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The Need for a Shift in Higher Education: the Case of Malakand Division

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Abstract

The prime aim of this study was to find out sufficiency of higher education institutes at Malakand division along with the quality of education in the universities. This study also examined the sufficiency of government spending on higher education at Malakand division. The study was based on questionnaires and is developed in such a way that it captures the desired objectives of the study. The data was collected from 150 respondents from university of Malakand. The data is analyzed by using frequency distribution. The analyses show that the current higher institutes in this area are not sufficient for this area. Most of the respondent disagrees to the sufficiency of present higher education institutes (Mean = 2.33). Further the respondents also were disagree with the level of spending on higher education institute in this area (Mean =2.02). While analyzing the quality of education this study found that up to certain level the level of education provided is good. However the respondents were disagree to level of resources in terms of infrastructure, laboratory, research, library and technology. This study has certain recommendations.

Key words: Malakand Division, Quality of Higher Education, University of Malakand.

Introduction

According to World Bank report the economic gaps between the developing and the developed countries are due to different facilities available to them in the higher education sector (Siddique, 2002) In the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Education for all Development Index (2012), Pakistan ranks 113 out of 120 countries. Pakistan spends low amount on education only 2.0 percent of GDP as compared to other countries of the region. This can be shown by table No. 1 (see the appendix) Taken from Pakistan Economic Survey (2013-14).

The education sector of Pakistan is facing many problems including poor management, low qualified and untrained teachers, irrelevant curriculum, non-availability of textbooks, teacher's absenteeism, fewer number of universities, low quality of research, higher teacher to student ratio, poor and ill equipped laboratories, dual medium of instruction and the most important is lower government spending on this sector.

At national level Pakistan has total 160 universities including both public and private sector. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) is a province in Pakistan having 29 universities 19 in public sector and 10 in private sector. (Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, n.d). According to Higher Education Commission (n.d) ranking the top ten universities in the country belongs to federal and other provinces and not a single university from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) is included. This situation clearly shows the standard and quality of higher education in the province.

Malakand Division is an administrative division of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province of Pakistan. The division includes the districts of Chitral, Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Swat, Shangla, Buner and Malakand. Malakand division is deprived of higher education since independence. The population of this area is 4262700 which is further divided into districts wise details Buner = 506048 Female= 253013 (49.99%) Male= 253035(50.00%), Chitral= 318689 Female= 156607 (49.14%), Male= 162082(50.85%) Lower Dir= 717649 Female= 361921 (50.43%), Male= 355728 (49.56%), Malakand =452291 Female=218735 (48.36%), Male= 233556 (51.63%), Shangla = 434563, Female= 210815 (48.51%), Male= 223748 (51.48%), Swat =1257602 Female= 609594 (48.47%), Male= 648008 (51.52%) and Upper Dir= 575858 Female= 284276

(49.36%), Male= 291582 (50.63%). (Population Census 1998, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

For this much population there was no university till 2001 and most of the students have to migrate to other big cities for higher education. Most of the people belong to lower middle and lower income group and it is very costly for them to go and get higher education in other cities. There first university in Malakand division was established on 30th august 2001 since independence of Pakistan. This shows how backwards this area is regarding higher education. Now there are only three public sector universities (University of Malakand, University of Swat and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Dir Upper) in Malakand division.

On 30th august 2001 the first university established in Malakand division is university of Malakand (University of Malakand, n.d). With the establishment of Malakand University at Chakdara, Sensing the backwardness of the people of Dir upper, the then Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, issued directives for the establishment of Campus-II of Malakand University at Sheringal on October 3rd, 2002. Sheringal Campus became a full-fledged University "Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University" on 6th October 2009, under the Regulation 2009. (Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, n.d). The third university which was built in Malakand division was University of Swat On May 29th, 2010 the Prime Minister of Pakistan, visited swat and announced the establishment of university of swat. The university came into formal existence at dated 7th July, 2010 by the Honorable Governor. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Awais Ahmad Ghani with the prior approval of the President of Pakistan. (University of Swat, n.d).

