Globalisation and higher education in Pakistan

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Abstract

Aim: This paper aims to evaluate recent policy reforms that prioritize university autonomy and privatization through higher tuition rates while also addressing the quantity and quality of higher education. High tuition costs undermine the good public status of higher education and are a major social and political concern.

Methodology: The researchers in this study used a qualitative approach and based their findings on an extensive review of the relevant literature.

Findings: Issues like national education policies, institutional strategies, and cultural concerns must be carefully considered if the internationalization of higher education is to be successful.

Novelty/Implications: This research sought to examine the policies aimed at highlighting a definite stance on public financing in the reformation of Pakistan's higher education system. Policymakers in Pakistan are given actionable advice and policy implications to enhance the quality of higher education for Pakistani students.

Key Words: Globalisation, Internationalization, Higher Education, Education Policy, Privatisation

INTRODUCTION

Background, Funding, and Policies

Before discussing their effects on higher education, it is crucial to grasp the concepts of internationalization and globalization. It would be challenging to deduce the effects of these two terms on education and generate points from the argument if you develop an understanding of them. That's what Teichler says in his 2009 book, "globalization," which refers to similar activities occurring simultaneously as the erosion of borders, "internationalization" is defined as increasing cross-border activities despite the persistence of borders.

These are merely a part of the system that Western culture has developed to facilitate interpersonal interaction and create new business opportunities. At its core, "we are global" is an organization's willingness to engage with people and cultures worldwide in the name of education. However, as a part of the globalized world, countries like the United Kingdom welcome and accommodate students from all over the world to study at their best universities but limit their ability to work and get practical experience as students are not allowed to stay in the United Kingdom beyond the proposed time of the study. TIER 4 international student visa policies explicitly state this (Tier 4 of the Points Based System-Policy Guidance 2013).

Most educational grants and scholarships are awarded to students from European countries, making it difficult for international students to finance their education. British immigration policy aside, the European Union allows its citizens to freely move around the continent, communicate with one another, and attend school within the EU (Gov. UK), so what accounts for the disparity between British and international students? This may be the national stance on various issues, but it could be more objective. Internationalization and globalization are called into greater question in this context. In what ways have these ideas been incorporated? Why do we care so much about internationalizing and globalizing schools?

This globally integrating higher education has its share of other significant challenges. Despite the global significance and necessity of internationalized policies, many challenges are encountered in their development. A

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large number of organizations around the world need help to find the resources they need to formulate effective foreign policies. As a result, they cannot effectively compete in the educational marketplace or develop as many high-quality or ambitious initiatives. Most governments allocate a decreasingly small portion of their budgets to education; for another, they rarely make targeted investments in internationalization. It is defined by Knight and De Wit (1995) as follows: "With the internationalization of higher education in the UK, emphasis has been placed on attracting high tuition-paying foreign students, and the government adopted a full-fee policy about students from outside the European community in 1979". (p. 11).

Similar problems exist in Pakistan, where universities need more funding and must reject many research proposals and projects. If only one student in a hundred succeeds despite their best efforts, students will be less motivated to work toward that goal. Financial barriers are crucial even for well-established programs like the Fulbright in the United States or Europe's ERASMUS or SOCRATES. Financial obstacles also arise when fewer grants are available to students from developing countries (Damme 2001). Internationalization policies vary from country to country. Some countries have aspirational policies, like Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, but the United States, despite being the most popular destination for international students, has yet to establish any international policies (Altbach and Peterson 1998).

It could look like something unusual is occurring. In this model, it is education that plays the role of the businessman. Education is being used by universities as a means to generate revenue. According to Knight and De Wit (1995), recruiting international students and providing advisory services related to international education are two examples of internationalization activities that could be launched to generate revenue. It would appear that the ultimate goal of modern universities and education is to have a high rate of student intake, generate income each year, and compete for rank regardless of the cost. The business of educating people is booming around the world. Making money appears to have replaced teaching as the primary mission of these schools. With a growing number of wealthy international students, the government can spend much less on higher education while reaping greater economic benefits (Knight and De Wit 1995; Mohamed et al. 2015). We have become hopelessly preoccupied with gaining an ever-increasing share of the pie for ourselves. This may not have been the goal in the past.

For a long time, international education has been viewed as a useful instrument of foreign policy, particularly in national security and international peace and harmony. Even though this is still something to think about, its weight is much lighter than it once was (Knight 1997).

