

# HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

*From State control to State supervision*

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## **Abstract.**

Higher Education forms part of every society. This study focuses on the higher education in Pakistan. It presents development of higher education in Pakistan in which the government has played a major role for forty years.

The higher education system in Pakistan for the majority of the years has remained under the state control; government has played a major role in policy making and implementation. This dependence has given growth to a higher education dependent on the government funds. With an increase in the student numbers, diversification of higher education and with the entrance of private sector has changed the scenario.

The increase in number of private higher educational institutions with government finances shrinking, has given rise to a lot of challenges for the future of higher education in Pakistan. These challenges if not addressed effectively and properly can give rise to number of problems that can have an adverse effect on the development of higher education Pakistan.

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# **1. Introduction**

One of the greatest assets for a nation is its educational institutions. They form an important basis for the development of the country. Educational institutions train, provide skills and open a new world of opportunities and possibilities for the nation. Thus, human resource development and a country's education system are closely related. This is realized everywhere and the relation between national and educational development tops the political agenda in most of the countries.

In Pakistan, education in general and higher education in particular has remained under government control till the late eighties. In the nineties and till the recent years there has been a change with regard to government policies towards higher education placing the government in a relatively new position to higher education. The theme of the thesis concerns how a transfer from state control to state supervision of higher education may contribute to the making of a more dynamic higher education system in Pakistan.

## **1.1. The importance of a working Higher education system**

The rapid means of communication and the digital revolution have opened new horizons for the world. Concepts such as internationalization, globalization, knowledge, culture and life long learning gives a distinctive position to higher education both in a international and national context. Through its contribution to lifelong learning, competitiveness and the pursuit of excellence, higher education plays a significant role in society. The universities of Pakistan will have to meet international standards and produce graduates who can compete globally. Accordingly, higher education institutions must be responsive to the challenges of a rapidly changing and challenging world, the expectations of society, and growing demands from a rising student population.

Higher education is viewed as a source of great potential for the socio-economic development of the country, and it is the conviction that through quality higher education a nation can be transformed into a developed nation within the life time of a single generation. To serve that purpose the higher education system needs to be dynamically adjusting to changing times. Factors such as the distinctive nature of higher education institutions, international mobility of students and teachers, accessibility to computer-based learning, pursuit of research and scholarship, and globalization of economy directly affect higher education systems.

It is also recognized globally that universities are potent agents of development in nation building. They are important in terms of generation, dissemination and utilization of knowledge. They are primary contributors to economic growth being a source of new scientific knowledge, its technological applications, and by training scientists and technicians. The World Bank Report highlights the importance of higher education in these words:

“Higher education is of paramount importance for economic and social development. Institutions of higher education have the main responsibility for equipping individuals with advanced knowledge and skills required for positions of responsibility in government, business, and the professions. These institutions produce knowledge through research; serve as conduits for the transfer, adaptation and dissemination of knowledge generated elsewhere in the world, and support government and business with advice and consultancy services. In most countries, higher education institutions also play important social roles by forging the national identity of the country and offering forum for pluralistic debate.” (The World Bank 1994:1)

Higher education is investment in human capital, it increases labour productivity, technological innovation and produces a rate of return markedly higher than that of investment in physical capital. One dividing line between developed and developing nations is educational and scientific attainments that facilitate economic progress and prosperity. To quote World Bank again:

“The development of higher education is correlated with economic development; enrolment ratios in higher education average 51 percent in the countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Development (OECD), compared with 21 percent in middle-income countries and 6 percent

in low-income countries. Estimated social rates of return of 10 percent or more in many developing countries also indicate that investment in higher education contributes to increases in labour productivity and to higher long-term economic growth, which are essential for poverty alleviation.” (The World Bank 1994:1)

In the modern times, higher education forms the basis for the development of a country. The problem with developing countries including Pakistan is that they have given a relatively low priority to higher education.

## **1.2. From State Control to State Supervision**

Higher education in Pakistan has been under the control of government after independence in 1947. Inheriting a weak physical infrastructure and lack of appropriate funds, the government of Pakistan has been unable to support the higher education system in totality. Funds disbursed were not only directed to the development of education itself but it included other expenditures like the construction of universities, induction of teachers and faculty development, other expenses included salaries and administrative costs of the staff. This laid a heavy burden on the national exchequer and dependency. The total dependence of higher education on government created a system of higher education in which major part of education funds were directed to the running and maintenance of these institutions.

In the late eighties, the establishment of private universities and the governments' incapability to fund a sector growing rapidly resulted in a situation where government became incapable to sustain the higher education system. The establishment of private universities made the government to rethink its role as the sole provider of the higher education. Where the private universities took burden off from the government to fund a large sector it also made an emergence of a state supervision model where government started to support public universities while simultaneously encouraging the private sector out of necessity. As the government funds became insufficient to support a large pool of public universities, the public universities had no other option but to generate funds from itself for sustainability.



This situation at least in the public universities led to generating funds from its own resources and more decision making at the university level.

### **1.3. Restating the purpose**

The importance of higher education in development of a country is unquestionable. In the present world, higher education should be capable of adjusting to the changing times.

In the case of Pakistan, the heavy dependence of higher education on government funds has led to a development in which the state plays a major role in funding as well as in policy making. The state control has made the higher education inflexible as far as the demands of the students are concern. Financial dependence has led these institutions to work in accordance with the policies given to them from the government which leaves no space for decision making at the university level.

In the recent times, with growing number of students, government funds have become insufficient to support such a large sector. Some of the pressure has been taken off by the entrance of private universities. These universities have the resources and the study programs which are attractive to the students.

Pakistan, presently, is facing a transition from state control to state supervision of universities both in the public and the private sector universities. The theme of the thesis concerns how a transfer from state control to state supervision of higher education may contribute to the making of a more dynamic higher education system in Pakistan.

## **2. Approach and background**

This chapter presents the approach, as well as a background to higher education policy in Pakistan used in this thesis.

### **2.1. Approach**

During the study I had the opportunity to meet scholars and administrators from different universities in the public and private sector, as well as from the political administration.

During my stay in Pakistan from 5<sup>th</sup> February to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2005, I was engaged in collecting data, discussing and interviewing with various employees working in the higher education branch in the public and private sector.

Before leaving Norway for the fieldwork, I had prepared different questions and the universities that I wanted to visit. The public universities were in the capital whereas private universities were in the provincial cities.

I visited the ministry of education to get information regarding official documents and policy. In this regard I had the chance to meet government officials serving in the ministry of education. The official documents provided by the ministry gave an overview of the situation of higher education from the governments view. I had the chance to meet Mr. Nadeem Piracha and Mr. Shafqat Islam from the policy and planning wing of education department. These were informal meetings in which mostly the government side was covered. I got copies of education policy documents which were pursued by different government in different eras till the latest ones. Although they had to say a lot about the government's initiative during the different regimes, they were the mostly official version of the situation of higher education which depicted a fairly bright situation

Going through these documents and analyzing different policy matters, I directed my study towards donor organizations like the World Bank, which have been operating in Pakistan and working in different fields including education. My main aim was to get interview with the World Bank officials. Instead I was asked to send questions via emails to be reviewed and answered by experts of the bank. Those questions were not answered. Instead some links to the sites were sent which helped me to get a view of higher education by the World Bank mission in Pakistan

I visited two public universities and two private universities. The public universities are located in Islamabad, which included (Quaid-e-Azam University and Allama Iqbal University). Both universities are funded by the federal government (as all universities in the public sector). I interviewed Professor Dr. Hafiz Chaudry and Associate Professor Mrs. Mina Zulfiqar Ali of the department of Anthropology from Quaid-e-Azam University and Mr. Irfan Bhatti, Assistant Professor, Mr. Khalid Bashir, Assistant Professor, Dr. Gulzar Ahmed, Lecturer and Mr. Masood Hasan Shah, Lecturer, from the department of education of Allama Iqbal University.

I also visited two private universities which included School of Business and Commerce, Rawalpindi and it included from department of Business Administration Mr. Bilal Malik, Lecturer and Mr. Mubasher Ahmed, visiting lecturer. The other university was Al-Khair University, in Rawalpindi. Interviews were conducted with Mr. Shariq Saeed and Faisal Hashmi from computer department. Both were lecturers.

The public universities were in the federal capital while the private universities were in the provincial cities. The universities in the federal capital came under direct control of the Ministry of Education whereas private universities were under the provincial education departments.

Higher Education Commission (HEC) which manages the higher education in Pakistan was also visited. Interviews were conducted with Mr. Muhammad Akram Shiekh, Executive Officer and Mr. Alam Ahmed Khan, Research Associate.

Public and private sector universities, Non Governmental Organizations, Higher Education Commission, and Ministry of Education were the main sources from where I collected the data.

The thesis required study of background to the present situation of higher education for which a lot of information was gathered from government records, especially from the education department and the Higher Education Commission.

The study of literature for this thesis consists of official documents of government of Pakistan relating to higher education including past and current policies of the government. Similarly to study the current situation in the world so as to see the general direction of higher education especially in Europe, how the governments have changed their roles and the latest issues relating to higher education in general.

During the course of this thesis I will present the situation of Pakistan's higher education during the 70s and 80s, during which the higher education remained under the control of state through funding, policy making and formulation of universities by the department of education. Subsequently I will bring out the changes that have occurred after the establishment of private universities and how the system is working now with higher education divided into public and private sector.

## **2.2. A general background to Higher Education in Pakistan**

Pakistan was a colony of Great Britain till 1947 and it inherited universities which were more or less being run by the British government. Universities established in the colonial countries were different from the original ones in the European countries. "Colonial universities were patterned directly on institutions in the metro pole, but often without the tradition of autonomy and academic freedom in the mother country" (Altbach. G. Philip, 1992:40). As Pakistan has also been under colonial rule it was not an exception. A European model of education was imparted in the colonial period. After independence the same universities, inherited by Pakistan, were run in the same capacity as Pakistan did not have the manpower or the

resources at that time to change this model. The newly established government took over the European/British model and followed the tradition laid by the colonial past.

“It is significant that none of the formerly colonized nations have shifted from their basically European models. There were few possibilities to develop independent alternatives. In many cases, traditional indigenous institutional forms were destroyed by the colonizers, as in India when in the nineteenth century the British imposed European patterns and no longer recognized existing traditional institutions.” (Altbach.G. Philip, 1992:42)

“Madrassah is Arabic for school. It has now come to be used in South Asia exclusively for institutions of classical Muslim religious learning.” (Nayyar, H.A., 1998:215). These institutions are present in rural and urban areas. It is interesting that their presence in the urban areas indicate that these institutions are not just limited to certain areas i.e., areas where formal schools are not present. It exemplifies the importance of such schools also in modern times.

These institutions have been present for a number of centuries and dates back to 15<sup>th</sup> century in the Sub-Continent. Before independence, these schools had a set up so students graduating from them were able to get government jobs mostly in administration. After independence in 1947, the system of education was based on the British model of school system, therefore, the policies of the government of Pakistan were more or less directed towards the mainstream educational system. Madrassah education wasn't affected by the education policy rather it was merged with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In this way, instead of reviewing or developing any curriculum for these schools mostly grants and funds were generated which were given to them from time to time.

“The end of state patronage over Muslim religious educational institutions and the virtual dissolution of the religious revenue system by the colonial administration in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to the establishment of a number of madaris independent of state, which cater to particular ideologies and frameworks and which expect its graduates not to deviate from their allotted role.” (Hartung, Jan-Peter. 2006:40)

As these traditional institutions were not recognized by the colonizers it lead to the destruction of such system as students opted for the European model of education.