This study is carried out to know the current situation of higher education institutions in Malakand division, its standard and whether these universities are fulfilling the needs of the students or not.

Significance of the Study

Education is the basic right of everyone. Countries and nations are developing on the basis of knowledge and research. Unfortunately the education figures of Pakistan are not that much impressive. Malakand division is the largest division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province but education facilities are not provided in enough quantities. This study has been undertaken to examine whether the current number of educational institutes are sufficient for Malakand

division or not. This study also examines the standard of education provided in the higher education institute. This study will provide insights of whether there is a need for more higher education institutes or not. Further it will also examine the current level of spending on higher education institutes of this area. This study will also provide the factors of the quality of education that need to be kept in mind for higher education.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the standard of current higher education institutes (Universities) in Malakand Division
2. To study those factors which may improve the quality of education.

Review of Literature

Literature on education sector has extensively studied the quality of education and its importance for the economic growth of the country.

According to Lowe (2002) universities provide highly qualified and skillful labor force to the country. Because in this 21st century a country cannot attain development without having this kind of labor force. The challenging thing for us is that we should focus on establishing such system of higher education whose outcome should be social inclusion and social cohesion.

Jabbar et al (2014) carried out a study about the satisfaction of students in higher education through a comparative study between Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir Pakistan. They study different facilities which universities provide them and they came to know that students of Punjab are more satisfied as compared to students of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the reason was the quality of facilities and infrastructure differences.

Menon et al (2014) highlighted some of the problems of higher education of India including inflexible academic structure, eroding autonomy of academic institutions, unwieldy affiliating system and the most important is low level of public spending. The study analyzes various aspects of Indian higher education to point out the major problems and uses the experience of

other countries to tackle with its various systematic deficiencies. It has also found that India has an average level of existing infrastructure of higher education and the standard of education is far behind than that of developed countries. So its needs a paradigm shift to bring it up in par with western education.

Khattak et al (2013) they found that higher education can lesser the burden and hardships of the people especially of the youth. Most of the respondents believe that poverty eradication is only possible with higher education. It is suggested on the basis of the result of this study to increase government spending on higher education and launch a program for the awareness of higher education linking higher education with the market will increase employment which will further motivate students to go for higher education.

Memon (2007) studied the key is to develop people both physically and mentally. He said that in the entire world, Universities are linked with industries and agriculture organization and they are doing progress and development very rapidly. He has made a point that there is a closer link between higher education and development. But in Pakistan even after more than five decades the development process is very slow and it is due to low participation at higher education. He points out many problems of higher education of Pakistan including; quality staff, student library and laboratory, relevance of the education with society, financial crisis, weak examination system and ineffective governance issues, problems and new challenges to higher education sector in Pakistan.

Shaheen (2013) study the problems faced by education sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Pakistan's education indicators are not that much impressive since independence and the situation of KPK is not a different story. The quality of education is poor; teachers follow traditional methods of teaching and with no community involvement making the situation worse.

Hypothesis

H1: The number of universities in Malakand division and the provided infrastructure is not up to the mark compared to develop nations.

H2: The quality of education provided is poor.

H3: Government spending on higher education of this area is sufficient.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on primary data. Sample size consisted of 150 respondents. Data was collected through structured questionnaires containing 11 close ended questions. The questionnaires were developed in such a way that tries to get the relevant data so that objectives of the study could be achieved. The respondents include students of BS, M.A/M.Sc, M.phil, and PhD of the University of Malakand. This university was taken for convenience and also it is the oldest and major university in Malakand Division. The responses of the respondents were recorded by one to one meeting.

Data Analyses

The data was analyzed by using 5 points likert scale ranging from strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed, strongly disagreed. This study was descriptive in nature and since it has been analyzed on the descriptive statistics. The questionnaires were distributed between respondents and then collected back for analyses. The data was analyzed by using frequency distribution by using SPSS software. The frequency distribution has been carried in order to analyze the responses of the respondents for the specific questions and then the mean value has been calculated.

The score assigned to the single question has been given as: Strongly Agreed = 5, Agreed = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagreed = 2, Strongly Disagreed = 1. The abbreviation used after this for each respond will be as Strongly Agreed = SA, Agreed = A, Neutral = NA, Disagreed = DA, Strongly Disagreed = SDA.