Some aspects of any given ideology or concept are bound to be positive and useful, while others may initially seem less so but turn out to be counterproductive in the long run. Competition among countries and universities that target international students has increased due to the rise of emerging economies and developing countries, which does little to further the sector's development.

Diverse Concepts and Factors

Internationalization of higher education brings a broad range of diverse factors into account. There are various reasons and requirements that internationalization became important in higher education to serve different needs of society. There were some professional and academic requirements for graduates which also, on the other hand, are the demands of society in their economy and labour markets (Kalvermark and Wende 1997). This can be seen as one of the main reasons of internationalisation of higher education, which is usually seen to be the need for skilled labour and professionals who will serve and meet the demands of international markets. To support the process of internationalisation, the higher education takes account of different global, national, regional, and institutional differences and commonalities.

Internationalization of Higher education is now a means of income for many countries and getting more foreign students brings in a huge amount of institutional income and is considered to be a positive impact on national economic interest (Qiang 2003). The common goals and objectives include the increased importance of reputation of institutions and a competition for rankings and getting a huge amount of funds, along with long-term economic gains. This now seems to have become the main objective of national and institutional policies and strategies.

Institutionally, universities have developed up inside of a national political structure and have built up

particular national instructive frameworks, regulations, and methodology, adjusted to address the issues of society. Regardless of the fact that specific models of advanced education, for example, the French, the British, the American, or till a few years back, the Russian, get to be winning on a scale worldwide and refer to different nations formulating their own strategies of advanced education, despite everything they have still not developed a proper system of advanced higher education (Damme 2001; Tarmuchi et al. 2015).

Countries and educational institutions, rather focusing more on qualitative results, focus on quantitative ones. Almost all the institutions work for the generation of revenue through higher education as it seems around in the world. Every institution is being commercialised and they believe that higher education is a private good. Europe is seen as the biggest part of this internationalisation. Knight 1997; Qiang 2003 stated that:

'Education, especially higher education, is often considered as a form of diplomatic investment for future political and economic relations. For example, scholarships for foreign students, who are seen as promising future leaders, are considered to be an effective way of developing an understanding of and perhaps affinity for the sponsoring country. This affinity may prove to be beneficial in future years in terms of diplomatic or business relations.'

This can also lead to the risk of cultural homogenisation which can also be the dominance of the Western society over other countries' beliefs, norms, and values. This can be seen happening around the world. The universities and their impacts on education seem quite different from the actual philosophy of education. Allen (2011) states that

"Academics and universities are increasingly absorbed in the pursuit of excellence, innovation, impact, ranking, fund-seeking, and so on. The realm occupied by the private use of reason grows to envelop university life, resulting in considerable distraction."

Universities and other private institutions are trying to just influence the market and generate profits and working on to get more funds. Higher education funding and scholarship schemes result in different methodologies and are very much diverse but they also produce some obstacles for mobility and support. My view does agree with this deduction made as the defining purpose of education, and educating students is lost in between these factors. This fundamental concept along with marketization of institutions is also like neoliberalism, which is like a set of economic policies to cut public expenditure, privatise and commercialise institutions, and eliminate the concept of public good (Martinez and Garcia 2015). For increasing the opportunities for cooperation and mobility, more transparency is required and obstacles are needed to be taken care of. As for the future of internalisation of higher education, more joint degrees are considered really important and for that, these barriers have to be taken care of. Higher education, in the public interest and as a public good, is definitely seen with the increased entrepreneurship and private ownership, but it is very important to ensure that the process of internationalisation acts in line with the principles and values of education (Wit et al. 2015). We can say that Internationalisation of higher education is good for the private good and development of global society. There will only be an impact if all the different participants and stakeholders in this process bring up a common and clear view about this approach and rationales, means, and benefits, along with creating opportunities and solving complex issues in this Internationalised process. There can be seen the importance of Internationalization of higher education that we cannot ignore. Issues in the process of internationalisation, especially the increasingly thoughtful social, economic, financial and cultural crisis, bad demographic developments, immigration, religious and ethnic tensions have to be dealt accordingly.

Culture and Identity Issues

As we talk about the cultural perspectives and in particular from Pakistan, it is seen that for the past two decades, the Western society and assimilated cultures have dominated the traditions, cultures, values, and norms in this region. As Sohail (2015) says that

"Western culture and its symbols are valued over native customs, which lead to a kind of colonization of the mind and colonization of the mind is one of the root causes of the identity crisis we and especially the youth face today."