On the other hand, the lack of autonomy and academic freedom led the post independence period for the government to take charge of this system. The state got actively involved in financing, policy making, curriculum development and induction of professionals also. The universities came under complete control of government and were left to the directives of the government as to how they should be run.

Universities are not static institutions. They change and develop according to the need of the time. The period of 1960s and 1970s saw a sizeable increase in the number of students both in the European and other parts of the world. This affected governments to change the policy so as to accommodate such a large number of students. Similarly the technological development and scientific advancement in the European countries was directly related to the increase in the skilled manpower and to the university education. This period saw a quantitative increase in the numbers all over the world.

“In many areas the very concepts of higher education were being modified, new disciplines or sub-disciplines emerged. Outdated structures of institutional authority and government were being challenged. Admission to tertiary levels of education and training in most national systems changed from a restrictive elite-model to varied patterns of mass higher education.” (Teichler, Ulrich 1993:10)

With an increase in the number of prospective students the universities came in the forefront to accommodate this changing environment. On the government side, financing such situation became more and more problematic.

“Issues of financing of higher education were so much dictated by governments that institutions of higher education remained the happy beneficiaries or the unhappy victims. On the other hand, issues of curricula and of teaching and learning were so much shaped by academics that governments either claimed to respect autonomy of higher education or looked rather clumsy in their interventionist behaviour.” (Teichler, Ulrich 1993:23)

### **2.2.1. Policy initiatives**

The same period in Pakistan saw a number of new policy directives from the government. As more and more money was pumped into the higher education sector, the more it became a burden for the government to control the situation. Policy, planning and financing the higher educational institutions became an issue for the government. Virtually government was controlling the whole higher education system including issues at the university level like induction and promotion of lecturers and professors, this whole development led to dependence of higher education on government's policies and funds.

“The autonomy of higher educational institutes was limited and structured by national intermediary body, but at the same time they were compelled to take action to reduce their financial dependence upon the state. That means entering a range of markets, institutions were more accountable to the state and they became open to a greater variety of values and interests. They also had to develop organizations to manage increased size and complexity. Matrix structures and staff with more varied qualifications and skills.” (Henkel, Mary 2000: 64)

The period of 60s, 70s and 80s which saw a quantitative increase in the number of students moved towards a more qualitative side where governments tried to hold accountable universities by the notions of accountability and quality. These changes led a shift in the role of governments from controlling the universities directly to managing them in an effective manner by trying to indulge in areas where the universities were lacking. In Britain for example:

“Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) was introduced by law, supplemented by ministerial directives, and administered by the body responsible for resource allocation. It imposed universal and permanent obligations. All providers of all subjects at a higher education level in all higher and further education institutions would be assessed at regular intervals. All would be the object of public summative judgements. There were potentially powerful sanctions. If judged unsatisfactory, departments would be liable to withdrawal of funds, if they do not demonstrate improvement, in the longer term, differential funding would be introduced on the basis of comparative quality judgements.” (Henkel, Mary 2000: 74)

In Pakistan's situation, public universities increased the tuition and other service charges to bridge the gap of funding. According to Jamil Salmi (1994), throughout the developing world, higher education institutions have diversified their sources of funding to improve their long-term financial position and become less dependent on shrinking government budgets. In most industrialized countries, institutions of higher education are called upon to utilize their resources more efficiently and to justify their expenditures before the public by demonstrating their appropriate and efficient use.

In Europe, Leslie Wagner (1995) argues four stages for Europe's advancement, initially during the latter half of the 1950s and early 1960s where there was an emphasis on increasing number of students for stimulating technical, economic and social growth. The other stage in the latter half of the 1960s and early 1970s concentrated on the search for restructuring higher education system, touching the issue of curricula, syllabi, teaching and learning on the need to increase the number of students. Third stage experienced by most western industrialized countries in the late 1970s is frequently presented as a shift from optimism to pessimism or, alternatively, as renewed scepticism, frequently interpreted as a collapse of faith in societal planning. Lastly, during the 1980s a new stage of higher education policy was reached in western industrial societies. Once again expansion of higher education was considered desirable or a priority in preparing for the growing international competition based on technological progress and since then the quality in the higher education was discussed.

“Regardless of political system, level of economic development, or educational ideology, the expansion of higher education has been the most important single post war trend worldwide”.(Altbach, Philip G., 1992:44). Similarly technological change and development forms its root in academic research. These are some of the reasons that governments are making efforts to focus on the development of higher education.



### **2.3. State Supervision Model**

Due to rise in the student numbers and inadequate funds available from the government, the state control over the universities started to diminish. A large part of the funds from the government was directed towards administrative costs, which left less or nothing to be spent on the establishment of new universities. According to (Shahid Kardar 1998) in case of the universities, 80 percent of the budget is allocated to salaries, he further states that a major proportion of the expenditure on non-salary inputs has gone into administrative buildings, auditoriums, and mosques, investments that do not enhance the quality of education. In such a case, Pakistan had no other option to look for new alternatives, which included supporting and encouraging the private universities. Pakistan's move towards a state supervision model, therefore, was initiated due to the decrease in the financial support to the universities.

In a state supervision model, policy making and planning mostly falls in the hands of government in general. So on one side the government is involved in policy and planning and on the other side it also monitors that the funds dispersed are effectively and efficiently used by the public universities, further ensuring that a mechanism of accountability is present not only towards government but also towards public by the institution. The government tries to press more for an effective use of resources of the universities and mostly the academic part is left to the universities.

There has been a growing increase with regard to differentiation between academic and administrative arenas. The latter part has been mostly in the control of government which is determined to make university more accountable, effective and responsive to the needs of the public. Governments, in general, are more concerned with the outcome and student numbers entering the job market. This development has made university to adapt to the changing environment regarding its external outlook. Increase in the faculties, easy availability to the prospective students, information about the job market, and increase in the intake of students has made the

universities to move forward from just providing education to selling itself to the consumers.

As the importance of universities grow in the field of national economy, the government will concern itself with higher education even where it is not a major source of funding. Governments concern would be about the effectiveness and value for money of such an activity, the total standard of higher education when comparing it with regional and international standards, its relation to a society as a whole, and about its contribution to the nation's research and development effort.

“The government should ensure that the system serves the public interest, provide at least those elements of higher education that would not be supplied if left to the market, promotes equity, and supports those areas of basic research relevant to the country's need.”(World Bank 2000: 53).

This leads to a greater relationship between higher education and its students and the wider community of interests that draws on its services, so the role of government does not diminish but changes in respect to involvement and expectations. Moreover, the very scale of higher education has already raised the need to identify alternative sources of funding, the more diverse the institutions making up the higher education sector, the more devolved decision-making is likely to be.

## **2.4. Outline**

The following chapters concern the situation of higher education in Pakistan in the private as well as in the public sector, the past and current policies in the field of higher education and the choices and challenges present for the government of Pakistan.

Chapter three presents the governments past polices and a change from a state control model to state supervision model. Similarly going through different literature in general to study how the model has been working in other countries including the emergent issues in this area.

Chapter four involves a more elaborate presentation of state supervision model and its working in the private and public sector, with some major problems faced.

Chapter five includes a discussion on the chapter three and chapter four. Analyzing how this approach has worked for Pakistan in particular and other countries in general.

The final chapter will involve the issues prevailing in the higher education sector of Pakistan, the choices present for the government and conclusion.

## **2.5. Summary**

This chapter involved the discussion on the approaches and background to the main research topic. It started presenting the sources of data collection and relevant literature review.

The higher education in Pakistan has moved from state control to state supervision. After the independence, with meagre resources and few higher educational institutions present government remained the sole provider of higher education in terms of curriculum development, teacher training and induction, and finance. This eventually led to a state control over higher educational institutions.

With increase in the number of students the policies of government were directed for the expansion of higher education. The establishment of private higher educational institutions paved the way for such a development which was duly supported by the government also. These private higher educational institutions were charging a fee that was much higher than the public institutions but it did not hinder their development as their focus was on studies which were in demand and had a job market.

Due to this development, government was able to focus on other issues like quality, accountability and effective running of public institutions. This gave the government to direct its effort more towards policy and planning, effective running of public universities while supporting the growth of private higher educational institutions.

This has created an interesting and challenging situation at the present, making the higher education to achieve goals that require a plan to make the current situation more dynamic with innovative thinking.

### **3. Governance of Higher Education in Pakistan**

According to Isani and Latif Virk (2004) demographic trends in Pakistan indicate a youthful population. Currently Pakistan's 13% of the total population is in the age group 17-23, which amounts to almost 20 million in numbers. It is estimated that by the year 2010, this age group will be about 25 million in numbers. However, the enrolment in the tertiary sectors in Pakistan is only 2.6% of the relevant age group.

The above presents both a challenge and an opportunity. If this large reservoir of youth is not properly trained and channelled into nation building, it could end up tearing apart the very fabric of society.

The historic trend in Pakistan has been that despite pious pronouncements, education has never received its due allocation of funds. The commitment of the government towards education has never manifested itself, so that even non-monetary steps for improving educational standards were never taken. Another shortcoming has been that even the educational institutions that are functioning, could never get their due funding in their recurring budgets to make them operate efficiently.

#### **3.1. Situation of higher education in Pakistan**

The Situation of higher education in Pakistan is not impressive. After 56 years of its existence it does not find itself in an enviable position. Out of 177 countries, its ranking order in terms of human development profile comes to 142 ([www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)). Seen in the perspective of human development indicators its profile in providing basic education, basic health care, safe drinking water, adequate nutrition, energy consumption and gender inequities presents a bleak picture.

If we compare Pakistan with other countries in the same region the picture becomes more interesting. A graphic picture is vividly provided by Dr. Mahbub ul Haq as

“Pakistan’s social and human indicators make dismal reading. Two-thirds of total adult population and 77 percent of its adult women are illiterate. Combined school enrolment is only 37 percent. Basic health facilities are available to only half the population. The maternal mortality rate is high at 340 per 100,000. One-fourth of newborn babies are under weight and malnourished. Both the coverage and its quality of basic social services are coming under increasing strain every year because of a high population growth rate of 3 percent a year. Thus, a low human development and a high population growth rate are locked together in a fatal unending embrace.” (Ul Haq, Mahbub, 1997:38)

Though Pakistan has tried to improve literacy, its current male and female literacy of 59 percent and 30 percent respectively, is far below other countries in the region. Pakistan, since its existence, has failed due to a number of reasons to make effective use of education for its development due to a number of problems, some of which are discussed in this chapter. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2003-04) literacy rates for male and female are estimated at 66.25 percent and 41.75 percent respectively.

### **3.2. University structure in Pakistan**

Universities in Pakistan have come into existence through Acts of the National Assembly or Provincial Assemblies. Universities are incorporated on a more or less uniform basis in accordance with an Act which provides common features of university government and management. Other universities have copied the Punjab University Act, 1884 which was drawn up on the pattern of the University of London. General universities in Pakistan are teaching and affiliating bodies.

Typically, a Pakistani university is headed by a Chancellor (who is the Governor in the case of a provincial university and the President in the case of a federal university). It further has a Pro-Chancellor (the Minister for Education for the province), Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor, chosen from the senior professors of the university, is appointed by the Chancellor to assist the Vice-Chancellor. Other administrative heads are the Registrar, the Treasurer, the Controller of Examinations, the Resident Auditor and the Librarian.

