

Falling Standard of education in Pakistan: Who will tie the bell?

Muhammad Afzal ^{a,*} & Fazli Qadir ^b

^aDepartment of Economics, Preston University, Islamabad, Pakistan

^bElementary and Secondary Education Department, Peshawar, Pakistan

Abstract

The paper investigated and analysed the various factors assumed to be responsible for falling quality of education and the necessary data were collected from university students whom were asked relevant questions. Students expressed dissatisfaction on the semester system and BS program. BS program has killed the students because they are bogged down in the vicious circle of plethora of courses which not only affect their health but also their academic performance. MPhil and PhD admissions are reduced to minimum in the light of demand and supply to avert future problems. The most deplorable aspect is TTS which is supposed to have done more harm and damage to the national exchequer than alleged good. Lecturers in universities enjoy the lucrative BPS-18 scale while doctors, engineers, civil servants are inducted in BPS-17. Step-motherly treatment of other civil servants will certainly add to bad blood. TTS and induction in BPS-18 as lecturer must be stopped once for all. Lack of job opportunities and rapid population growth are potential factors responsible for falling standard of education. When students are aware that their hard labour will not bear fruit, they lose interest in working hard. Social media has added fuel to the fire.

Keywords: falling quality; education; admissions; Pakistan.

1. Introduction

Education is the basic need of every citizen because education makes him a responsible citizen and contributes to awareness of life, its needs and challenges. Education helps in building character that is supposed to promote economic and social development because education produces capable workers and responsible citizens. In the modern world, the human resources of a country are considered the basic factor that eventually promotes the progress of its material and human growth since education give birth to available efficient lab or and better citizens who makes better the socio-economic development.

According to Afzal (2005), many empirical studies in the developed countries have established that it was growth of human capital (not the growth of physical capital) that was the principal source of economic progress in the developed countries. He adds that it is extremely difficult to provide irrefutable evidence on the high correlation between education and economic development. Experience of a number of countries revealed that the increase of education at all levels contributed to aggregate economic growth.

Similar to other developing countries, the status of education sector in Pakistan is not much good. The admissions in the primary schools, glaring differences between regions and gender-ratio school-leaving rates, small budgetary provision and weak physical infrastructure reflects the bad working of education sector.. Though the educational infrastructure has made an impressive growth over the past decades, literacy growth has not kept pace with the population growth.

The literacy rate at present is estimated at 58% (male 70% and females 46%) in 2016-17 and 54% (male 66.25 percent and female 41.75 percent) in 2003-04 [Government of Pakistan (GOP), Economic Survey (2017-18 & 2003-04). Moreover, enormous population growth far exceeds the provision of educational facilities. Total expenditure on education during 2013-17 was respectively 2.1 %, 2.2%, 2.3% and 2. 2% that shows stagnation of GDP contribution to education (GOP 2017-18). This survey also acknowledged the minor improvement in key performance indicators like enrolment rates, number of institutions, and teachers.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: profafzal@gmail.com (Muhammad Afzal)

The total admissions ratio (TAR) for primary schools (Age 6-10) at country level decreased from 92 percent in 2012-13 to 91 percent in 2014-15. Though all were similar the similar trend, was much lower in Baluchistan [73 percent] succeeded by 79 percent in Sind. Absolute Enrolment Rate (AER) for primary schools (Age 6-10) at the country level decreased to 67 percent in 2014-15 compared with 68 percent in 2012-13. The TAR for middle level (Age 11-13) at Pakistan level declined to 62 percent in 2014-15 compared to 63 percent in 2012-13. Province wise TAR indicates that in Punjab and Sindh it declined to 64 percent and 55 percent in 2014-15 as compared to 65 percent and 57 percent in 2012-13 respectively, while there were rising trend in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 71 percent in 2014-15 compared to 69 percent in 2012-13, and Balochistan remained unchanged at 65 percent during the period 2014-15 and 2012-13.

