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Khattak, Naeem Ur Rehman Khattak and Khan, Jangraiz and Khan, Iqbal and Tariq, Muhammad

University of Peshawar, Pakistan, University of Peshawar, Pakistan,
University of Peshawar, Pakistan

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE DEMAND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Naeem Ur Rehman Khattak¹, Jangraiz Khan², Iqbal Khan³ and Muhammad Tariq⁴

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the factors which affect demand for higher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan). Primary data was collected for this purpose from 100 students enrolled in different universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The results showed that age of student, marital status, access to higher education institutions, parent's education, family income and awareness of the benefits of higher education are the major determinants of demand for higher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Interestingly, 93% of respondents suggested that socio-economic problems prevailed in the society can be solved with increase in higher education while 80% of the surveyed students considered that poverty eradication is possible with higher education. It is therefore, suggested on the basis of the results of the study to increase public expenditure on higher education and launch a massive campaign for awareness of higher education. The linkage of higher education with the market demand will increase employment which will motivate students to higher education.

Key Words: Demand for higher education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Socio-economic problems,

Parent's Education

¹ Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Peshawar

² Ph.D Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Peshawar

³ Ph. D Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of Peshawar

⁴ Ph. D Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Peshawar

Introduction:

Pakistan like other developing countries is gripped into serious socio-economic troubles of poverty, unemployment, inflation, and poor health conditions. Education is believed to be the most effective tool to overcome such problems, leaving a cross cutting effect on all aspects of human life. It is one of the major determinants of economic growth in endogenous growth theories. Keeping in view the significance of education, the developing countries are giving much weightage to the formulation of educational policies and are linking their education sector to the market demand. *“Access to higher education has increasingly become a major priority for state and federal policy-makers”*, (Jackson and George, 1975).

Besides the utmost importance of the education, literacy rate in Pakistan is only 57%. It is 69% for male and 45% for female respectively (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2009-10). Pakistan has a very low Human Development Index of 0.551, keeping it at 136th Position in the world (UNDP, 2008). Pakistan spends a meager percentage of its GDP on education. The expenditure on education remained only 2.13% of GDP during the period 2000-2008 (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2008-9). The Universities in Pakistan are the major sources of higher education and its growth showed remarkable expansion in recent past. Realizing the crucial role of higher education in quality research for sustained education and economic development, the government of Pakistan dissolved the University Grants Commission (UGC) and established Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2002. The main aim of HEC was strengthening higher education with special focus on research in applied fields of science and technology within the country.

The demand for higher education is believed to be effected by educational policies, income level, cost of education, access to educational institutions, standard of the lower level of education, the structure of education, the educational background of the parents and quality of teaching (Kodde and Jozef, 1988). The demand for higher education is positively associated with income and inversely associated with price (Cost) of higher education (Cambel and Barry, 1967). High admission standards, and cost of education are also expected to affect enrollment and attendance in higher education (Bishop, 1977). Galper and Robert (1969) found the effects of changes in armed forces on higher education which means that employment level in a country can have reasonable effects on higher education. Similarly, Socio-economic status is also considered as a strong determinant of higher education (Corrazzini *et al*, 1972).

The Pakistani society is diverse in income distribution and access to different levels of education. The access to education of all levels is easy in urban areas especially in big cities, while the higher education facility is mostly not available in rural areas and smaller towns. Major universities are situated in urban areas and the students have to move to big cities for university education and in most of cases even for college education. The higher education in Pakistan is provided by both public as well as private sector.

The present study has been designed to analyze demand for higher education in Pakistan with special reference to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It is expected that it will highlight the major factors which affect the demand for higher education in the study area.

Higher Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

When Pakistan came into being in 1947, it had very low education profile. The government of Pakistan tried to improve the condition of education sector although it has not kept education on top priority. The continuous efforts on part of government and private sector especially in 1990s, added a network of educational institutions round the country. The progress in higher education remained very slow till late 1990s but the establishment of Higher Education of Pakistan (HEC) , brought revolutionary expansion in it. Presently, there are 128 universities imparting higher education in Pakistan. These universities include 72 public sector and 56 private sector universities. The distribution is shown Table I.

There were 276274 students enrolled in higher education institutions in 2002. This enrollment tripled in 2009 which shows the palpable efforts on part of HEC of Pakistan which is shown in Table II. It can be seen that besides the major contribution in enrollment by public sector universities, private sector is also emerging as a significant source of higher education in Pakistan.