The authorities of the universities are generally the Senate, the Syndicate, the Academic Council, the Board of Faculties and Studies, the Selection Boards, the Advanced Studies and Research Board, the Finance and Planning Committee, the Affiliation Committee and the Discipline Committee. Senate, considered to be the supreme authority of the university, is a large body comprising university officers, professors, and members of syndicate, Deans, Principals of Colleges, eminent persons, elected junior staff and representatives of students in some cases.

The syndicate, consisting of 20-25 persons chaired by the Vice-Chancellors, is the chief executive organ of the university and includes representatives of academics. The Academic Council is the academic body of the university and is responsible for laying down proper standards of instruction, research and examination and for regulating and promoting the academic life of the university and the colleges.

At present the appointment of the office of the Vice-Chancellor is highly politicized and the office enjoys enormous powers. The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the Chancellor, and the Vice-Chancellor holds office by the choice of the Chancellor who may remove the Vice-Chancellor without any reason. This practice has not only resulted in the appointment of persons not suitable for the post but also generated feelings of insecurity on the part of the Vice-Chancellorship. Consequently, the policy and the actions of the Vice-Chancellors are highly amenable to the demands of different pressure groups resulting in a weak decision-making process culminating in administrative, financial and academic indiscipline. The appointment of the Vice-Chancellor without any proper system, his discretionary powers as executive and administrative head and serving at the pleasure of the Chancellor is a major cause of concern. There is no prescribed qualification for the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor.

The financial support for universities comes overwhelmingly from the Federal Government, and is channelled to them by the University Grants Commission (UGC), an agency of the Federal Government established for the supervision of higher education. However, Pakistan's universities operate under legislative acts

passed by the Provincial Assemblies. The Governor is by law Chancellor of the university and thus its highest executive body. The Vice-Chancellors are appointed by the Provincial Executive must answer to the political imperatives of the provinces. The Federal Government does not have significant influence over other organs of university governance.

According to (Isani and Virk 2003) pressures are inexorably brought to bear on provincial legislative and executive authorities to expand access by building new campuses and enlarging old ones, to open new courses of study, to hire more people, to increase non-salary related allowances of personnel, even to lower standards of admission or for the award of degrees. Knowing they need not assume any responsibility for the concomitant costs, the provincial authorities instruct the university leadership to proceed forthwith in the indicated directions even when the Vice-Chancellors and Bursars have not perpetrated the initiative in the UGC. The UGC has neither the political muscle nor the professional resources to serve as an effective evaluator and filter for these demands on the public purse. By the time the UGC is involved, most initiatives are not merely statements of intentions about future action; they have already been publicly announced and often are already nominally functioning on the ground in the provinces. Thus the UGC can typically do little more than pass the financing problem upward, through the equally powerless Higher Education Wing of the Ministry of Education, to the Federal Ministries of Finance and Planning.

The divorce of administrative responsibility from financial responsibility means that federal, provincial and university authorities are not held accountable for the overall management of the university system. It also precludes rational planning and control of the system. In an environment where tough decisions are required nothing significant can be accomplished to improve universities until this duality of management is not ended. Such anomaly present in the system further creates a problem to make the system effective and result oriented. University leadership can only be improved by bringing in full-time, appropriately qualified professionals,



rather than hiring political appointees, with the attendant risks of interference and patronage.

### **3.3. State Control**

Universities in Pakistan are corporate autonomous bodies as provided in their Acts and by the declared policy of the government in this respect. The autonomous status is generally respected by the government. However, the relationship of universities with government needs to be seen in the broader perspective within which a system works. Universities in Pakistan are autonomous so far as their internal governance is concerned, but subject to certain constraints as provided in the university acts.

The provisions in the Acts relating to the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and Pro-Vice Chancellors by the Chancellor and nominations by the government to university senates and syndicates, all provide the government with a certain amount of control over the affairs of the universities. Further, the inclusion of the inspection clause in the Act of the universities, which entitles the government to cause an inspection or inquiry in respect of any matter concerned with the university, gives an overall authority to the government over the university affairs. In the past, such a clause has been invoked by the government in the case of certain affairs. Above this, there is a control exercised by the financial mechanism through funding of public universities. This enables government to control the growth of university education. The fact that all the statutes passed by the universities are subject to sanction by the provincial or the federal government, as the case may be, also tilts the balance in favour of the government.

#### **3.3.1. University Grants Commission (UGC)**

The introduction of the University Grants Commission in 1974, now replaced by the Higher Education Commission as a coordinating agency between the government and the universities by means of persuasion, if not by legal sanctions, is a grey area

whereby the government retains an upper hand to guide the universities in the broader perspective. Through the organ of Higher Education Commission (HEC), the government exercises influence over the universities.

In addition, under the 1973 Constitution, a number of important matters in the educational sector have been placed on the concurrent legislative list, in respect of which the Federal Parliament has the power to make laws. These relate to policy, curriculum, planning, syllabuses, books, standard of education and Islamic education. The federal government has assumed the role of overall policy-making and co-ordination of educational development, promotion of research, building of institutional capability, and development of manpower in the country. The Act for the Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks, Maintenance of Standards of Education, 1976, gives the federal authority the power to ensure that nothing is introduced into education that may be repugnant to national ideology.

In this situation, the functional aspect of the university comes under the control of government in most of the areas.

### **3.3.2. Funding**

Since 1979 the federal government took over the entire funding of the universities. The fee structure was subsidized by the government. This heavy dependence on federal grants has historically left universities under-funded and dependent on government maintenance. The funds are insufficient to allow these institutions to perform the functions they were established for. According to Shahid Kardar (1998) in view of the heavy claims on the budgetary resources of the federal and provincial governments, they cannot continue financing the steeply rising expenditures on different levels of education. To ease the financial constraint to the expansion of educational services and to improvements in the quality-related inputs, the provincial governments will have to mobilize additional resources, including enhancement of user charges, especially for tertiary level education. Mobilizing their own resources becomes necessary as the universities have been receiving less than what they have

been requesting. To generate more funds most of the public universities have started self financing schemes and have also increased fee and other related charges. These self financing schemes are mostly run in the demand oriented faculties mostly in computer and business studies. Encouraged by the experience of self financing, the universities have even launched some programmes on full cost basis.

“Almost 75 percent of the university budget is spent on salaries and allowances, while 15 percent is allocated to academic activities, 8 percent to other utilities and virtually no funds are left for research. University fees have remained low, as are the user charges in the public sector universities. Student fees cover only 10 percent of unit costs. The cost of hidden subsidies, up to 30 percent for transportation, gas, water, electricity, rent, telephone, office supplies and building maintenance etc keeps on mounting.” (Mahmood, Nausheen 1999:32)

All this demonstrates low-level cost recovery, which results in heavy dependence on the government and increasing public funds. During the nineties, majority of public sector universities were in serious deficit positions and the government had to salvage them by one time grant. However, in recent years there has been some effort on the part of the universities to increase fees and other user charges. Because of that, the financial health of the universities is improving.

### **3.3.3. Increasing enrolment**

Currently universities are facing an increase in the number of students. This increase in number is not matching the resources present especially in the public universities. As a result, there is limited access to higher education and many students are forced to get admission in non-recognized institutions and others more towards private educational institutions.

In such a situation, where the federal government has the responsibility of providing finances and curriculum needs, the structure of the governing body of public sector universities is in such a way that political interference and favouritism makes it more difficult for a public sector university to perform to its maximum. This is because the

head of the higher education institutions in public sector is nominated or appointed by the President of Pakistan. Similarly Head of the university does not have any problem in appointing administrative or teaching staff for the educational institutions hence making the structure of the university more ambiguous.

With so much external interference it becomes difficult for the public universities to perform uninterrupted, as this trickle down in the whole structure of public universities. “The chronic neglect of the social sectors in general, and of the education in particular is of the reason that the government spends only \$ 3 per capita on activities important for human care, compared with \$ 130 spent by South Korea and Malaysia” (Haq, M. 1992:11).

#### **3.3.4. Issues of faculty and staff**

Lack of presence of qualified teachers in the public universities is another problem being faced by the public universities. Qualified manpower is a prerequisite for advancement of knowledge, research and for the overall socio-economic development of the country as universities remain in the forefront before the students enter their practical life. The teacher becomes the central figure of the whole process. Over the years the system has developed in such a way that public universities provide little incentive for hard work. University teaching staffs once employed in public sector universities enjoy long tenures. Seniority and availability of posts govern the principle promotion for teachers as far as the college teachers are concerned, while university teachers have to compete for appointment at each stage for openly advertised posts. To help promote a healthy research program at any university, should it be Pakistan or elsewhere, well-qualified people with research background should be available. Due to lack of adequate training facilities for university teachers, the present position of teachers with Ph.D., degree in the universities is alarmingly low. “The faculty strength has not increased significantly in the last five years, and in the year 1999-2000 all the universities combined have a faculty of 7684; out of these only 2212 have Ph.D. degrees that accounts for an

overall of 29 percent holding PhD degrees” (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2003-04:124)

The situation at the M.A. and M.Sc. level is that a masters degree is awarded after 16 years of education, while in the USA a Bachelor degree is awarded after 16 years of education, this means that in Pakistan the universities are staffed with internationally under-qualified persons and Pakistani degrees have problem of recognition at the international level also.

The following table will further clarify the situation;

Country	Scientists and engineers per million of population	Technicians per million of population
Japan	5677	869
Republic of Korea	1990	349
Singapore	1284	583
Malaysia	326	69
Turkey	209	23
Indonesia	181	--
Sri Lanka	173	51
India	151	114
Philippines	90	35
Pakistan	54	76

Source: UNESCO 1995.

The above table shows that according to the international standards Pakistan ranks at almost at the bottom in case of scientists, engineers, and Technicians per million.

#### Students Enrolment in All Pakistan Universities 1989-1990:

	Physics	Mathematics	Engineering	Chemistry
M.Sc.	939	1070	374	1110
M.Phil.	66	53	0	74
Ph.D.	30	6	0	52

Source: UGC 1990

The above table shows the student enrolments which after the masters degree seems to be almost non-existence. It negates any positive trend toward research also.

### 3.4. Units

In the public sector, from the very start, Pakistan inherited a very weak base of university system. According to Isani and Virk(2004) there was only one university, the University of Punjab at Lahore (established in 1882) at the time of independence in 1947. It looked after the entire area of Pakistan excluding Sindh, which was affiliated with Bombay University (India). Sindh University received its charter in 1947 for higher education. Arts and Science colleges were 40 and 5 divided into male and female respectively. Enrolment figures stood as 13500 males and 1100 females with an overall 11 professional colleges.

The above table shows inheritance of only two universities at the time of independence with a meagre enrolment of 13500 which only included 1100 females and overall 11 professional colleges

All the universities, except the University of Punjab, therefore, are the product of post - independence period. Also the general universities, which were established subsequently, followed the model of the University of Punjab both in the affiliating and teaching aspects. The diversity of courses remained traditional and institutions have been slow in introducing newly emerging disciplines.

With independence higher education received greater attention. Initially the pace of development was slow. Seen in the background of the development of decade, the

number of universities /degrees awarding institutions remained restricted to four. The next decade saw the growth of six more universities/degree awarding institutes. “The number increased to 18 during the period 1967-77, and during the next decade, between 1977 and 1987, rose to 26, the number increased to 43 from 1987-1997”(Hoodbhoy, Pervez 1998:25). The period of late nineties has been a period of exponential physical expansion in the history of Pakistan. In the coming years the number is expected to grow faster in view of the greater participation of the private sector and rise in the enrolment of students. From 1998 to date a record number of 57 universities/degree awarding institutions have been established.

