

THE ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSITION FROM UNIVERSITY TO WORK AFTER GRADUATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCE SUBJECTS WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The learning process of higher education is generally considered not only to gain knowledge and wisdom but also to get some dynamic skills which are necessary to translate the abilities with respect to future job market requirements. In spite of the fact that the route to success depends on personal abilities, this paper intends to investigate the contribution of the university in giving its graduates a competitive edge in the open market. In recent years the debate over the role of university in preparing and furnishing the personal attributes of the students is a hot discussion in the academic circles. However, in Pakistan the transition from university to work is little bit complicated. The curriculum and teaching method seems to be out-dated. Theoretical orientation has proved devoid of the market demands. The graduates have to strive hard to get a decent work experience after graduation. The various reports depict a grim picture of the state of affairs. This paper highlights the reasons and the overall implications on the people who are very anxiously waiting for the job.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a key role in bringing socio-economic changes in the society. It polishes the personality and helps to bring out the hidden abilities. It helps to learn the various mechanisms and skills necessary in providing and guarantying the decent livelihood (Aggarwal, 2005). In 1947, when Pakistan came into existence, the first educational conference presided over by Muhammad Ali Jinnah was held in Karachi after a year in 1948 to find out the ways of education for the newly established Muslim country. In the different sessions of the conference, many practical decisions were taken to endorse the Muslim philosophy of education in Pakistan within different phases. Subsequently different educational policies were announced to meet the needs of the day. Regrettably, the most wanted consequences are still seems a far cry to be achieved (Naseem, 1990).

Recently, the discussion about the relationship of higher education and employment has attracted the attention of academicians, planners, managers, researchers and the general public.

Universities in all over the world are nurseries who provide the knowledge seekers the compatible academic milieu. They are the source of getting formal as well as informal knowledge. The standard of higher education in Pakistan is poor, where the number of universities is not only insufficient but also less equipped with modern research resources.

The problems of education in Pakistan especially in higher education are now new. The scope of social science subjects in the country is diminishing. Technical education is on the rise but still lack the required physical infrastructure. Two factors are responsible for the current status quo. They are: The first is the increasing demand for higher education and proportionately fewer facilities available in public universities are inadequate. The second factor relates to the low standard of the faculty. The remedies are yet to be discovered (Abdullah, 1992).

Much has been said about the poor quality of education and low personal skills, the attitude and poor communication skills of those who complete their graduation. Even the graduate holders in IT and engineering are being reported to be jobless due to their poor command over English language. In Pakistan as compared to applied sciences the scope and chances of getting job for social science graduates are not bright. The market value for the social science graduates is quite low. There seems to be a discrepancy between the general output and ability of social science graduates in different specializations and the absorptive capacity of the labour market and employers' expectations. As a result, the unemployment and underemployment becomes the fate of social science graduates.

In the presence of huge number of universities offering hundreds of courses across a number of disciplines the disparity between the adequate supply of jobs and the unemployment rate has been a growing concern all over the world (Woo, 2006). The number of graduate increases by years, escalating as the number of private institutions also increases. The paper aims to provide insights of the employment chances of graduates in social sciences, in particular their struggle for getting first job upon completing their studies. It analyzes the factors influencing their chances of getting job as well as the characteristics of the jobs secured.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The various articles related to unemployment suggest that the graduates especially in social sciences are themselves responsible for not getting any suitable job after the completion of their

studies. Employers are becoming more selective because they usually have to select from the huge number of fresh and old graduates. The business environment is becoming more demanding and with the intention of keeping on competitive, they become dependant a lot on their human resources. These assets are the most important capital as they are the ones who create value for the business (Nurita et al, 2007). The graduates who are lacking in different aspects like communication, leadership and other soft skills harm the interests of the business owners though they are well equipped with the knowledge and skills in their respective fields. Although they are very good in their various subjects they study in the university but due to the poor communication ability, their technical skills remain unexploited when some of them start a job where non-technical skills required (Nurita et al, 2007). In that way they get themselves disappointed and also a great loss to the nation.