The Matric level TAR (Age 14-15) for the country level increased to 58 percent in 2014-15 compared with 57 percent in 2012-13. The provinces followed the same trend as shown in primary and middle level ATR. Literacy rate of population (10 years & above) at the country level remained the same at 60 percent for the period 2014-15 and 2012-13. Literacy remained higher in urban areas than in rural areas and higher in males than in women. Punjab with 63 percent was the highest and Baluchistan with 44 percent were the lowest in all the provinces. Literacy rate (15 years & above) at National level also remained unchanged at 57 percent for the period 2014-15 and 2012-13 [PSLM 2014-15].

Much has been written on different aspects of education because it is a multifaceted sector and is important for majority of the population. In the general aggregate production function, labor (L) and capital (K) are the crucial inputs leading to the output (Q) which is given by:

$$Q = F(K, L) \quad (1)$$

Neither input can contribute effectively to output without the help of the other input. Education is concerned with the development of labor input by using different doses of both physical and financial capital. The success of the education system of a society is crucially dependent on contributing to efficient labor that in turn hinges on the reasonable quality and standard of education. There is a wide spread view that standard of education in Pakistan has fallen noticeably. Students, government, and private sector seem to be gravely concerned about the standard of education because human resource is not as productive and responsible as is expected.

It is an open secret that quality of both teachers and students culminating in standard of education has deteriorated and many factors could be identified to look at the falling quality of education that fortunately or unfortunately has been assumed to be closely linked with teachers' diverse training programs, basic education and enhancing the academic qualifications of teachers in the guise of MPhil and PhD.

Smaller literacy rate and low quality of education are the principal problems of the educational system in Pakistan. Education is affected by a number of factors that cause the low quality. low enrollment and high dropout rate at the primary level, different standards of education, low budgetary allocation for education sector, political interference, low quality of curricula and textbooks, rapid growth of population, poverty and unemployment, poor quality of teachers and irrelevant duties, and low standard evaluation system are the noteworthy problems. These are the prominent causes of falling standard of education. Though the government claims for some major steps to overcome these problems, there is space for betterment.

Afzal (2005) pertinently noted that in the past few decades a radical change had taken place in the standard of living, peoples' outlook and life style. People became status conscious and they realized the real significance of education for social and economic grounds. Because educated people are supposed to enjoy a respectable social status as well as civil amenities. The "demonstration effect" of education has been observed to be most pervasive and permeating. Now people pay serious attention to their children education even if they are uneducated or undereducated. Since public schools/colleges/Universities are unable to cater to the growing demand of the exploding population, private sector has stepped in to provide not only primary education but also higher education. Moreover, at the official level emphasis has been shifted from primary education to higher education.

An examination of development in education and the successes in the implementation of education policies shows that the present education system faces with much serious financial and management issues as well as shortcomings in the quality of education in Pakistan (Mahmood 1999). It was concluded during 1950s and 1960s that growth was an "Exogenous" factor due to low level of savings and erratic exports earnings in the developing countries. Foreign aid was conceived as the most *crucial exogenous* factor to stimulate growth in these countries. Towards the end of 1980s, this view changed and now growth is regarded by a sizeable body of economists as an endogenous factor. And human resource development (HRD) that includes both education and health plays the most dominant role in

economic growth. The skilled and healthy manpower is supposed to contribute significantly to economic growth. For adequate HRD that meets the growing needs of the economy, massive investment in human capital in the form of education and health is required (Afzal 2005).

To finance that level of investment, a vigorous, persistent and consistent domestic resource mobilization (DRM) is essential. Because of mounting fiscal deficit in 1980s and 1990s due to inadequate DRM (Tax GDP ratio stagnated around 13% of the GDP for the last two decades), uninspiring export performance, growing current account [CA] deficit and escalating non- development expenditure, budgetary allocation to education and health over the last two decades concentrated around 2% and 0.7% of GNP respectively (see GOP, Economic Survey 2003-04).

Physical, and moral development of human being is the major objective of education. Rapid fall in the standard of education is the most obvious condition that has embarrassed the principal players (parents, students, public and private sectors of the economy). Government, teachers, parents and students are all can be held responsible for the rapid fall of education standard in Pakistan. At all levels of education (primary, college and university) a very small majority is honest and dutiful. It is a general complaint that teachers do not take classes regularly; they come late and leave the classes early. The heads are helpless before the political appointees. The major responsibility for these bad problems fall on the students, parents, teachers and the government.