Pakistan is a country with rich culture and traditions that made it worth of. It cannot be said that Pakistan is

a very developed country but it is progressing.

One can never understand how academics and institutions say that the world is progressing. On what scale they measure the progress when we all see the lack of respect and humanity in society, people striving for food and shelter, less opportunities, where there are more graduates but less jobs. Pakistan is also suffering from these problems which seemed to be very less before. And that what can be seen is the race for money, the privatisation, commercialisation of everything, endless competition, and less opportunities, and this is what is making things worse. This can also be seen as part of influence by the policies of internationalisation and globalisation along with dominance of the Western society. As Sohail (2015) tells that

"Globalization has lifted cultural barriers and provided exposure to new ideas and ways of thinking but economically, it has dramatically increased the wealth of some people and led to a more urban country. This has polarized the culture in Pakistan as more people are moving away from the teachings of Islam and from traditional customs in general."

It is also the bad governance that leads to negativity in society. The education system is disrupted. There are schools, colleges, and universities with more number of students but less quality. This can be said to impact the fighting for globally recognised institution.

Private schools, colleges, and universities are being built day by day in each city and they focus on getting students, whereas the teachers teaching in these institutions are not properly trained and sometimes even not qualified. These institutions charge fee so high that a middle-class family has to work day and night to get their children to study in these institutions. This mind set is just working as a poison in the society and is prevailing. Even the parents believe that sending their child to a private institution and paying higher fees make the student bright and of worth in society. In reality, it is just that society respects people who are graduated from big institutions and have a brand name of the institution on their transcripts and degrees. It can be said that there is no love for education but the love and greed for money and being successful and for that, people get educated. And it is the trend which these local institutions are more likely to follow because of the westernisation. As Altbach (1989) says:

'With all Asian nations now fully independent and with Japan an economic superpower, the situation has significantly changed but Western influences remain quite important in an independent and increasingly prosperous Asia. The Western academic model remains dominant worldwide' (p.10).

Belonging to the part of that society and still continuing to be because in the real world, that is the way people tell you to survive in the society. You are even not yourself. You can't do what you want but what the society demands from you. It is like someone telling you that you are free to do what you like, you have the freedom of speech, you can be creative, you can be innovative but you have to follow my laws at the end. These are all that negative aspects which can be seen from the globalisation and internationalisation of education. Sometimes, it is really annoying when you want the education system to work the right way by following the right path, following the aim education has and what education should do but there, the world tells you to wake up. Even my peers and colleagues studying and working in the same environment tell me that this is the real world and you have to be realistic. We need to see where this is taking us. We are facing more problems than solutions in this internationalised world. It can be believed that people are losing their own identity, cultures, values, and norms by following what they see. Western culture is dominated in the developing countries. As Sohail (2015) says that

"Many Pakistanis have settled abroad in countries like the US, the UK, Scandinavian nations, and other European countries. Their continued relationships with those who remain in the country affect Pakistan's culture and economy."

This can be seen in Pakistan as people see that the Western culture is better than their own and they are adapting to that. Moreover, people try their best to migrate to these developed nations by any means and believe they will have a better life there.

Marketization of Institutions

Advertisement or marketing of universities and these universities themselves also stress on the importance of educational and social benefits and spend so much in order to attract students from around the world (Damme 2001; Lin et al. 2017). Having representatives and agents work for the university in other countries and setting

targets for them to get as many students as they can is what they are doing. Most countries also have international offices in other countries as in, for example, the Great Britain which has more than 200 British council offices worldwide. As in Pakistan, targeted emails, phone calls, and text messages were also being sent to people about the benefits of studying in that university. It sounds more like a corporate sector where the companies try to please their customers any way they can according to their cultures and values. It does, in my view, compromise the actual aim of education.

Universities are now sending powerful messages to people around the world that getting an international degree gives an edge over others and it gives you many benefits. All the time, you see university officials talking about the ranking of their university. University is now as a market product and its officials sell it this way. Every time if someone searches for a university on the internet, the first three things it talks about is the ranking of the university, number of students, and income generated in the past year. All the talk about education, programs, and research comes later. That is where universities increase student mobility by giving these messages and providing effective means which makes a lasting impression that, for a professional life in the International world, is to study abroad in this world economy. Institutions bring messages that say students can acquire cross- cultural knowledge, improve their foreign language which is usually in English, and have more networks around the world.