Leading cause of unemployment among the social science graduates is the low quality of practical field knowledge. Although they are well versed in theoretical subjects but they are aloof of the market-oriented comprehension (Ahmed, 1988). Many factors are responsible for the present status quo. Among those factors defective curricula, dual medium of instruction, poor quality of teachers, cheating in examinations and overcrowding in classrooms are noted as the important (Mukhtar, 2005).

This paper investigates the characteristics of graduates in two distinct groups based on their academic achievement and job characteristic. Higher learning institution's contribution in providing soft skills through teaching and learning to the graduates is also investigated. Biggeri et al (2001) used a multilevel approach to the analysis of the time to obtain the first job. They aimed to characterize the factors that determine the transition from university to work as well as to evaluate the effectiveness on universities and course programs with respect to the labour market. The study focuses on the time taken to obtain the first job, based the graduates' characteristics and also the contribution from the university. The result shows that the transition from university to work is a complex phenomenon with a lot of intervening factors.

FAULTY CURRICULUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE SUBJECTS

The curriculum of social science subjects taught in Pakistani universities is based on theoretical work devoid of market oriented compatibility. After the graduation the graduates usually forget

whatever they were taught in the classrooms. That is the main reason that social scientists in Pakistan have to spend their energy in the search of job which they very rarely succeed.

Social Science curriculum is traditionally framed and loaded with the body of knowledge with the irrelevancy with business or industrial knowledge. Once the students get admissions they are supposed to amalgamate this archaic information and apply that knowledge to solve the complicated problems of the society. With the expanding body of knowledge, there is over-burdening of the students with the content information. In order to grapple with this problem, it is essential to define the core content which every student 'must learn', things that are 'useful to learn' and 'nice to learn' but do not need the same emphasis.

In most of the cases, the students are exposed to the curriculum which is not demand-oriented. The syllabus taught in Pakistani universities has not any direct link with the ever-changing technological world. The orthodox theoretical principles, blind ratifications and compulsions which are taught to social science graduates, have turned out to be outdated in the contemporary world since last several years. Many committees were entrusted with the responsibility of revising the syllabi but the curriculum has not really changed. Now it has become a fashion to repeat that our universities are creating graduates who are not well-resourced to undertake and understand the requirements of the society. The most important troubles with our curricula and textbooks are listed in the Nayyar (2003) report. The points as noted by Nayyar are:

- Inaccuracies of fact and omissions that serve to substantially distort the nature and significance of actual events in our history.
- Insensitivity to the actual existing religious diversity of the nation.
- Perspectives that encourage prejudice, bigotry and discrimination towards fellow citizens, especially women and religious minorities, and towards other nations.
- A glorification of war and the use of force.
- Omission of concepts, events and material that could encourage critical self-awareness among students.
- Outdated and incoherent pedagogical practices that hinder the development of interest and insight among students.

DEFECTED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Joblessness is huge dilemma for the knowledgeable youths of Pakistan. It is one of the main reasons of the increasing poverty. There are thousands of unemployed graduates, who are waiting for the government jobs. The system is yet to be developed. The industrial joblessness is also increasing for the reason that many industries have been closed.

The degrees awarded in social science disciplines compel the degree holders to choose the clerical type jobs. Current job system in Pakistan is faulty. It compels the degree holders to seek government job no matter if it offers a poor salary. Students usually are well aware of the fact that they are perhaps unfit to do a private job. There is an urgent need to change the feeling. It results in the unnecessary demand for the government jobs. Nonetheless, this misfortune of joblessness can be avoided if a logical approach is adopted towards this problem.

The current education system in public universities is less attractive. It has failed to create among the youths an enthusiasm for the real love and enquiry to learn something in true letter and spirit. In government educational institutions the students are discouraged not ask questions pertaining to the course stuff or what is said in the textbooks, and take everything for granted. Surprisingly, those students are encouraged and rewarded who reproduce this often dated and substandard 'knowledge' at the examination time. The reason behind this practice is that those who grade the papers are as much a part of the system. Any variation from the typical responses may certainly consequence in students being penalized (Dawn Editorial, 2003).