Years	Development of universities/degree awarding institutes
1947-1957	4
1957-1967	6
1967-1977	8
1977-1987	8
1987-1997	17
1997-2003	57
Total	100

Source:HEC 2004

There are now 45 public sector universities and 29 in the private sector. Apart from the universities there are 9 degree awarding institutes established in the public sector and 17 in the private sector. Thus the total number of universities/degree awarding institutes both in the public and private sectors is 100 as shown in the table below:

Universities	Degree awarding institutes	Total
Public – 45	9	54
Private – 29	17	46
Grand total – 74	26	100

Source:HEC 2004

In Pakistan, university education has remained exclusively in the domain of the State and was treated as a public service and funded by the state to the extent of 95% of the budget. The fees therefore remained very low; no entry tests were conducted, as there was no pressure on the universities to admit students. There was no private degree awarding institution for almost 4 decades until 1985.

“The public universities in Pakistan differ in establishment and of the different courses they offer. Most universities are relatively young. Eight were established during the 1970s and six during the 1980s” (Hoodbhoy, Pervez 1998:62). Traditionally, the university character has been confined to teaching and affiliating functions and conducting examinations through a network of colleges. Thus the functions of the universities were teaching and examinations. Research function of the universities was minimal and funding was scarce. Since the independence almost a dozen educational reports and six major education policies were produced.

### **3.5. Categorization of universities**

Universities in Pakistan can broadly be categorized into general and professional universities. The most dominant feature, however, is the general category. The professional category includes engineering institutions, agricultural, medical, management sciences, arts, architecture and others.

“Apart from the universities, higher education is also provided through 754 science, arts, degree colleges and professional colleges.”(Isani & Virk 2003:167) These colleges are affiliated to universities directly; degrees are awarded from the universities these colleges are affiliated to. Some affiliated colleges also run post-graduate courses, and are duly recognized by the universities for this purpose. Universities also ensure common academic standards by a common syllabus.

Another function of public universities is inspection of the respective colleges which come under its degree program and to see that adequate facilities of staff, buildings, libraries and laboratories are provided and maintained. Other than this, the



universities have nothing to do with the staffing of degree colleges, neither are they concerned with the colleges internal administration, which falls under the jurisdiction of provincial departments of education. An affiliated college is either run by the government or administered privately.

By and large, the universities in Pakistan impart education in arts and sciences at the honours and post-graduate levels. In the past, professional education was, in a way, kept out of the direct control of the university but was allowed to be maintained in constituent or affiliated colleges. Professions were given less importance in the scheme of university education.

### **3.6. Affiliation**

All the colleges are affiliated to the universities as far as examinations and the award of degrees are concerned. Higher education is divided into graduate and post-graduate courses. Some of these courses take two years but honours courses require three years, engineering four to five years, medicine five years and agriculture four to six years. Some of the new universities run four-year undergraduate courses. University mostly caters for graduate (M.A. /M.Sc) and post graduate level (M.Phil. PhD).

The system of affiliation seems to have contributed significantly to the deterioration of academic standards in the country and has had less attention from the government for investment and improvement. “More attention, however, has been given to the universities at post-graduate level: university level enrolment has expanded 98 times, compared to a 30 fold increase at college level, over the past five decades. Generally teaching at pass level has continuously been ignored, and this has given rise to a crisis in quality of education” (Safdar, M. The Daily News 1996)

“To diversify higher education and to increase facilities for research, 6 area study centres, 10 centres of excellence and 6 Pakistan study centres and several other centres of advanced studies have been established under the aegis of the University

Grants Commission” (University Grants Commission 2001:22). They are located in the universities but outside their control, leaving the universities with just the degree awarding function. They are funded by the Ministry of Education and governed by independent boards chaired by the respective Vice-Chancellors.

“There are two subsets within the higher education domain in Pakistan—students that attend colleges, and students that attend universities. The total number of students in Pakistan’s higher education system is 475,000 which translate into a higher education enrolment ratio of 2.6 percent. Of these 475,000 students, only 139,000 attend universities. This means that the total university enrolment ratio in Pakistan is less than 0.8 percent: fewer than 8 of every 1000 Pakistanis between the ages of 17 and 23 attend university. This represents the dire lack of access to higher education for most Pakistanis.” (Higher Education Reform 2002:5)

### **3.7. Autonomy**

All the universities are corporate autonomous bodies as provided in their Acts and by the declared policy of the government in this respect. The government generally respects the autonomous status. The provisions in the Acts relating to the appointment of Vice-chancellors and Pro Vice Chancellors by the Chancellors and nominations by the government to university senates and syndicates, all provide the government with a certain amount of control over the affairs of the universities. Furthermore, the inclusion of the visitation clause in the Acts of the universities, which entitles the government to cause an inspection or inquiry in respect of any matter connected with the university, gives an overall authority to the government over the universities affairs. In the past, the government in the case of certain universities has invoked such a clause. Most important, however, is the federal funding of the universities (federal grants now constitute 50% of university income). This is obviously a serious constraint, enabling the government to control the growth of university education. The fact that all the statutes passed by the universities are subject to sanction by the provincial or the federal government, as the case may be, also tilts the delicate balance in favour of the government.

The establishment of University Grants Commission in 1974 acted as a coordination body between the government and the universities. UGC did not have any legal functions as far as it is related to establishment of new universities and funding by the government education department. Still it retained its hold over the public and private universities by its functions of recognition and financial control.

Through the constitution of Pakistan the government of Pakistan holds the legal powers to make new laws relating to policy, curriculum, planning, syllabuses, books, centres of excellence, standard of education. The federal government has assumed the role of overall policy making and coordination of educational development, promotion of research, building of institutional capacity and development of manpower in the country. The Act of the Federal Supervision of Curricula, textbooks, Maintenance of Standards of Education, 1976, gives the federal authority the power to ensure that nothing is introduced into education that may be repugnant to national ideology.

Among other problems faced by the higher education of Pakistan is of quality. The public sector universities have different problems as regard to quality, which is not only institutional but also structural. One of the reasons that can be attributed to such a problem is the lower spending of the government on the public universities, whereas “Pakistan has about the same per capita income as Sri Lanka and the Philippines, adult literacy rate in Pakistan is barely 36 percent (males 47 percent and females 22 percent) compared with 89 percent in Sri Lanka and 94 percent in Philippines” (Pakistan Economic Survey 2003-04:31). Furthermore, the federal government in Pakistan is the main provider of policies and funds for higher education institutions; this has further increased the pressure on the government as the provincial governments mainly focus on the primary and secondary education level. So the federal government has historically formulated policies, designed curriculum and particularly during the 1980s provided much of the finance for universities.

### **3.8. Initial steps to a state supervision model**

Financial constraints and the reluctance of the government to finance higher education in response to increasing enrolment and to find alternate sources of funding pose a big challenge.

Public universities on the other hand are trying to shift the cost of the study programs to the students. Total government grants to universities during 2000-2001 add up almost to Rs. 3.34 billion (2.9 billion for recurrent expenditure, Rs. 0.4 billion for development and Rs 0.04 billion for research). This brings out the main cause of problem and that is the major source of income. According to the World Bank(1994)

“The financial base of public higher education can be strengthened by mobilising greater share of financing and cost sharing from student themselves, who can expect a higher income level throughout their life as a result of attending a university. A growing number of developing countries are moving in the direction of cost sharing. An Income form student fee in public institutions is 22% of the recurrent expenditure in Vietnam, 36% in Chile, 40% in Jordan and 46% in South Korea.” (World Bank 1994:41)

The foregoing arguments make a strong case for sharing the cost of higher education by students. However, it also needs to be noted that this principle of policy ignores the element of equity.

“Achieving greater equity of participation in higher education is important for economic efficiency as well as for social justice and stability. Providing equitable opportunities for participation in higher education is an important element of policies to increase integration and the representation of traditionally disadvantaged groups in economic and political leadership.” (World Bank 1994:11)

The growing demand for access to higher education had put great strains on universities in providing quality education. Till 1990s, the state was responsible for the provision of funds to universities in Pakistan and it amounted to around 90 percent of universities budget. As the government was providing the education on subsidised rates it only accounted for 1 to 3 percent of the university budget. With a demand from increasing number of students and the government support on a decline

it forced the public universities to start self-finance scheme in selected disciplines. The private universities charging high tuition fees and the willingness of the students and the parents to pay gave an impetus to self-finance schemes in the public sector also.

### **3.9. Summary**

There has been a rise in the number of students entering higher educational institutions both at public and private universities. Universities in Pakistan are facing a lot of problems and these include increase in the number of students as well as the university structure present since independence. Heavy dependence on the government funding and a lot of interference from the government in the running of the public universities from the appointment and promotion of professors to the appointment of the highest office i.e., Vice Chancellor has led the university structure more politicised and in the effective running of the universities. State control over the years have led to such a situation but as more and more universities are being established it is leading to a system in which state control has started to loose control and a state supervision model is emerging.

## **4. State supervision and private higher education**

Private sector in Pakistan is successfully running private schools and colleges in Pakistan. Their entrance has opened new possibilities for the expansion of higher education in Pakistan. Their resources, expertise and experience can be utilized for a positive development.

### **4.1. State supervision and private higher education**

Private educational institutions in Pakistan have been present in the education sector even before partition. Generally, the role of private sector was confined to the school level in particular, and to some colleges in general. Christian missionaries ran some of the leading educational institutions in the sub-continent, and a few by Muslim trusts; however, there was no presence of private universities.

Since 1947 when Pakistan got independence and until 1972, private sector ran a number of schools and colleges. In 1972, this development came to an abrupt end when with the introduction of new education policy private schools and colleges were nationalized making them dependant on the national exchequer. This sudden change in the policy of government affected the growth of private sector. The outcome of this policy made the government to bear the expenses of these institutions and lowered their achievements as it became extremely difficult for the government to provide teachers and other technical facilities to the private schools and colleges in addition to the public schools, colleges and universities already run by the state. According to the National Educational Policy (1998) it states that as a result of nationalization 18926 schools, 346 madrassahs, 155 colleges and 5 technical institutions were given under the government control.

In 1979, this policy was reverted and the private sector was allowed to establish private schools and colleges. It took around five years or more to establish the confidence of the private sector to enter in the higher education sector. In 1984,

finally two private universities were established one in Lahore and one in Karachi. In 1984 a Private Educational Institutions Act was passed which provided for the registration of all private institutions with a Registration Authority, the constitution of a managing body for each institution and conditions for registration.

This act although allowed the private sector to enter the field of education and supported them, still it managed to establish a hold of government by making the private sector institutions to register itself with a registration authority.

However this did not hinder the private sector, as it managed to establish itself and a census conducted by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan (1999-2000) yielded following results:

Region	General	Professional/technical (undergraduate)	Professional/technical (graduate and post-graduate)	Vocational	Total
Pakistan	33893	433	265	1505	36096
Islamabad	309	10	12	31	362
Punjab	22855	263	157	688	23963
Sindh	5943	86	42	386	6457
NWFP	3995	73	48	335	4451
Balouchistan	465	1	6	53	525
FATA	326	-	-	12	338

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics 1999-2000

The above table shows an enrolment in general education in private institutions is about 96% whereas in technical and vocational institutions is only 4%.

The distribution of institutions in respect of urban and rural areas is as under:

Region	Rural	Urban
Punjab	42,1	57,9
Sindh	11,2	88,8
NWFP	58,9	41,1
Balochistan	28,2	71,8
Federal Administered Tribal Areas( FATA)	100	0,0
Islamabad	48,3	51,7

Source: UGC 2001

The above table shows that private educational institutions are mostly present in urban areas, an overall of 62% of these institutions are in urban and 38% in rural areas.