The mean value from the frequencies can be calculated as

$$\text{Mean Value} = \frac{\sum (F_{SA} \times 5 + F_{SA} \times 4 + F_N \times 3 + F_{DA} \times 2 + F_{SDA} \times 1)}{N}$$

Results and Discussion

The analyses shows that there were total 150 respondents among which there were 115 males respondent and 35 were female respondents. The respondents background of education predicted were about 101 Master students, 35 were MS/MPHILL students and 14 were PHD students. The analyses represent the following results.

Table 2 describes the responses of the respondents which are obtained in order to capture the real objective of the study whether the existence of the current higher education institutions are enough for this area or not. The “N” represents the number of respondents and below this it represents the % of the responses to the whole population. The data represents that majority of the students (N=DA) replied to this statements in Disagreed portion (N=DA). The percentage of the responses is about 35 %. After this 27 % of the respondents replied in strongly disagreed category to the statement that the number of higher education institutions is sufficient for this area. The mean value of 2.33 supports the statement in the disagreed portion. In the respond 7% replied as strongly agreed, 10% in agreed and 21% responses were neutral. The result signifies that there should be more institutions to support the students of this area.

Table 2 Number of Higher education Institution is sufficient for Malakand Division

Q1. The number of higher institutions/universities in Malakand division is sufficient for the people of this area.						
	SA	A	NA	DA	SDA	Mean
N/%	10/7	15/10	31/21	53/35	41/27	2.33

Table 3 provides the evidence of the respond to the question whether government spending on this area is sufficient or not. The data point to the responses of the respondent that approximately half of the respondents were disagreed to the statement. About 49% showed that the government spending on the higher education institutions in this area is not sufficient with replying disagreed to the question. There were also 31 % respondent replied with disagreed to the statement. The mean value of 2.02 clearly points that there is less spending on higher education on this area. The other responses recorded include 3% in strongly agreed, 7% in agreed and 10% of responses were neutral.

Table 3 Government spending on Higher education in this area

Q2. Government spending on higher education of this area is sufficient.						
	SA	A	NA	DA	SDA	Mean
N/%	5/3	10/7	15/10	74/49	46/31	2.02

Table 4 illustrates responses about the quality of education at the universities of Malakand division. Q3 describes the level of teaching quality at institute of Malakand. The responses captured in this aspects includes that about 60 respondents were agreed to the statement which is 40% of the total population. This shows that the quality of the education is good here in this institute. This is also followed by 10% of highly agreed responses from other respondents. The mean values of 3.36 quantify that level of teaching standard in up to certain level good as compared to standard institutes. Q4 examine the level of technology present in the University of Malakand. The 46% responses to this statement were in portion of disagreement and 28% replied in strongly disagreed area. This is supported by the mean value of 2.08. This shows that the available technology at universities of Malakand is not sufficient for these peoples. There should be more advanced and enough available technology for students. Q5 attempts to examine the quality of research in the institutes of university of Malakand. The respondents captured in this aspects were found neutral as mostly respondent as 37% replied as a neutral. However 33% respondents were agreed somehow that the research is up to some standard in this aspect. The mean value of 3.1 reflects that mostly candidates were neutral. This shows that there should be some support for research in universities. Q6 examine the existing infrastructure at universities of Malakand division. The respondents clearly disagreed to this statement as 60% responses are in disagreed portion. The mean value of 2.46 represents that the existing infrastructure provided is not sufficient for the universities. This quantify that there should be more spending on enhancing the infrastructure of the universities. Q7 attempts to examine the updated syllabus used in the universities. The responses here were about 53% of respondent showed that they are agreed to this statement. This is may be because the HEC is attempting to regulate and send the new syllabus for a specific subject. This mean value of 3.43 somewhat supports the statements of the respondent. Q8 examine the available resources present in the student's library and laboratory. The evidence shows that respondents were disagreed to this statement as about 57%