2. Education Problems

Following are the prominent problems faced by the education sector of Pakistan.

- 1) Low enrolment, literacy rate and budget allocation for education sector and increasing school leaving rate at the primary level
- 2) Fast growth of population, poverty, unemployment, low quality of teachers and low standard evaluation system
- 3) Political intervention, much low quality of curricula and textbooks, and shortage of competent teachers because of non-availability of quality education
- 4) Examinations have become a joke, teachers do not take classes honestly; they come late and leave before time
- 5) Serious financial and management problems Wide disparities between regions and genders and the poor physical infrastructure

These are genuine problems faced by the education sector. Education is a huge sector that could be addressed and explored from different perspectives. There is a vast literature on education and it is exceedingly difficult to critically review the available literature covering diverse aspects of education. Therefore, the scope of this paper is limited to discuss and analyse the falling standard and quality of education in Pakistan. Though it is one objective but it is less likely that justice is even done with the single objective of this paper owing to multidimensional aspects of the purpose of the paper. It is an open secret that the number of educational institutions ranging from primary schools to secondary schools, colleges, Universities and multitude of technical and vocational institutions has increased manifold coupled with burgeoning students' strength, physical structures and teachers' number, there is no denying the fact that the quality and standard of education has deteriorated to a deplorable heights.

Low or poor quality and standard of education implicitly as well as explicitly implies that the successful graduates of the fore-mentioned institutions do not perform well in public examinations and tests and their performance in different fields according to specific academic background and qualifications is not according to expectations. In other words their marginal productivity is scarcely positive. In 2019 CSS examination only 372 out of 14500 qualified the examination.

Low national level male or female literacy rate much emphasized in the literature, though important is not bothersome. The most annoying problem is that the literate human resource despite being decorated with impressive and conspicuous degrees is not meeting the country's needs as expected and required. If the country has to import every electronic /mechanical implement leading to escalating trade deficit, what is the utility of several hundred engineering graduates that the universities produce each year? If MBBS doctors serve as CSS officers, where the patients will consult a doctor? Since these doctors do not find jobs in the public or private sector they are constrained to appear in competitive examinations to meet body and soul together. This is the most agonizing dilemma of Pakistan education malaise. In microeconomic terms both are underemployed suggesting that their marginal productivity is less than if employed in the relevant field.

Therefore, the purpose of the paper is to investigate, identify and analyze the various factors assumed to be responsible for falling quality of education and its principal players (teachers and students) role. The data will be

collected based on a well-designed Questionnaires from majority of the stakeholders and a rigorous analysis will be done to arrive at valid, policy prescriptions based on ground realities.

3. Literature Review

According to Ghazi et.al (2010), absenteeism, irregularity, unpunctuality and indiscipline are the prominent features of the educational institutions in Pakistan. Instead of need of knowledge, simple papers and false degrees seem to be the purpose of education. Examinations have become a mockery. Low quality education is producing low quality professionals (doctors, engineers, lawyers and good teachers etc.). Today, there is a sensation that the moral, human and political standards in the country and the great ideals of life are rapidly falling. No attention is paid to turn students honest, frank, and standing like the past. Values have become valueless and no longer regarded agreeable. Education has become an immoral business today.

Despite hopeful drifts, such as the rapid spread of private schooling and growth of higher education opportunities, systemic reform remains inflexibly indefinable. The incapability of following governments to correct the system has produced deep problems for Pakistan's economic and social development. Increasing young population and increasing competition pressures from other developing countries will increase the problems diverse in the future (World Economic Forum, 2012, cited in Aziz *et. al* (2014)

According to Aziz *et al* (2014) at primary and secondary levels, both approach and student successes are low by international standards and also the standard of meeting Pakistan's wide development challenges; and future outlook is negative. Inequalities in access, quality, and educational outcomes result around gender and income, between urban and rural schools, and between the country's four provinces. Higher education system does not do good, despite growth made in the previous decades.