Enrolment by type in private institutions:

Region	General education	Technical education
Punjab	96,7	3,3
Sindh	94,7	5,3
NWFP	95	5
Balouchistan	89,5	10,5
Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)	98	2
Islamabad	82,5	17,5

Source: UGC 2001

The above table shows enrolment in general education in private institutions is about 93% and about 7% of the institutions are in the technical education field.



## **4.2. Development of private higher educational intuitions**

Private educational institutions in Pakistan are mainly situated in the urban areas. These private institutions are mostly in the general education sector around 92% as shown in the Table on page 35. This is because the overall higher education in Pakistan is tilted towards general education. The government spending has increased for the higher education but not enough to keep pace with the growth of the education sector.

“During the first three decades after the independence in 1947, education was accorded a low priority in the plans for national development as far as the government spending is concerned. The overall share of the education sector increased from around 4 percent to up to 13.4 percent till the mid 1980s, its share in total government spending averaged 7 percent, rising from 6.5 percent in 1970-71 and 5.4 percent in 1980 to 7.8 percent in 1984-85, compared with almost 13 percent for all in Asian countries and close to 15 percent for all developing countries. Pakistan dropped from fourth position in 1970 to the last place in 1980 in participation rates at the primary and secondary levels, and from second to last position in enrolment rates for higher education. However, government expenditure on education increased sharply after 1985, from a modest level of 1 percent of GNP to 2.7 percent.” (Jalil, Nasir 1998-47:48)

The increase in government spending was still not enough to meet the increasing demand. For this reason the private higher educational institutions entered this field, and they were able to establish themselves where there was easy availability of student's i.e. mostly in the urban areas.

According to the World Bank

“In some countries, growth in the supply of private sector schools and universities can be explained by the failure of the public sector to keep up with increasing or changing demand. Other countries have explicitly encouraged the private sector. The evidence is clear, however, that where public resources fail to keep up with increasing demand especially for secondary and higher education, private schools enter to fill the gap.” (World Bank 1994: 10)

The year of 1985 can be regarded as the entrance of private sector in the higher education sector. Till the late eighties the development was slow, government was pursuing the structural reforms of the World Bank, it was under pressure to privatise public utilities including public educational institutions. Private sector was therefore, encouraged to take part in the higher education and its development was regarded as a positive development. Government pursued a liberal policy towards the private sector entering the educational sector. It also privatized such faculties in government universities which were most attractive for the students for example business and computer education. The National educational policy of 1979 and 1992 allowed the private sector to establish schools, colleges and universities with broad guidelines for the establishment of private education facilities.

The education policy of 1992 included specific indications towards a greater participation of the private sector, so the trend, which laid the foundation for the entrance of private sector from 1985, continued in the 1990s and affirmed by the government. The education policy mentioned the problem of maintaining quality in the private higher educational institutions but nothing specific was mentioned as how to deal with standard of quality. This problem remained a major issue during the 1990s as the number of private institutions kept on rising, with government's reluctance to take any serious policy making initiative made many non-serious actors to enter this field just for making money. With a large number of public universities to manage it became difficult to keep a close eye on the development of private universities and hence this made a lot of sub standard institutions emerge which had improper faculties, inadequate land and even no proper classrooms for the students. Mostly these institutions were opened at places depending on the availability of students and offering courses, which were attractive for the students.

### **4.3. Higher Education Commission (HEC)**

In view of the autonomous status of the universities, the government felt the need of a coordinating body to look after the general growth of higher education in the country. Accordingly the University Grants Commission (UGC) was established in

1974. The concept was taken from the former UK University Grants Committee (UGC). Among other functions, its statutory role was to inquire into the financial needs of the universities and to disburse grants, to support and coordinate the academic programmes of the universities, and to advise the government on the problems of higher education. In 2002, UGC was replaced by Higher Education Commission (HEC). The difference lies in the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of every university who meet regularly for viewing general problems faced by the universities and for evolving a consensus through exchange of ideas. It has assumed a form of platform for the expression of the views of the universities.

The role of the UGC (University Grants Commission) /HEC (Higher Education Commission) was and is, however, limited by virtue of the fact that it comes under the controlling authority of the Ministries of Education and Finance, which control the policy as well as the finance. Because of this UGC/HEC follow the instructions of the government rather than making independent decisions. Due to the federal funding of the universities, the UGC assumed the important role of disbursement of grants. The UGC served as a clearing house for development schemes of the universities, to provide continuing support to Centres of Excellence, Areas Study Centres and Pakistan Study Centres.

“Where the UGC model survives as on the Indian sub-continent, it is more like a government regulatory agency than a committee of academics, and mainly advises government on allocations of funds among institutions. Nevertheless, in India and Pakistan, the UGCs have taken a positive measure to try to improve quality by setting up centres or departments of excellence and trying to increase salary levels so as to recruit better qualified staff.”  
(Harman Grant 1994:38-39)

It continued its modest support for faculty development, research fellowship and research programmes, and organized pre-service and in-service training of university teachers. Nevertheless it's coordinating, persuasive and advocacy role dominated its other roles. Giving the limited jurisdiction within which it worked, the UGC was regarded by many as an arm of government rather than a representative of the universities.

Although due to internal problems of public sector like funding and structural problems, the government still followed an open policy towards the private sector. It tried to encourage the private sector in establishing itself in the 1990s but this trend had its shortfall also. Many private universities were established and are still running which are present to make money from this trend. There are a number of universities in the private sector that do not even fulfil the basic requirements like the physical structure and does not have the expertise to run a proper course. Government negligence to take any legal action against them and a general lack of awareness by the public has aggravated the situation. Over the years this problem has become severe as the students graduating from these institutions were not able to get jobs and their degrees were not recognized by the government sector namely by the University Grants Commission / Higher Education Commission which has also the responsibility of recognizing the universities after a series of inspection.

#### **4.4. Problems faced by private sector**

Private universities have become part of the higher education sector and some of them have really excelled to become a model for other universities. There are a lot of problems that private universities face.

There is a deficiency of qualified staff available; a full fledged faculty is very difficult to form by the newly established private universities. As it is the same market that the private sector explores, they also need qualified faculty for running their institutions. The success of the private sector lies in the fact that it depends on the trends of the market. Private sector has developed on the demand side. The requirements of the students are kept in focus. Private sector is able to attract persons due to high pay structure and have the liberty to employ persons that have excelled in their fields. Mostly these persons are in the same line, for example, a private institution running business studies program are more attracted to employ persons that are in the same field. There are few private universities running their programs in the technical fields like engineering and agriculture. Due to this trend, the private sector has been able to establish itself in the education sector.

#### **4.4.1. Recognition**

In Pakistan mainly all the educational policies and their formulation depends upon the political regime and their tenure. The educational policies have long term goals and sudden change in the government brings in a new educational policy. This has made the education sector with a lot of policies and overlapping goals. The different policies announced are mainly referred to the political regimes that were in power and as soon as the new government came a new policy was announced with some minor changes.

In the late 90s, the question of recognition of private higher educational institutions became more and more at the forefront. Due to the involvement of non-serious actors and sub-standard educational facilities the government came under more and more pressure to reform such a situation. The private sector, which had enjoyed the encouragement of the public policy till the mid 90s came under scrutiny and the government, announced a new policy in 1998. The new policy announced by the government took into account the factor effecting the education sector and especially higher education. It realized that there was an unprecedented demand of higher education due to a number of factors such as demographic factors, value of higher degrees, expanding size of middle class and increasingly broad base of education at the lower level.

The main problems identified by the policy document was limited access to higher education, tilt towards arts education, low investment, politicisation of higher education, out dated curricula and system of education. In order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, the policy emphasized that higher education would need both structural as well as functional changes. The structural changes that would be needed relate to private provision of higher education, autonomy to increasing number of institutions, decentralization of higher education, amendments in the acts of the universities and of the University Grants Commission, development of efficient system of cost effectiveness, responsiveness, public accountability, liaison with industry and a system of accreditation for quality control. The functional

aspects include faculty development, revision of curricula, academic audit, corruption free system of examination, selectivity of higher education, and diversity of higher educational institutions.

In the same policy document it was decided to increase funding for education from 2.2% to 4% of GNP. Although the policy document laid down the main targets for broadening the base of higher education but the targets were almost the same as given by earlier policies. It specifically did not address the private sector that was growing its base rather it made the recommendation for the private provision of the education that was neither clarified nor taken into consideration as to how it will be achieved. Private universities kept on growing in numbers as the policy did not lay any recommendations for an active role of government. This further aggravated the situation as the main damage was done to the students.

The degrees offered by the private universities which were not recognized by the Higher Education Commission did not hold any credibility in the job market. The students suffered from such a situation as they lost their time and money on such degrees. With government funding on a decline and such institutions on a growth made the situation worse.

The policy of 1998 never saw any progress due to the reason that the government was changed and as usual with the change in the government the new policy was enacted.

With a new government in 1999, the same process was started again but this time the government approached the same problems with a new agenda. Instead of announcing a new policy the government announced the "Education Sector Reforms: 2001. This document did not mention any increase in the education budget rather it continued to pursue an open policy in respect of private and public sectors to enhance access to higher education. Similarly the new document encouraged the universities in the public and private sector to generate their own funds. This is

recommended by increasing user charges and self-finance schemes in the public sector.

The package identified targets as well as implementation strategy. It laid down that 5% access to higher education of the relevant age group and 60:40 enrolments between public and private sectors will be achieved by 2004 through institutional diversity, differentiation and proliferation of disciplines and pursuing a liberal policy of private participation in higher education and by expanding intake of public universities. The document declared that the government shall enforce National Educational Testing Service and the National Council for Accreditation and Quality Assurance as regulatory mechanisms and to encourage merit based admissions. In the same document it was suggested that funding of higher education would be raised from 0.39% to 2% by the year 2010.

#### **4.5. Expansion of higher education**

The market of higher education is expanding. This has made many private institutions to enter the field of higher education which are of doubtful standing. Without establishing proper physical facilities and proper faculty provision for proper education and meeting minimum academic standards, these institutions are issuing degrees that have no value in the job market. They pose a serious threat to national system of education, legitimate credentials and the integrity of accredited institutions of higher education as well as having serious international consequences for the value of Pakistani degrees.

The period of nineties opened new grounds for private sector. The private sector in higher education is opening up new avenues of cooperation. The most important change is seen in their national outlook in terms of appointment of faculty and intake of students. Public sector universities have traditionally been confined to their regions for the intake of students and teachers and are supply oriented. Private universities, working on the basis of market forces, are admitting students and recruiting teachers nationally in demand oriented disciplines. Fee structure and

salaries of the staff and faculty are also different from the public sector universities. Most of the private sector universities are mono-discipline universities. Others are seen proliferating and franchising their programs to a large number of private sector institutes.

Hesitation of the government in funding higher education means that it is abdicating from its crucial role of provision of higher education to its citizens on merit, equity and just system. That demands a total reversal of past policies and evolving a new role of the state on education. The private-public partnership is another related challenge that demands a reversal of the role of the state. However, the strategy that is now emerging in Pakistan tends to count on the private sector to provide higher education while diverting the resources of the state to primary and secondary education.

Between the dilemma of conflicting claims of demands of higher education and escalating cost, higher education, it seems, will continue to get less funding from the government in the coming years. Now it sounds as if the role of the government for this sector would be confined to policy perspective only. The reality of the time, therefore is that university education should look elsewhere or to itself and raise necessary funds not only to survive but to sustain as well.