Table I Number of universities in Pakistan 2010

Area	No of Public Sector Universities	No. of Private Sector Universities	Total Universities	Population (Thousands) 2007
Islamabad	13	3	16	1124
Kyber Pakhtunkhwa	15	9	24	21856
Punjab	21	19	40	87683
Sindh	14	22	36	36458
Balochistan	06	02	08	8190
Azad Jammu & Kashmir	02	01	03	-
Gilgit-Baltistan	01	-	01	-
Total	72	56	128	-

Source: Higher Education Commission, Pakistan, Economic Survey of Pakistan (Various Issues)

Table II Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education of Pakistan

Year	Enrollment in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan			
	Distance Learning	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
2002	89749	142652	43873	276274
2003	108709	167775	55261	331745
2004	159257	202871	61108	423236
2005	187557	216454	67953	471964
2006	199660	242879	78934	521473
2007	272272	276226	91563	640061
2008	305962	331664	103466	741092
2009	339704	348434	115389	803507

Source: HEC, Economic Survey of Pakistan (2008-9)

The number of Ph. Ds in Pakistan sufficiently increased in all fields due to the steps taken by HEC. Pakistan is producing more than 750 Ph. Ds per annum which is three fold of the number in 2002. The year wise Ph.D production is shown in Table III

Table III Number of Ph.D Produced (1995-2009)

Year	Ph.Ds Produced	Year	Ph.Ds Produced
1994	125	2002	276
1995	178	2003	276
1996	191	2004	312
1997	171	2005	328
1998	212	2006	408
1999	201	2007	430
2000	176	2008	625
2001	204	2009	740

Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan

The present piece of research is an effort to highlight the socio-economic determinants of higher education in Pakistan especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Province. The higher education in KPK is offered by a network of colleges and universities spread over in all province. There were 2966 students enrolled in 14 postgraduate colleges of KPK with 953 teaching staff of different categories in 2007-08 (KPK Bureau of Statistics, 2008-9). Similarly, 30751 students both male and female were enrolled in 7 public sector universities with 1671 teaching staff.

Table IV Higher Education Profile of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Year	Post Graduate Colleges Staff			Public Sector Universities		
	Colleges	Teaching Staff	Enrolemt	Universities	Teaching Staff	Enrolemt
2005-6	12	806	1831	-	-	-
2006-7	14	851	2396	-	-	-
2007-8	14	953	2966	7	1681	30721

Source: KPK Bureau of Statistics (2008-9)

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on Primary data. The data was collected through a structured Questionnaire. The Questionnaire was designed in such a way that it covered the objectives of the study. Primary data was collected from M. Sc/MBA, MS/M. Phil and Ph. D students enrolled in major universities of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province including University of Peshawar, University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar, Allama Iqbal Open University Peshawar Campus, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Agricultural University and City University of Science and Technology Peshawar. The Universities were selected on purposive and convenience basis. Being major universities of the province, students from all districts of the study area are enrolled in them. The data was collected from 100 students during May - June 2011.

The Secondary data used in this study was collected from the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), Economic Survey of Pakistan (various Issues), Federal Bureau of Statistics and other national and international organizations. The results have been derived on the basis of percentages, tables and graphs.SPSS-15 has been used for the derivation of results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, primary data was collected through a well developed questionnaire from 62 MA/M. Sc /MBA students, 22 M. Phil and 16 Ph. D students. Out of total surveyed students, 58 % were male and 42 % were female students. Most of the students were young by age but it also consisted some of the students with relatively higher age as shown in the following Table V.

Table V Distribution of students by age group

Age	Percent
20-25	65.0
25-30	20.0
30 & above	15.0

Source: Field Survey

Among the surveyed students 65% were in the age group 20-25 years. 20% of total students were in 25-30 years and 15% were of 30 years and above. The marital status of students

was also taken into account as married male and female students have more responsibilities as compared to unmarried students. 18 percent of the students were married while 82% were unmarried. Interestingly, majority of the students (71%) were from rural areas. The surveyed students were from 18 different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In order to find the effect of parent’s education, the students were asked to narrate the education level of their parents. According to the survey results, 85% of fathers while 45% of mothers were educated. Out of fathers, 41% were M.A/M.Sc, 19% were BA/B.Sc and 21% were FA/F.Sc. Similarly, among the mothers of students, 9% were M.A/M.Sc, 36% were B.A/B.Sc or F.A/F.Sc while 45% were illiterate. This shows that the education of parents is an important determinant of higher education in the study area. This is shown in Table VI.