Consequently, most of Pakistani graduates come from universities without the technical or social skills required for them to be strong workers in the workplace or society, either in Pakistan or abroad. The long neglect has made these problems severe than ever before. In a world in which many countries (including the developing countries) are going ahead quickly in terms of their material and social development. Pakistan risks will increase even more behind if it does not succeed in educating its young people productively.

According to World Economic Forum (2012), besides other education problems, it is relevant to ask why skilled labor indicators such as 'poor work ethic' and insufficient education rank as two of the top 10 most problematic sources for doing business in Pakistan,

Increasing economic insecurity has added to the anxiety of parents and youth about their future. Pakistan's fast growing population has turned bad these problems. In the limited time and perceived autonomy that the civilian governments had enjoyed, their attention was mostly on rent extraction and personal gains, partly because few expected to go back to the electorate to seek re-election based on performance. It is not clear by now how much the government could focus on education against other highly noticeable and thrilling problems, such as the economy, energy, and security crises.

Even little obvious is whether leaders who have the power to do something about the education system also have the political skill to take advantage of the country's substantial strengths, to result permanent change at the scale needed for Pakistan's business and leading thinkers are also not satisfied (Aziz *et. al*, 2014).

Waqar, Shakil and Lohdi (2010) investigated the causes to identify the main factors responsible for falling educational standards at schools level in Karachi, Pakistan. They concluded that majority of the respondents were of the view that present unsuccessful curriculum and evaluation system, unsuitable health facilities, lack of co-curricular activities and old teaching methods caused the substandard education.

Okorom (2007) has discussed the UNESCO recommendations. The paper concluded that educational standards have really fallen and listed the following factors as responsible: poor funding facilities, tilted admission policies, insufficient and un-motivated teachers and poor learning attitudes of students. The development initiatives of Nigeria have therefore been pretentious adversely by the poor quality of education. The paper concludes that better standards can only be achieved by improving on educational funding as recommended by the UNESCO followed by real implementation of educational policies. The paper argues that though the it focussed on Nigeria, that similar situations face many developing countries in variable degrees and perspective. The critical issue of effective implementation of educational polices via passable funding are expected to influence educational standards and the direction of development.

Mani and Haridasan (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of educational institutions in India and noted that higher education system in India had been testing with management approaches to address challenges resulting from both internal and also as external factors and used operations research techniques to measure the effectiveness of educational institutions. They suggested suitable interventions to see the specific gaps identified through the gaps analysis.

According to Akhtar (2014) Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) in 2016 discloses that the country stands at a low 128 among 138 countries in higher education and training, it is now ranked 123rd. These sorry statistics show low educational outcomes as reported in a new report stating that there are 24 million out-of-school children in Pakistan the second highest figure in the world after Nigeria. According to the annual Pakistan Education Statistics report during 2014-2015, of the 50.8 million children aged 5 -16 in Pakistan, 47 percent do not receive any formal education. This is a arresting example of how Pakistan public education system has been a whole failure.

An essay published in the Dawn past year reported that the country's expenditure on education was the lowest in South Asia. However the number of universities has increased, the quality remains a problem. Problems comprise low quality facilities, faculty, curriculum and teaching dynamics that focus on a memory-oriented system of evaluation. Pakistan's ranking in Global Competitiveness Index recovers but still remains in bottom 20.

According to Zaman (2017) seventy years before, the number of universities in the newly created Pakistan was less than a dozen, and remained unreachable to broad sectors of society. But increasing number alone is not a measure of success. In some cases, it is hard to claim whether any real progress has been made at all. Pakistani institutions of higher learning may depend on three supports. The first is quality, the second is access and the third is independence. The issue of quality is the single biggest problem afflicting our institutions. Whether it is quality of teaching or scholarly work, there is a thoughtful gap between what happens in our institutions and what is needed to arrive at a trustworthy international standard.

Maintaining quality in hiring of faculty and administrators is as important as employing the best students. The second support is that of access which does not mean to increase access at the cost of quality, but ensuring that higher education is accessible to those who we have been left behind. The third, and perhaps the most important part, is freedom and independence in a comprehensive sense.