The fee issue is the critical area, which is criticized mostly by the public, terming these institutions as “commercial institutions”. It is observed that fee structure makes the entry of rather middle class students difficult to these institutions. This trend will ultimately open ways to the monopoly of lucrative jobs by the rich and privileged class and will marginalize the poor students in the job market.

There is a big concern that unregulated higher education in the private sector will lead to further deterioration in quality. It can on the other hand increase competition and enhance the quality of higher education. The increased competition is already on the rise. Despite the fact that government cannot fund higher education and is being left to private sector, nevertheless, still the general public view it as a public good



and would therefore like to have some control over the development of private sector in terms of demand of a regulatory body on fees and quality in order to protect the public from those who just give out degrees without suitable facilities and curricula. It is generally realized that without government regulations, areas with high demand and low public investment could bring in more deterioration of standards. That brings in the need for a stringent regulatory body.

“Academic staffing is a major problem in many countries, with an overall shortage of well-qualified staff, serious staff shortages in regional institutions, and, unfavourable staff-student ratios. Many systems experience a brain drain from universities to the private sector, where salaries are higher and promotions are on merit, and to overseas appointments.”  
(Harman, Grant. 1994:34)

Same is the case in Pakistan, the private universities are also taking advantages of the abilities and services of the public sector universities staff on a part time basis as most of the private sector universities have very few permanent faculties. The private universities seems to get the best teachers from the market as well as from the public universities by offering them salaries that are not possible to get in the public universities.

#### **4.5.1. Self financing**

Although the introduction of self-financing scheme in Pakistan is quite a sensitive issue, because it touches the aspects of social justice and educational equity. It is generally realized that the level and quality of teaching and research is declining as a result of over-crowding, deteriorating physical facilities, poor library resources and insufficient equipment. Governments funding to universities is insufficient and too little to expect a major advancement in the quality of education. The issue of rising pressures for admission, problems of quality and internationalisation of higher education are some of the major challenges that Pakistani universities are facing. One way of meeting these challenges is to generate sufficient funding for themselves. Once the universities are able to raise funds, it is certain that they would have more freedom of action and autonomy in their governance. Financial dependency on

government puts the universities more and more under pressure and undue interference by the government sector. The public universities have achieved this by increasing the seats in the faculties that are attractive for the students for example medical, engineering, computer and business education.

Particulars	Government Grant	Self-finance Scheme	(-) Deficit (+) Surplus
All universities (1995-96)	1853,331	140,606	-1,037
All universities (1996-97)	2046,453	203,902	+68,743
All universities (1997-98)	2212,917	169,218	+199,654
All universities (1998-99)	2119,673	300,663	+142,481
All universities (1999-2000)	2269,546	303,716	+158,963

Source: Economic Survey 2003-2004

The above table shows that there is a clear relation between the increases in the self-finance schemes in the public sector making the percentage of growth as surplus over the period of time. Government grants in the same period have not increased as per the rate of increase in the self-finance schemes that has doubled from 1995 to 2000.

#### **4.5.2 Tuition**

There are two main perspectives of tuition fee in higher education. One perspective, which has been in place until 1980s viewed higher education as equal to public service provided by the state, therefore it needed support from the government to nurture it. The precise nature of public good in higher education is interpreted that higher education improves individual lives and enriches society. Higher education, it is contended, raises wages, which makes the society and the individual richer and

improves social and cultural life by raising tax, better health care, and improved institutional capital. Societies with highly educated persons are more dynamic, competitive and successful. The problem with state funding is that it may result in lower level of participation by students because of lower funding by the government and high wastage and inefficiency of the system. State subsidies in public sector universities, as has been experienced in Pakistan, results in low cost recovery, high wastage and student's indiscipline.

One problem, however, with state subsidy and low or no tuition fee approach is that it fails to reflect the private returns students get in the form of higher wages throughout life.

“The high rates of return at all levels of education justify large investments by individuals. They also justify self-financing by families or students, through immediate or deferred cost sharing. However, not all groups can afford the cost of higher education and that brings the role of the state to the forefront. If education were to be provided under market conditions, only those who can afford to pay tuition fees could enrol. This would result in under investment and income inequalities would be preserved for generations, since education is itself a determinant of life time income.” (World Bank 1994:55)

For these reasons, it is believed that governments must be providers of higher education and offer finance for higher education. Improving higher education is in the country's interest and has legitimate claims on public funds. Educated and skilled manpower is indispensable for a modern society and higher education is responsible for upward mobility. That makes a case for broadening access to higher education, particularly from disadvantaged groups and women and providing tuition and support to students who cannot afford. The opposition to fee is on the ground that it excludes poor people from higher education. It seems that the pattern of participation in higher education does not reflect the socio-economic composition of the population. Students from lower socio-economic background have lower participation in higher education. Therefore the benefits of participation that flow to those with higher qualifications are thus distributed unequally across the population. Since the public funding for higher education comes from the whole population through general taxation, benefits go primarily to higher income groups. Thus the

benefits of state subsidies paid by taxpayers revert to the rich class. A response by policy makers is to provide student support schemes such as loans, scholarships and grants as it is in public interest to reduce cost barriers.

The other perspective is that public investment in higher education is socially inequitable in the sense that university graduates are already from the affluent class and therefore do not deserve public subsidy. A public consensus is growing that higher education is a private good primarily benefiting the individual rather than a social investment.

“Although estimates have been made of the economic returns from broad categories of education and training, little seems to be known about the social rate of return from a country’s investments in highly specialized types of scientific training, particularly at the doctoral level.”(Mansfield, E. 1994:121)

It is argued that for a modern economy the major cost of higher education should be borne by the individual rather than by society. Under this system, tuition fees are set as a proportion-typically less than half of the educational cost per student. Government funding covers most of the remaining cost. It is replacing the long held view that higher education is a public good and that collective action is needed to support higher education institutions. The new realities have made the prevailing system irrelevant, thereby making a case for seeking additional resources and realized from those who benefit from higher education.

#### **4.5.3. Cost recovery through tuition fee**

Many countries have now moved towards a system of higher education that is based on the principle of cost recovery. The 1980s brought a worldwide trend towards the increase in fees in public higher education. This was contrary to the 1950s and 1960s when the dominant view was of free public education. The chief justification for inexpensive higher education was that it is considered as a major route for social mobility. Therefore, the possibility of poor people being excluded from education by fees was considered inequitable.

In the late 1980s, according to the World Bank (1994) in only 20 countries tuition fee account for over 10 percent of recurrent expenditure. Sub Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe had little or no tradition of cost recovery in public higher education. In the 1990s fees were increased. In china, for example, the average fee in 1995 has reached 25 to 30 percent of recurrent costs. In Singapore, differential fees were charged by academic discipline, increasing from 10 percent of the recurrent cost in 1986 to 20 percent in 1992-93. In Pakistan it amounts to 10 percent of public sector universities budget and almost 100 percent in private universities.

The reluctance of the government to fund higher education and increasing demand for access to higher education makes public higher educational institutions to charge more from the students. This reinforces the contention that the state is receding from its responsibilities. This shows that the idea of a degree as a private good that benefits the individual rather than a public good is gaining acceptance and that the cost of higher education is shifting from the public purse to the individual. An optimal policy would be full cost recovery by public institutions, with students paying fees out of parental income and out of their future incomes, through a loan scheme or a graduate tax. In some countries, 100 percent of recurrent cost of student welfare services, such as, food, and housing and 30 percent of instructional costs in being realized.

Though the cost recovery creates its own problems, it tends to encourage institutions to raise their tuition fees and build this expenditure as a means for increasing the revenues they receive from students. This is seen from yearly increase in the fee of institutions. Another criticism is that it tends to reinforce inequities already existing in the system.

Cost sharing by students is done generally by charging tuition fees in the public sector institutions and also the elimination of subsidy from allied activities like transportation, hostel charges and cost of meals.

“Vietnam is charging 22 percent of the recurrent expenditure in the form of fees. China, on the other hand, is charging about 9 percent of the unit costs for regular students. However, supported students who gain admission on a lower entrance examination than that required for regular students pay tuition fees which are 10 times higher than those paid by the regular students. In China the self-finance students pay almost the full recurring cost of their tuition.” (World Bank 1994:32)

In Pakistan, tuition fees in public sector universities cannot be increased beyond certain limits as social justice and equity cannot be ignored by any state. There are always segments of society who are unable to look after them and ignoring them is bound to lead to social problems of acute nature. Moreover, full cost recovery of fees from the students would lead to detachment of the state from higher education in the matters of funding. The state cannot afford to totally give up its social responsibilities. Consequently, the rise in fees to recover a reasonable cost of the recurring expenditure is a desirable objective but it must be accompanied with adequate provision of support needy students in the form of grant and loans. Grants to the students have been criticized on the grounds that the students do not feel obligated towards society and the help given as grant is presumed to be the right of that person. Moreover, the students are quite oblivious of the extent of subsidy that he receives for his education.

#### **4.5.4. Private sector: fee structure**

The private sector in Pakistan is already working on charging fees from students and the fees meet over 90 percents of their running costs. Consumer oriented approach followed by the private universities has made it possible for them to survive in the market. Similarly private sector has gained ground where the public universities failed, like the provision of demand-oriented education, results and a strong relationship with the market demand and future trends. With a steady expansion in the education sector the government is trying to put a check on the growth of this sector. During the establishment of a private university the Higher Education Commission takes into consideration the physical facility and the faculty

requirements. The tuition fee and other user charges are mostly left to the university to decide.

#### **4.5.5. Recognition of private universities**

In Pakistan, as there has been a steady growth of private universities thus it makes it difficult to assess the exact status and value of such institutions, programmes and qualifications. It is in this context that the Higher Education Commission developed a set of critical criteria for the recognition of private universities/institutions of higher education and their programmes and qualifications.

The universities and other degree awarding institutions also need their degrees to be accepted by the Regulatory Authorities as equivalent to other recognized degrees. If this is not done, then it is obvious that the candidates possessing such degrees that are not recognized or equated and have no market value and hence will cause considerable disadvantage to the holders of such degrees. The equivalence of degrees was done by UGC and now by the Higher Education Commission.

Educational institutions offering degrees at the graduation level and beyond can also seek affiliation with existing universities and degree awarding institutions. The privileges of affiliation mean that the institution can offer courses leading to certain degrees, which are recognized, by the university to which it is affiliated. The affiliating university has the academic control, while the administrative and financial control rests with the management of the affiliated institution. This can happen both in public and private sector. Consequently, every institution, which has a programme leading to a degree, has two options, to seek affiliation with a university or institution, which already has a charter, or to seek a charter of its own either from the federal government through parliament or through the provincial assembly depending on its location.

There is no formal requirement of accreditation of educational institutions like in the American system. Once an institution gets a charter, its degrees are recognized and

equitable with similar degrees awarded by other chartered institutions. Consequently, an educational institution to be fully effective and to have its degrees recognized must not only have a charter of its own but must also comply with the regulations and directions of the professional bodies relevant to its functioning.

Historically, the universities in Pakistan have been established in the public sector. The private universities came in 1980s. The private sector universities are demand oriented whereas public universities provide a full range of studies. The limited places in public sector higher educational institutions, the resource constraints of the government, the high rate of return associated with higher education and the impact of globalization mixed with the expanding size of the middle class has had a dramatic affect in the increase of the student population aspiring for admissions in the institutions of tertiary level. The inability of the government to cope with this demand has created a high demand for the establishment of private institutions.

