July 30, 2013).
- Card, D. (1999). *The causal effect of education on earnings*. In O. Ashenfelter and D. Card (Eds.), *Handbook of Labor Economics* (pp. 1801-1863). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier Science.
- Clark, B.R. (1983), *The Higher Education System: Academic Organization in Cross-national Perspective*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.),.
- Dearing, Sir Ron (1997), *'Higher Education in the Learning Society'*, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in Britain.
- DeTorres, D. (20-12), <http://drarrinruns.worldpress.com> ret. July 30, 2013
- Hatch, J. A. (2002), *'Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings'*, State University of New York Press, USA, pp. 7 & 65.
- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR> ret. August 05, 2013
- <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2013/06/04> ret. July 30, 2013
- Isani, U.A. (2001), *'Higher Education in Pakistan: A Historical – Futuristic Perspective'*, Ph.D. thesis, The National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, pp. 20-21.
- Isani, U.A.G., Virk, M. L. (2003), *'Higher Education in Pakistan, a historical and futuristic perspective'*, National Book Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan, p.232.
- Kyllonen, Patrick C. (2012), www.usc.edu/program/cerpp ret. July 30, 2013.
- Pyshorn, C. & Huisman, J. (2011), 'The role of the HR department in Organisational Change in a British University', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 24 No. 5, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, p.612.
- Salmi J., *Facing the Challenge of the 21st Century, Perspectives*, Vol 6 #1, 2002. Page 9)
- Scott, Kinney (2013), *'An issue of highest (educational) importance'*, column available on www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2013/06/04 ret. October 2013.
- Spar, D. (2009), *'What Higher Education Can Learn from the Case of Singapore'*, article published in Forum for the Future of Higher Education, p. 22, <http://net.educause.edu> ret. Oct. 04, 2013.
- Stephen A. Hoenack's article *'Higher Education and Economic Growth'* in *'Higher Education and Economic Growth'* by William E. Becker & Darrell R. Lewis (Eds.), 1992, Kluwer Academic Publishers, US, p. 36)
- The daily 'Express', Karachi, August 15, 2013, p.9.

The World Development Report 1998-99, '*Knowledge for Development*', 1998, The World Bank & Oxford University Press.

Weinacker, Emily L. (2008), doctoral thesis entitled '*A Descriptive Study of Human Resource Operation in Higher Education: Are They Value-Added?*'

Wolff, E.N. and Gittleman, M. (1993): "*The Role of Education in Productivity convergence: Does Higher education Matter?*" In A Szirmai, B van Ark, and D Pilat (eds), *Explaining Economic Growth*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Yaakub, N.& Ayob, A. (1999), '*Higher Education and Socio-economic Development in Malaysia: A Human Resource Development Perspective*', <http://mahdzan.com> ret. October 04, 2013.

Charlotte Edgley-Pyshorn, Jeroen Huisman, Emerald Article: '*The Role of the HR Department in Organisational Change in a British University*', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 24 No. 5, 2011, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 610-625