The enterprising approach appears to be the major cause of falling standard of education in Pakistan. This has originated from the fact that the education industry has been contributing huge profits in many parts of the world. One particularly good example for this is Australia where international education is the third largest export industry, generating approximately AUD 20 billion annually. But this approach is not only beneficial but also brings with it variety of negative effects. Consequently to earn profit more and more new universities are opened compromising quality that depends heavily on tuition for survival and growth. Students have become the source of revenue, therefore, to keep retention rate, tests are adjusted downwards to remain acceptable pass rate. Teachers are lowering standards, bending deadlines and using upcoming examinations questions as study guides.

Therefore, government must have effective policies and strict regulations on applications to establish a university or an education institute. Government of Pakistan policy on university education derives from the high demand for engineers, teachers, doctors, etc. However, instead of focusing on quality of graduate students, governments softened policies and allowed more universities to open and enrol students. Consequently though the number of fresh graduate student is increasing rapidly, only few of them qualify employers' standards (Essay Forum, 2015).

The test score data in the annual status of Education Report for all the provinces since 2011 shows little improvement in learning. After ten years from today, Pakistan might have more high school graduates, but that may not suggest much in terms of being employable. If learning does not improve, policymakers may even contend that these children are better off outside school learning a trade or being employed. The first astonishing fact is that there have been more than 100 reforms since 2000 alone. The second surprising fact is that all these reforms made sense; they are consistent with what countries around the globe do to improve their educational results (Mohyidin, 2017).

Humphries (2018) says that when throughout the world countries arrived into a period of economic recovery during 2010, it was transpired that emerging economies [China, Korea and India] performed better than OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) counterparts in terms of GDP, the worldwide recession of 2008 and 2009 caused more than 15 million American citizens unemployed and homeowners nationwide faced the burden of negative equity. Nations that showed a quicker than expected economic recovery also performed exceptionally well in the World. Education Rankings released in 2010 that suggested a correlation between flourishing economies and financial sectors with strong teaching systems. By mid-2018, the top three

educational systems in the world had been South Korea, Finland and Japan. This is founded on developmental levels including early childhood enrolment, test scores in mathematics, reading and science in primary and secondary levels, completion rates, high school and college graduation, and adult literacy rates.

4. Methodology, Data, and Result

It is a common observation and feeling by the teachers, students, public and private sectors that the quality and standard of education at nearly all levels [primary, secondary, college and university] has deteriorated. Therefore, it is desirable that the problem is addressed objectively to ascertain at modest length the various factors assumed to be responsible for falling standard of education. The crux of the problem is to identify and analyze the potential factors factually contributing to deteriorating quality of education.

Therefore, low aggregate literacy rate is not a serious problem; the pertinent problem is that the successful graduates are given gainful employment. Unbridled corruption and population growth, bad governance and lamentable macroeconomic instability, have led to falling exports, rising trade deficit, escalating debt burden and falling investment. Each has reinforced each other and has resulted in the worst unemployment situation.

It is an open secret that younger generation notably educated youth has become despaired of the country future and consequently do not take interest in studies. Mobile, Face book and *You* tube and burgeoning Private TV channels have added fuel to the fire. Unless the real factors are identified, the problem of falling standard of education may assume a formidable facade. Education system of any society is a reflection of the socio-political-economic systems of that society. If these systems are not doing well, how the quality of teachers and students could be expected to excel in an enviable form.

Background of the falling education standard has been precisely described above. As mentioned above there are diverse stake-holders, time, coverage and cost constraints make it abundantly difficult to get objective feedback from all concerned players. Therefore, it is essential that necessary response is obtained from the students who bear the brunt of the said phenomenon in the guise of escalating unemployment implying that physical, mental and financial inputs having obvious costs do not bear fruit. They become despaired culminating in acquisition of low quality of education and as such the vicious circle is complete.

To explore the real causes and factors responsible for deteriorating quality of education, information from 100 students of few public and private sector universities were collected by a well-designed Questionnaire by Convenience sampling. It was extremely difficult to use a probability sampling technique due to cost, time and coverage problems. Therefore, the results are interpreted with carefulness. Though the main reasons for falling standard of education are well known as briefly discussed above. However the feedback by the university students helped a lot to identify the problems to make conclusions.