COMMUNICATION PROBLEM

Frustration among the employers and recruiters lies mainly on the mastery of English language and the attitude of the graduates as potential employees. Nonetheless, English is widely regarded as having become the global language with the spread of use covers economic activities, science, social, politics and internet. To become competitive in the global market, Pakistani graduates should be proficient in the language most used in global economic activities and knowledge acquisition. Communication skills and the mastery of languages are vital factors in order to get success in career and advancement in life. Other soft skills such as ability to solve problems and interpersonal skills would be an advantage to those graduates who have them. There is a vast amount of articles and news regarding the unemployment issues. The question is, what are the

characteristics that differentiate between those who are able to get a good job and those who are not, once they secured a job at a particular hierarchy in a particular sector with a particular level of income.

STUDENT POLITICS

Student politics has destroyed the peaceful academic atmosphere of the universities of Pakistan. Kalashnikov and Mauzar culture has stricken badly the students who are in the search of gaining something from the universities. Some militant wings of various political parties are capable enough to block and suspend positive academic activities within the campus. They usually pressurize the neutral students, teachers, as well as the administration to meet their vested interests. If the administration fails to meet their demands automatically they resort to violence boycotting the classes, tearing the glass windows of the building and sometimes resorting to direct indiscriminate firing. In local political context of Pakistan it is almost impossible to ban, control or rusticate any of the colleague or leader of political band because sometimes they are the more powerful than any one else in the campus.

POOR QUALITY OF TEACHERS

In Pakistan the teacher's performance is taken for granted. No one cares about his/her credibility and competency. With the introduction of information technology the teaching method is totally changed. Computers have ushered a new era in the world. Therefore, the teacher has the responsibility to make the best use of the modern technology.

The duty of teachers in educational institutions has been revamped in industrial countries of the world. The teacher is not a speaking machine. They need to use audio and video instruments and techniques to make clear and demonstrate their point of view. There is no need to dictate the students or blackmail the students for his/vested interests. Teacher should not be a dictator but a friend of his/her students.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan social science is never considered as important as the physical science. Therefore, the major share of the spending on higher education goes to the physical science subjects. Physical science disciplines are provided the best available physical infrastructure. The teachers belonging to physical science subjects are usually provided more chances getting scholarships and training. As a result teachers who teach social science subjects

do not get enough chances of getting trained in a proper way. That is why the quality of teachers never reaches at par with their counterparts in physical science disciplines.

CURRENT SITUATION

In very recent years due to the educational reforms and the provision of huge funding to higher education sector the situation has somewhat improved. The creation of Higher Education Commission under the leadership of Dr Atta-u-Rehman is a good step. Some drastic measures have been initiated. The number of PhDs in social sciences as well as physical sciences has jumped. Nevertheless, it has been generally perceived that the institutions of the higher education especially the public universities in the country are devoid of the urgent demands of other stakeholders like community, industry, NGOs, and the private sector. Therefore, due to the misunderstanding between the job seekers and the people who give jobs situation remains dubious.

In spite of the all the efforts it has been observed that consecutive education policies and action plans have failed to work or create any impact as those were only well-worded documents, short of substance. All, from policy makers to executers and teachers to parents, failed to achieve as they are either unable to speak up or not ready for any mental agitation. Pakistan needs a sound and even dynamic educational policy at all levels of education. We have to meet the challenges of 21st century with missionary zeal. We need qualified, skilled and trained human resources in all the areas. In this regard, on the top of every thing, we have to build a strong and sound foundation of social science education in order to achieve the goal of inducting students in higher technical and professional education.

CONCLUSION

Education is considered as the vehicle of sustainable economic well-being. No one can deny the scope and importance of social science disciplines. They teach the humanity at large. Graduation with social science needs to be revamped on modern sound footing. There is a need that social science students should be taught courses of information technology and basic know-how of the computers. There is a need to amalgamate the subjects of social and physical sciences because in the present circumstances no discipline stands in vacuum. An engineer, a scientist or a doctor needs to study the social sciences to understand the behaviour, attitude, and psychology of

his/clients. Likewise, a social scientist needs to study the applied science subjects to understand the reality of physical world. As it has been explained theoretically and also through the experience, the status of social science education in Pakistan especially in the public universities appear to be less equipped with the modern needs of public and private sector employers. The research shows the close link between the education and employment. Graduates who are well aware of the mechanism and techniques of modern age get job very easily than those graduates who are devoid of such abilities. The transition from university to workplace with a graduation in social sciences is not very smooth due to substandard education and limited scope of social science field.

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