#### **4.6. Requirement for the establishment of universities**

For the establishment of a new university the government has laid down some guidelines in regard to the financial stability, which is as follows:

Endowment fund (secured in the name of trust/society)	Rs. 50 million (not applicable in case of public sector university)
Tangible assets in the form of land/building etc	Rs. 100 million
Working capital	Rs. 50 million (not applicable in case of public sector university)
Total	Rs. 200 million

Source: The Higher Education in Pakistan:2003



In case of a new degree awarding institute of higher education

Endowment fund (secured in the name of trust/society)	Rs. 15 million
Tangible assets in the form of land/building etc	Rs. 25 million
Working capital	Rs. 10 million
Total	Rs. 50 million

Source: The Higher Education in Pakistan:2003

In the case of the private sector, the HEC goes into greater details, the sponsors prepare a project document, which contains all the details outlined in the HEC guidelines. The project document after preliminary examination is referred to a panel of two experts in the relevant fields to assess the viability of the project. The HEC after due notice to the sponsors constitutes a committee to inspect the physical facilities available on ground. In case the sponsors do not have a running institution, then the HEC has to carefully examine the ability of the sponsors for continued funding to the project. Once the HEC is satisfied a No Objection Certificate is issued. The sponsor can approach the relevant government, may it be a provincial or federal level, the relevant government processes the case and, if satisfied, a charter is issued.

Government is at present giving clear guidelines for the establishment of new universities in the private sector. This has really encouraged the private sector to enter the field under the supervision of government.

#### **4.6. Summary**

University expansion both in the private sector and public sector is underway. The public sector with its limited resources is trying to catch up with the growth of higher education. This has been mentioned in the policy documents and with new universities being established.

Private sector has grown considerably on the national and provincial levels. It reflects a commitment for providing quality higher education to students with a price tag that covers the expenditure and expenses by the students. In a country like Pakistan this has created many problems with no public or private loan schemes available. In the future, Pakistan will see a growth of private higher educational institutions and government has to come up with proper guidelines and policies to make this system work for the benefit of the students. This needs functional policies and effective regulations.

## **5. Discussion**

The situation of higher education in Pakistan is under change. Formerly the government remained the sole provider of higher education with regard to finance, curriculum development, faculty induction to public universities and above all even the promotions in the public universities. As this remained the practice till the mid-eighties the development of higher education in Pakistan was in the hands of government. With the establishment and growth of private higher educational institutions the situation in the field of higher education changed with emergence of new challenges.

### **5.1. Funding problems**

Problem of funding goes back as far as the independence of Pakistan. As the higher education was not only the area where the government has to disburse the funds, primary and secondary education funding was also there. With a literacy rate at around 12 percent overall at the independence both in the male and female education, the primary focus of government was to fund primary and secondary education and to increase the physical facilities to far flung areas. The total expenditure on the higher education has been around 2.7 percent overall.

With higher education at the mercy of government it led to a lot of involvement of state in the affairs of the universities. The government has taken a turn since the 80`s with the entrance of private higher educational institutions and implementing new rules and regulations for the establishment of universities in the private sector. This has changed the scenario in the higher education in Pakistan. The situation can be described as “Before 1972, the government owned 93 percent of primary schools and 88 percent of middle schools and the private sector operated 40 percent of high schools and 51 percent of colleges” (Fayyaz, Baqir: 177-178)

Funding has been a problem facing the higher education for long. Government has tried its best in some cases to increase the funding by using different techniques like increasing private sector universities, establishment of Higher Education Commission to check the public universities development and regulating the uniform funding to different higher educational institutions.

The dynamics of the higher education regarding funding in Pakistan has changed in the current situation. As far as the government universities are concerned government is more interested and focused that the funds disbursed are utilized in a proper manner. It has tried to cut the administrative costs as much as possible and to divert them for increasing the faculties and making sure that research funds are readily available. The government at present has to make sure that the public universities are made accountable and they are run in an effective manner. This is done by giving the public universities more powers to run independently and to adjust according to the needs of the market. Government is pursuing a policy in which the private sector is given a lot of share in the development of higher education by allowing them to open universities and giving incentives for universities established in areas where there is a dire need. Other steps in the public sector include the opening of faculties for the private students, having fee structure equivalent to that demanded by private universities and where there is a student demand. The funds generated by it are in turn used for the university in general and the university has full access to such funds and can use it for its own development.

Although the government in 1974 establishment University Grants Commission which had the purpose of taking care of the development of higher education in Pakistan but it lost its role with the distribution of higher education at federal and provincial level. It became ineffective over the passage of time as it did not have any legal framework to check the development of higher education. In 2002 it was changed to Higher Education Commission, which is more effective and has the legal power to check any irregularity in the public or private sector. It also has the resources for such action as it includes members from both the public and private sector universities for any support. It has also laid down clear policy and regulations

for the establishment of private universities so as to check any sub standard universities being operated just to generate money. The Commission also has the responsibility for distributing funds to public universities; it has taken the initiative to discuss with each individual university their specific problems and to develop a process in which to check that the funds given are utilized in a proper manner.

In the last ten years the situation has changed with the presence of private higher educational institutions. With a mushroom growth of these institutions in urban areas and a few in rural areas where there is a dire need for such institutions not everything can be left for the government to look after. Government is trying to encourage such institutions but it has its own limitations. Higher Education Commission is the main institution which deals with the establishment of private universities; it receives and reviews applications for the establishment of new private universities. Any recognition can be given to the institution or its degrees if a physical facility and presence of a full faculty is present. As more and more universities are being established the HEC does not have the resources to go to each and every university. This leads to the establishment of private university which is up and running before any green signal is given by the HEC. In this situation, funding effects the growth of higher education both in the public and private sector, and leads to a dilemma where non availability of funds in the public sector and presence of funds in the private sector both have repercussion for the growth of higher education.

Government of Pakistan needs clear policy and regulations for the disbursement of funds to the public universities and to check that enough funds are present for the establishment of private university.

One route can be more involvement of private sector in developing the institutions of higher education in Pakistan. The contribution of private sector is recognized worldwide even in the education sector,

“In fact, there are strong indications that the almost exclusive attention given to changes and issues in the public sectors, may be short sighted and misleading; because, there is a rapidly emerging ‘third sector’ in

higher education which is to a large extent privately organized and financed and which in many countries is already providing professional training for large numbers.” (OECD 1991:27)

An active involvement of private sector can lift load of financing of higher education solely by the government of Pakistan. It can also improve the condition of higher education by making quality new institutes which can help improve the quality of higher education in Pakistan overall. This, then, is the main window open to the country for a dramatic increase in numbers, so as to cater to the vast demand that exists within the country for higher education and also to meet the imperatives of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Private and public universities need to be developed harmoniously as supplementary and complementary to each other and not as rivals.

## **5.2. Rapid increase in student numbers**

At the international level, with the imperatives of globalization in the coming years Pakistan has to develop manpower that is able to compete on a global basis. Therefore, university education comes at the forefront. Currently the enrolment in the tertiary sectors in Pakistan is only 2.6 percent of the relevant group. Countries in the neighbourhood are having enrolment as high as 8 to 11 percent of the age group. Consequently, the vision 2010 for higher education in Pakistan prepared by the Higher Education Commission is envisaged an enrolment of 10 percent of the age group in higher education by 2010. In other words, the places of higher education need to be increased from current 0.6 million to 2.5 million by year 2010.

The National Education Policy 1998-2010, lay down in terms of numbers the goal of 5 percent of the age group to be achieved by the year 2010. Even with this modest target, enrolment in the higher education sector needs to be doubled. The question would be what route should be adopted to achieve a significant growth in terms of numbers in higher education in Pakistan?

The rapid increase in the number of students joining higher education institutions in Pakistan is not a special case of Pakistan. There is an increase in the number of students worldwide. The problem faced by higher education in the mid-1990s arises from a system which has become mass in its size but which remains elite in its values.

“The recent external changes of numbers, structures, finance and governance have not been matched by appropriate internal changes of values, purpose and activity.” (Wagner, Leslie. 1995:21)

With an increase in number of students to a more diverse in terms of its socio-economic and age profile, the universities both in public and private universities need to develop faculties that are in demand and are required at the national level. According to the World Bank:

“If public higher education institutions wish to increase their overall level of financing or improve their financial stability, mobilising a greater share of their revenues from non-governmental sources will be essential..... eliminating non-instructional subsidies, introducing (or increasing) fees, pursuing donations, and undertaking income-generating activities will provide institutions with a more diversified and stable funding base.” (World Bank 1994:16)

In Pakistan’s case, the government is also trying to pursue the same policies. It is encouraging the private sector to improve its capacity to increase the number of student intake. Government has also laid down new procedures to recognize the private universities. The fee structure in the public universities has been increased substantially.

To make the university education more dynamic in Pakistan, higher education need diversity both in the public and private sector. This means that they need to develop such programs and proposals to make the student attract towards their programs. As universities become more and more corporate in nature the students are now termed as customers, meaning that the universities need to sell their programmes to the potential customers, in this case the students. At least the public universities in Pakistan need to diversify its faculties and programs in a manner to attract the ever

increasing pool of students. The private sector on the other hand in Pakistan is mostly working in the specialized areas where they already have a huge market like the urban areas. Although this process can lead to development of an elite group of institutions which already are part of private higher education, still this can start a process in other universities in public or private to reorganize them in a manner to make more and more attractive to students.

Recently the government through Higher Education Commission is distributing information about universities in the media. Periodically, information is given in the leading newspapers on the status of various public universities about their new programs and faculties; information about private universities is also published about the recognition and credibility of degrees. As more and more information is available it is helping the students to choose the universities that are really professional in nature.

With new private universities entering the higher education system, there is a greater need from the government to check such growth. This has to be done in positive manner to make such development fruitful. Government has to make sure in effective manner that such institutions and universities developed in the private sector can help the overall development of Pakistan's higher education.

Other factors that can make the higher education in Pakistan more dynamic is to provide incentives to the financiers and sponsors to establish universities in rural areas. Those universities should be encouraged that offer technical and professional education as establishing more general universities will not help diversify the existing higher education system.



### **5.3. Recognition of private higher educational institutions and inspection**

An important function of Higher Education Commission is the inspection and recognition of private higher educational institutions. The introduction of this was due to the entrance of sub-standard institutions which were offering courses and programs without proper physical facilities and the degrees were given to students which were not recognized in the job market. The standard of studies was dubious and there was no proper faculty present, rather it was temporarily hired from the public universities on day to day basis.

With the introduction of this system of inspection and recognition of private universities, it has really helped to check the standard of such institutions. Frequent inspections are made to these newly established institutes and universities which even extend to one or two year to check that proper physical facilities like classrooms and laboratories are present and to make sure those proper faculty members is present on a permanent base. If such inspections encounter any such shortcomings such universities are given a time period to fix the problem.

Such institutions which do not adhere to such inspections are prosecuted and even shut down to avoid any further complications at latter period. Government from time to time publish list of such colleges and universities in the national press to inform the prospective students from entering such institutions. This has and is really helping the higher education in Pakistan to check sub-standard universities in the private sector.

In Pakistan's case every institution which has a programme leading to a degree, has two options, firstly, to seek affiliation with a university or institution which already has a charter, secondly, to seek a charter of its own either from the Federal Government through Parliament or through the Provincial Assembly depending on its location. Thus, such inspections become necessary for the newly established universities.

To make the higher education more dynamic the government should include the public sector universities for the inspection also. Such inspections can point out the short comings of the public universities which can really help them in formulation of policies for the future. These inspection reports should also be made available to the public through media, internet and publications. These inspections can focus on general and particular points, the physical structure, strength of the students and teacher availability can come in the general section, whereas new study courses, in-service training and adequate research funds can come into particular areas which need to be focused on.