Table VI Education Level of Parents

Education level	Father (Percentage)	Mother (Percentage)
M.Phil/Ph.D	4.0	-
MA/MSc	41.0	9.0
BA/BSC	19.0	18.0
FA/FSc or less	21.0	18.0
Illiterate	15.0	55.0
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey

The income of an individual is considered an important determinant of socio-economic indicators. Out of the surveyed students, 51% had family income more than Rs. 30,000 per month and 34 % had upto Rs. 20,000 . This shows the role of family income in higher education.

The effect of parent’s profession was also under taken. Out of the total parents were 34 % were government servants, 21 % businessmen, 10% labours and 6% teachers. The surveyed students were mostly from educated families. According to the survey results, 61% students had 1 or two while 30% had 4 or 5 brothers or sisters studying at higher education institutions.

When, the surveyed students were asked about the major aim of their enrollment in higher education, 31 % of total students replied that higher education will fetch them a good job.

All the students agreed on the fact that higher education improves research in a country. The students were also questioned about the role of higher education in increasing income and as expected 76% of the students agreed the fact that higher education fetch higher income while 24 % of the students opposed this fact. Education is believed to be an important factor of socio-economic problems in the society. The present study supports the fact because 93% of the respondents considered that higher education can solve the social problems prevailed in our society. In the similar fashion, 96% of the respondents recommended higher education for better utilization of resources and 80% of students suggested higher education for eradication of poverty.

Surprisingly, the respondents didn't consider higher education to be the only tool for the treatment of corruption and only 52% supported the view that higher education reduces corruption while 48% opposed the view. Higher education in Pakistan is mainly financed by public sector in Pakistan and 83% of the surveyed students agreed the fact that higher education can be improved by public sector funding. When the students were asked if they are offered a good job and higher education, what will be their choice; majority of the students opted for higher education. The students were also questioned about the source of financing. The study results showed that for the students enrolled in higher education in KPK, parents are the major source of financing their education. The sources of financing are given in the following Table VII.

Table VII Who Finance your Education

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Self	22	22.0
Parents	64	64.0
Government	6	6.0
Other Sources	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey

The survey shows that 22 percent of students finance their education themselves, 64% are financed by parents, 6% by government and 8% by other sources. Awareness of the benefits of higher education can increase enrollment in higher education to a great extent as 99% of the students supported this fact. Similarly, 89 % of the respondents expected that easy access to higher education will push up the enrollment in higher education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The present study started with the objective of exploring the determinants of demand for higher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Primary data was used for this purpose. The results showed that most of the students were young and unmarried. They belonged to different income groups. Most of the students belonged to educated families. The respondents considered education an important tool for the socio-economic problems prevailed in the society. The study also showed that higher education helps in achieving higher income which helps in eradication of poverty.

It is concluded on the basis of the results that awareness of higher education, age of students, marital status, Parent's education, family income, access to education, and public expenditure on higher education affect the demand for higher education. It is therefore; suggested to increase public expenditure on higher education, launch massive campaigns regarding awareness of higher education and provision of easy access to higher education institutions to reap the fruits of higher education.

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AUTHORS AFFILIATIONS

Prof. NAEEM UR REHMAN KHATTAK

Dr. Naeem Ur Rehman Khattak is Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Peshawar. He did his Ph. D from UK. He has extensive experience in teaching, administration and research. He has 64 research papers published in different national and international journals. He has produced 8 PhD and 25 M. Phil Students.

JANGRAIZ KHAN

Jangraiz Khan is Ph. D Scholar at Department of Economics, University of Peshawar under HEC Indigenous Ph. D Fellowship Programme. He also availed the IRSIP award from HEC and worked at University of Pisa, Italy for six months during 2010-11. He has 6 research papers published in different national and international research Journals. His areas on interest in research are education, health, environment and economic growth.

IOBAL KHAN

MUHAMMAD TARIQ

Muhammad Tariq is Ph. D Scholar at Department of Economics, University of Peshawar under HEC Indigenous Ph. D Fellowship Programme. He visited University of Padua, Italy under HEC IRSIP programme. He has 3 research papers published in different international research Journals. His areas on interest in research are exchange rate, price and output growth.