The educational international market for providing educational services is becoming an extremely big sector and it seems to focus more on the international marketing of all the local universities. This is not just the problem but these institutions are usually seemed to be forced into this scenario by the governmental policies and reduced investment in education sector.

Australia has become a part of that international market for education which has its students' numbers increasing every year. In Pakistan, on a large scale, marketing is being done by the Australian universities' international offices in Pakistan by participating in education expo held in most cities, giving visits to different domestic Pakistani universities, and interacting with students and, moreover, sending out messages of on the point admission to an Australian university. It does seem very appealing to many students that they can study in Australia, have an international degree, and have a bright future. As Pakistan is a developing country with poverty and many economic and social issues confronting it, along with universities that are good but don't compete with other international universities, so the idea of studying abroad makes students really interested. The idea still does cost them a fortune. The idea is appealing but not the costs. Parents want their child to be happy and get the best education and they try their best to go out of the way to earn that much money and send their child to study abroad.

It seems to be the commodification which is strengthening the social selectivity of students from around the globe as with the ERASMUS-program, and these programs are usually targeted at the full-time students who have enough money to bear the expenses for studying and living in other countries (Damme 2001). This can be seen as the trade of students instead of goods as part of that commodification. Several institutions organise themselves according to the required and demanded international market to provide their services and charge huge amounts for that. These institutions try their best to solve the issues regarding international standards in education, quality assurance, and accreditation to increase their reputation in the market. And even to deal with student mobility, universities have extended their educational services to other countries under full authority by setting up local campuses of their universities (Damme 2001). As part of this Internationalisation process, Singapore, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates with other countries are seen to be a perfect example of this strategy. All these countries have welcomed these institutions from around the globe, mostly from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia to set up their local campuses there and permit them the granting of foreign degrees and diplomas. But again to another surprise, these setup campuses charge even more than the main universities. There are other examples in the developing world that can be given as this form of internationalisation. Even because of the lack of institutional and national commitment, policies and bureaucratic interventions from getting funds from different agencies or organisations, these problems and barriers create issues for the proper functioning of different programs. There are administrative policies that are really strict for immigration rules and regulations, which is discouraging and also causes bad reputation or many complaints from students. One of the main focuses is also these certain visa policies and procedures.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

These are the certain problems that range from cultures, values, identity, and university rankings, huge fee structures, university funding, national policies (specifically the United Kingdom) for international students, education policies, and institutional strategies towards education which were key debates of this paper. Internationalisation of higher education can surely be a success if the issues are taken into consideration and addressed properly. Stated by Knight and De Wit (1995) that the danger of isolationism, racism, and monoculturalism is a threatening cloud hanging above the present interest in internationalisation of higher education.

There should be set rules that define the internationalised education system. Cultural issues arise and they bring unrest among the local people. Unless these defined and many other unidentified issues are addressed and taken care of, problems will arise. The higher officials must and should see the public interests first and develop policies and strategies for positive good and well-being of the society before looking at profits. They need to see the problems and stop making promises which they can't fulfil.

But again, to the point of being realistic, these issues look really small to those to see profits as their ultimate aim from the internationalisation of higher education. It seems not happening but we can hope it might happen. This process of profit making should stop. I believe for better good of the society nationally and internationally, the aim of education should be reconsidered and get back to that process of creating a learning environment among individuals. As Altbach and Knight (2007) say it as:

"We are at a crossroad; today's emerging programs and practices must ensure that international higher education benefits the public and not simply be a profit centre" (p. 304).

There are these certain issues, problems or challenges that are in front of institutions and organisations in the globalised and internationalised approach in this world but they tend to ignore them as they seem to be more interested in profits than the problems associated with degree programs. Challenges are many and are not just among those institutions but internationally. As part of that internationalised and globalised world, these challenges must be considered seriously and dealt with accordingly. Procedures and strategies need to be restructured or developed that help the students around the globe and not just one country. The policymakers, who define and develop these strategies, and alongside are also the heads of such big organisations and institutions around the world and earn profits from these multinational institutions yet called higher education institutions, should ensure its effectiveness and quality. There are a lot of questions that can be raised but these issues need to be addressed effectively. Knight and De Wit (1995) say it as:

"Even students, who never leave their home country, are also affected by globalised society and economy. Higher education institutions have the responsibility through teaching and research to increase awareness and understanding of new and changing phenomena that affect the economic, political, and cultural developments within and among nations" (p. 13).

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