responses were in disagreed portion. The mean values of 2.5 represents in support of the responses. This represents that there are not sufficient resources available for students in library and laboratory. Q9 quantifies the available research facilities for students. The responses show that about 65% respondents were disagreed to the statement. The mean value of 2.28 supports the statements. This show that there should be more research facilities provided for students. The research is considered to be building block for an economy. Q10 examine the results of the students with those of some good institutes. The responses represents that majority of the respondents showed neutral aspects in this regard as N=55 and 37%. The mean values of 3.03 represents that mostly respondents were representing neither agree and nor disagree to this statement. This show that results are somehow not comparable with other standard institutes but there should be some enhancement in the quality of students to promote their institute in further future aspect. Q11 attempts to examine whether teacher contact is good with teacher or not. The majority of the students were agreed as N=66 and 44%. This show that teachers are supporting their students and there is good teacher student relation. The mean value of 3.20 somewhat supports the statement.

Table 4 Quality of Education at Universities of Malakand Division

Q3. The Quality of teaching is like other standard institutes.						
	SA	A	NA	DA	SDA	Mean
N/%	15/10	60/40	45/30	25/17	5/3	3.36
Q4. The availability of technology in universities of Malakand division is sufficient.						
N/%	5/3	5/3	29/19	69/46	42/28	2.08
Q5. The standard of research in Malakand division universities is good.						
N/%	5/3	50/33	55/37	35/23	5/3	3.10
Q6. The existing infrastructure of the universities in Malakand division is sufficient.						
N/%	5/3	10/7	40/27	90/60	5/3	2.46
Q7. The syllabus of the universities in Malakand division is up to dated.						
N/%	10/7	80/53	30/20	25/17	5/3	3.43
Q8. There are sufficient resources for Students in library and laboratory.						
N/%	5/3	20/13	30/20	85/57	10/7	2.50
Q9. Research facilities are sufficient.						
N/%	5/3	4/3	32/21	97/65	12/8	2.28
Q10. Academic results are comparable with other standard institutes.						
N/%	5/3	45/30	55/37	40/27	5/3	3.03
Q11. Contact of teachers with students is good						
N/%	5/3	66/44	39/26	35/23	5/3	3.20

Conclusion and policy implications

The world is so much developed that it becomes a global village and now everything becomes possible and it is due to development of education and research. The aim of the study is to examine the sufficiency of higher education institutes along with the standard of education present in the higher education institutes. The analysis is based on 150 respondents through questionnaires. The analyses are based on mean response in terms of frequency distribution. Our first objective of the study was to examine the current standard of higher education in Malakand Division. Most of the people prefer to go to other areas of the country to get higher education and so that they may get job as early as possible. The analyses show evidence that respondents agreed the current standard of higher education in Malakand division is not good. There is no good infrastructure, no research facilities, the conditions of laboratories are bad, outdated syllabus, hostel problems, and results are not in par with international standard. Teachers and students contact is good according to the respondents which is perhaps a positive thing. Second objective of the study was to study those factors which may help bring the higher education system comparable to that of the international standard.

Government has to play a key role in this scenario. It has to increase spending on the universities of this area so that their infrastructure should be developed, have access to modern educational libraries and websites and provide good learning facilities to the students. The other important thing is currently there are three universities which are not sufficient for the people of this area. Malakand division has seven districts and it is the largest division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province having a population of 4262700 (Population Census 1998, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bureau of Statistics). So if the government want any progress and development of this area, they should build more higher education and professional institutions so that people may get good quality higher education at their doorstep so building higher educational institutions is key for the development of this area, this will not only increase education but also increase economic activities because with the development of universities, market will also expand, people will get job and the standard of living will increase.

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Appendix

Table 1 Comparison of Public Sector Spending on Education

Country	Public Sector Spending (As % of GDP)	Literacy Rate In (%)
Bangladesh	2.4	59.8
Bhutan	4.8	52.0
India	3.1	73.8
Iran	4.7	85.0
Maldives	11.2	99.0
Nepal	4.6	66.0
Pakistan	2.0	60.0
Srilanka	2.6	91.2

Source: CIA World Fact book, Figures for latest available years