“As demands for public intervention are constantly rising, while increases in public expenditures is unlikely to be forthcoming, the pressure to justify and show concrete results of public spending increases in many fields. This trend affects higher education strongly, because both student numbers and resources needed for research continue to rise in most countries.” (Teichler, U. and Winkler, H 1994:131)

#### **5.4. The question of quality**

Development of new universities in private sector and the current universities present in the public sector leads to the basic question of quality in such institutions.

“Various factors can explain this heightened attention to quality. One is the expansion of higher education systems. The rapid growth of the student body and the accompanying increase in the number of fields of study, departments and even whole institutions have triggered questions about the amount and direction of public expenditure for higher education. Another factor lies in the simple fact that the limits of public expenditure have been reached in many countries.” ( Vught, Frans van., 1994:4)

The challenge present for Pakistan now and in the coming years is to make sure that quality is maintained in the public and private universities.

The question of quality is very difficult as it could be applied to many areas in higher education. It can be related to curriculum, students, institutions and the teaching staff itself. The measurement of quality in higher education has to be applied in many areas if we take the example of Pakistan.

There are a number of factors that affect the quality of higher education in Pakistan. As there is a tremendous increase in the number of students over the last decade, a large number of students need to be accommodated in a number of institutions. These numbers of student affect the institutions of higher learning also. More and more institutions are needed to match the influx of students; this makes the government to make hasty decisions to accommodate such a large number of students. Government has laid down a lot of policies in this respect. One such is increasing the capacity of institutions to make more students available for admissions. Similarly making some departments in the universities like the business studies and computer departments to take students in the evening also. This has made university introduce self finance schemes in the universities for covering the extra expenses. To make it more workable the universities have to come with some more practical suggestions. The universities in this respect have to increase the number of faculty members in the universities drastically. As the teachers are not readily available, even if they are very few are willing to work on the salaries being offered by state funded universities. This has to be changed. To make quality teachers available, the salary structure of the university teachers have to be made more attractive or to make it more matching with the salaries available in the private sector. In this respect the government has increased the salary drastically in the government universities; similarly the government is also trying to send the current teachers abroad for special courses and even for long study programmes so that the capacity building is done. This is still in the initial stage and has not met with so much positive response. As these courses and study programmes offered by the universities are mostly decided in the ministry of education and final decision is taken there, it is seen by the academic community in universities as very dubious.

To make such programmes work, sincere effort is needed, for this purpose such programmes and study should be given to the university itself to decide by them as to which teachers and staff members should be sent. A clear procedure should be laid down as to how to make these programmes functional and to yield results for the higher education itself. Similarly two things are required for staff to produce quality. First, staff needs a suitable environment in which to work. They need the tools of the trade and they need to work with systems and procedures which are simple and which aid them in doing their jobs. The environment that surrounds the staff has a profound effect on their ability to do their job properly and effectively. Among the important environmental features are the systems and procedure with which they work.

Laying down good and workable procedures by itself does not produce quality, but if procedures are poor or misleading it makes producing quality extremely difficult. Second, to do a good job staff needs encouragement and recognition of their successes and achievements. They need leaders who can appreciate their achievements and coach them to greater success.

To achieve quality in higher education one should keep in mind what the customers want not what the institution decides is best for them.

### **5.5. Goal oriented approach**

To make the university education more dynamic and purposeful, the number of general universities should be reduced and the government should try to convert and extend the remaining universities into specialized universities meaning modern technical training institutes, offering programmes of study and courses with direct economic utility, upgrading and improving the existing general universities through massive infusion of resources, both financially and intellectually. By intellectually it is meant that simply there is not enough manpower available in Pakistan to teach the natural or social sciences at each of the present universities. Similarly the teachers available right now need to be concentrated. This is because the development that is

taking the world right now needs to move to a vocationally-oriented education. This is obvious by the labour exported to the Middle East and the United Arab Emirates, hardly any skilled labour is exported to these countries.

At present, the university tenure is life-long which makes the teachers to enjoy the tenure as long as they are in the job without any pressure for losing their job on inefficiency. It should therefore be converted to a three to five year contract which should be reviewed only after thorough scrutiny of performance. This scrutiny or evaluation should be done with the help of an external team, with members drawn from various countries. It would be very useful in making fair evaluations because it would be removed from the exigencies of local politics.

To improve quality from the student side, quota system should be minimized. Pakistan practices quota system in public universities in which the students coming from rural and far flung areas are given more points to the admission in a university system. Although it encourages students from disadvantage areas to enter these institutions but rather a uniform system of admission test should be given for the admission in the universities.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Findings**

From the discussion the following findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Government of Pakistan is trying to ensure that the funds allocated to the public universities are utilized in a proper manner, making their financial allocations more accountable.
2. With the establishment of Higher Education Commission which has the primary job to oversee the development of higher education in public and private sector, is trying to apply effective means so as to check the growth of private universities through their active involvement.
3. There has been a growth of sub-standard private universities which are mostly in the urban areas, this has been also a concern for government, steps are made to counter this establishment by not recognizing their degrees and running information campaigns in the public media.
4. The tilt of public universities in the past has been mostly in the arts and social sciences studies, an effort is being made to balance this through developing universities in public and private which impart scientific education.
5. Government support and tax cuts are being provided to private universities that are established in rural areas so that prospective students have easy access to higher education.
6. Government is using the resources of print and electronic media to inform the general public about the new educational programmes introduced in the public universities. Information about the private universities are also given about recognition and inspection results that are conducted from time to time.

7. Incentives are being provided to financiers and sponsors of private universities in areas where there is a dire need for establishment of universities, such incentives include providing land on subsidized rates, tax exemptions and financial support.
8. Inspections are being carried out regularly in universities in private sector so as to ascertain that basic educational standards are maintained in all universities, any shortcomings are informed to the universities concerned to rectify them in a given time.
9. Quality of higher education is also a concern for the government, meetings and seminars are held by Higher Education Commission involving public and private university representative to discuss this problem. Recommendations reached are tried to implement in both sectors.
10. Teacher tenure in public universities are also under discussion, new posts created and teachers hired are given time to show performance which is measured by research work and publications.

## **6.2. Final comments**

The higher education system in Pakistan is under change. There is a transition period in Pakistan in which direct government control is losing ground for a state supervision model is emerging. Government institutions whether they are colleges or universities are facing a lot of new policies which are making a fundamental change in the higher education institutes. Government has introduced a number of policies which include change in the curriculum, admission policies, fee structure and the induction of new departments in the existing public universities. On the government side, financing and increasing physical capacity of the existing institutions are major issues. To increase financing, the government is looking for new alternatives rather than the traditional one by just adding more to the already designated budget. It is in

the process of making financial mechanism result oriented and the existing resources to be used to the maximum.

University education is a complex issue; it revolves around a system that is constantly changing due to the internationalization, the sheer size of the whole enterprise in terms of students, staff and budget size, including its social and economic purpose. “Public expectations about the access to higher education, government concerns about the role the universities can play in innovation and economic development, and the application of the principals of market economics to the university systems of all countries have created a new context for higher education”(David D. Dill and Barbara Sporn 1995:13). In such an era, higher education in Pakistan is facing a lot of issues. There are a lot of areas that are to be addressed for making higher education in Pakistan a dynamic one.

One of the problems is of financing. Financial problems cannot be laid or attached to government funding only. Pakistan inherited a system of education that was before the independence. It was dependent on the finances of the government. This continued after the independence also. This dependency created a lot of problems. With every passing year its outlook became solely dependent on government finances and policies made at the government level were to be delivered, to be implemented and not to be questioned. This made the higher education totally dependent on government. Even the hiring and the firing were done at the ministry levels, making the faculties and syndicate powerless.

“Public support to higher education remains essential to ensure its educational, social and institutional missions. Therefore, the state should take the main responsibility for funding this sector. But, since the challenges for higher education concern society as a whole, the solution to this problem must involve not only the state but all stakeholders-students, parents, the public and private sectors, local and national communications, authorities and academic associations, as well as regional and international organizations” (Rao, V.K. 2003:105-106).

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The political system in Pakistan saw a shuffle of governments at national and provincial level. This resulted in lack of continuation of policies, and new policies were made with the entrance of a new government creating overlapping of policies and regulations. Over the years, financing of higher education was attached to the government. Recently the government is trying to use it as a tool that can be used to check the institutions that are not yielding any results. Such institutions need urgent attention. On a micro level such institutions are facing many other problems like lack of capacity to intake additional number of students, teacher shortage and inadequate administrative structure.

The Higher Education Commission established solely for the improvement of Higher Education in Pakistan has taken cognizance of such issues seriously. The fee structure has been reviewed by the government education department and much of the subsidies are taken off to make the earnings of the government universities more realistic. Similarly, self finance schemes are also being introduced. The real problem in such a case is being faced by students who are not able to pay such high fee and are therefore automatically left out of studies. Such issues raise concerns towards the social side of the problem. Such corporate culture is finding its way into the university education; the government needs to check such development. With a dearth of quality higher educational institutions, high admission fee, and a large number of students present, the current situation presents a challenging situation.

Private higher educational institutions can be an alternative for the present, as these can form and absorb a large number of students. Such areas are being searched by the government, and a presence of a large number of private educational institutions at school, college and university level indicates this.

With new institutions being established in both sectors, financing remains not only the sole problem nor the physical expansion but a lot of other things are involved to run the universities in an effective manner, that is, adequate staff and the number of diverse departments. This is the reason that the existing professors and teachers are in great demand by private sector and hired on maximum wages.

Other problem being faced is teacher training. There is no central or provincial department present for teacher training and in-service training and courses are present but only in the centre or at the provincial capitals.

The private sector in Pakistan is playing an effective role in developing more institutions hence increasing the student's intake. If we closely look at the private sector we find that it is based on an elite system of education where anyone can avail education at a price that is demanded by the institutions. Similarly more and more institutions established in and around the urban areas reflect the same picture. The government through Higher Education Commission takes notice of such development where such institutions are given preference over the other in terms of recognition and state subsidies which are more realistic in their fee structure and have a merit system for the intake of students rather than paying students.

In this situation, the government universities are in a better position because the major intake of students in these institutions is on merit rather than who is able to pay. The self finance schemes established in various departments charge students but the fee is not that high as that of private institutions. The difference is around fifty percent.

It seems that the whole higher educational system in Pakistan, be it public or private, is in transition. There are some major areas on which there seems to be a clear strategy of government that is to build the physical capacity of the existing public higher educational institutions and to increase the number of public universities. As the existing public institutions are being stretched to its limits many other problems are also visible such as staffing, quality, teacher training. The policy of the government is indicative of such facts and represents a clear consensus on these problems.

Recently the higher educational funds disbursed by the government has been increased first time in the history of Pakistan. Such a step has helped the public institutions to help them survive but the government requirements are also becoming

more and more indicative of the fact that such institutions needs to show results and improve drastically. This is not just the external requirement put forward by the government rather it is from within the institutions.

Through the Higher Education Commission in Pakistan the government has started to employ teachers from foreign universities on a pay scale that is relatively much higher than the normal pay structure. Such steps are in the initial phases and results have to be seen in the future.

Quality and access to higher education both in private and public sector can change the dynamics of higher education in Pakistan. To achieve this goal the government through Higher Education Commission can play an effective role. Private sector has the potential to diversify higher education in Pakistan; it needs to build its presence by developing in a positive manner and recognizing the responsibility towards public.

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