Modest number of Questions were asked from students to ascertain the basic causes of falling standard of education in Pakistan. The first question was about the choice of a university. Students' responses differed. Many observed that low university fee and short distance were the major factors besides other. This implies that short distance and reasonable fee structure were preferable factors. Both saved their cost and physical inconvenience. Long distance affected their academic performance that consumed time and caused physical inconvenience.

When asked about Quality of students, their responses varied from good to satisfactory and below average meaning that Quality of students was not uniform leading to student of diverse quality. Do you take serious interest in your study, modest number [40%] replied (i) do homework and teachers' check work regularly (ii) Parents also help & are aware about our performance (iv) infrastructure is reasonable (v) study long hours. Performance in examinations and tests? Responses differed from well [25%] to average [35%] and poor [40%].

Their replies differed on Students -Teachers ratio ranging from (a) better [50%] (b) poor [30%] (c) reasonable [20%]. They were asked whether teachers take classes frequently, come and leave the classes on time. Yes [55%] /NO [40%], other students did not respond. Students admitted that they allocated more time to Mobile/Face book/YOU Tube [75% and study [25%]. When students were asked what was their view that the following are the major factors of falling standard of education in Pakistan: lack of job opportunities, high cost of education and inflation, rapid population growth, heavy work load, mobile/Face book/YOU Tube/TV excessive use which wastes much time, biased evaluation system, non-serious and irresponsible attitude of students.

Majority of the students [80%] agreed that the mentioned factors were instrumental in affecting adversely the quality of education in Pakistan. They were of the view that overall political-economic-social environment seriously affect students thinking and behavior.

Students were asked about the merits and demerits of the examination system and its impact on academic standard and achievements. Students were divided in their opinion. Those who favoured annual system argued that annual system is better since (a) it is unbiased (b) students learn more by studying the prescribed course (c) saves time from frequent tests/assignments/examinations which are assumed to be not fair. Those who supported the semester system contended (a) It is biased and prejudiced; sometime it is called chacha/mamma system [personal relations, not merit do matter) (b) cash/kind gifts are there (c) places unnecessary burden on students (d) students lose interest due to frequent assignments/ examinations (e) students do not learn much due to limited course for examination. Moreover, BS instead of BA/BSc is also responsible for deteriorating standard of education because of large number of courses that students study unwarrantedly. Students lose interest because they are overburdened and cannot do justice with each course. Since adequate interest and seriousness are lost, students do not fare well in their examination.

Since the start of 2000, many changes have been made in the higher education of Pakistan that include:

- (1) Large number of public and private sector universities have opened to meet the growing demand of population for higher education (2) teachers service structure has undergone a radical change. Now MPhil/MS instead of MA/MSc is the basic requirement for becoming a lecturer in a university that has increased the student's number in the MPhil/MS programs of the universities
- (2) Lecturers in universities enjoy the lucrative scale BPs-18 while doctors, engineers, civil servants are inducted in BPS-17. It may be argued that lecturers enter after 18-years education, while other categories enter after 16-years education. Many years back lecturers in colleges and universities were also selected on MA/MSc basis. Doctors study for 18-years if house job is included, why doctors have been denied BPS-18. Passing CSS is an uphill task. They have to qualify 12 papers besides psychological tests and long interview. In 2019 CSS examination only 372 candidates out of more than 14000 qualified CSS. MPhil/MS require 30 credit hours [24 course work and 6 thesis] in two semesters. Students face much difficulty in topic selection because of large number of topics have already been searched. Moreover there are professional thesis writers and the students get ready made thesis on payment. What contribution such MPhil/MS students will make, the answer is obvious. The agreeable quality of MPhil/PhDs is a big question mark.
- (3) Universities have started PhD programs and large number of students are seeking admission in the program. This on one hand, has increased demand for PhD faculty who is not only appointed as assistant professor but also get allowance. The number of PhDs has increased and many could not get jobs so much so that they have made demonstration since supply exceeds demand. Moreover, foreign PhDs have also created a glut in the market that has diminished the chances of employment of local PhDs. Because of excessive and exploding population, employment opportunities have shrunk so much so that a PhD is a constable in KP police as reported in the Dawn. Many PhDs appeared in the KP Public Service Commission examination for schools teachers.
- (4) Still another sorry state and most deplorable aspect is the so-called Tenure Track System [TTS] that is supposed to have done more harm and damage to the national exchequer than alleged good. The faculty hired on TTS is receiving fabulous financial benefits which on one hand, has put an unnecessary burden on country's meagre resources plagued by current, fiscal deficits and low tax-GDP ratio and the other hand, this system is instrumental in making rest of the faculty in inferiority complex. It is yet to be ascertained in real terms the contribution by TTS faculty in enhancing the level and quality of education vis-à-vis the huge financial benefits which this category faculty is enjoying. This system must be done away with immediately.
- (5) University teacher's induction in BPS-18 cannot be justified on any ground. Lecturers are selected after a brief interview and no rigorous procedure is involved. This must be stopped once for all. Doctors, engineers, CSS officers and other categories of civil servants are not less important than university teachers. Step-motherly treatment of these civil servants will adversely affect their performance and will certainly add to bad blood.
- (6) BS program has killed the students because they are bogged down in the vicious circle of plethora of courses which not only affect their health but also their academic performance. BS program is replaced by BA/BSc. MPhil and PhD admissions are reduced to minimum in the light of demand and supply to avert future problems.
- (7) It may be argued that these programs are functioning to meet international standards. The country is paying exorbitant cost. Before this Pakistan students have got admission based on old system in USA, Canada, UK and

other countries and also got degrees. We are killing the cow just to get a pound of flesh. This is not reasonable and the ground realities are also taken into account.

- (8) BS program is replaced by BA/BSc. MPhil and PhD admissions are reduced to minimum in the light of demand and supply to avert future problems. BS program has done more harm than good to Universities admissions. As colleges also offer BS Program, students prefer college admission as Universities charge higher fee. Not only Universities admissions have fallen and their budget deficit has increased and these Universities are facing financial problems that have arrested their further development. So BS program has acted as sinking weight on the smooth growth of Universities.
- (9) Lack of job opportunities and rapid population growth are potential factors responsible for falling standard of education. When students are aware that their hard labour will not bear fruit, they lose interest in working hard.
- (10) Much emphasis has been placed on doing MPhil and PhD without ascertaining their real worth and need. It is to be seen how a PhD in education can contribute to enhancing standard of education who is supervised by supervisors of diverse disciplines which has little relevance to improve education quality but the holder of PhD get allowance and rapid promotion chances. Similarly PhD in other social sciences is less likely to be defended arguably.

Afzal (2009) concluded that fast population growth is the principal most difficult problem. Macroeconomic unpredictability, increasing absolute and relative poverty and worsening income inequalities are the direct as well as indirect result of explosion of population to a great extent. With still or declining employment opportunities, a tenacious increase in population would result in increasing relative and absolute poverty.

In 1947 the time of independence, Pakistan (united Pakistan) rank was the 13th most populous country in the world with a population of 32.5 million. Presently Pakistan is the 6th most populous country in the world with a population of 220 million. Pakistan has the highest birth and also total fertility rate among the Asian countries. Resources instead of being allocated to productive channels are used by the exploding population. Plans to reduce population growth over the years do not seem to have met with success. The common man does not understand the negative economic consequences of rapid population growth due to social reasons and cultural factors.

5. Conclusions

Falling standard of education in Pakistan and its causes are well known and documented. A modest attempt has been made in this paper to address the issue from a different perspective. The success of the education system of a society is crucially dependent on contributing to efficient labor that in turn depends on the sensible quality and standard of education. Therefore, the purpose of the paper was to investigate, identify and analyse the various factors assumed to be responsible for falling quality of education and the necessary data were collected from university students. Modest number of Questions were asked from students to ascertain the basic causes of falling standard of education in Pakistan. Majority of the students [80%] agreed that the mentioned factors were instrumental in affecting adversely the quality of education in Pakistan.

Major causes of weakening of education standard include low enrolment and high dropout rate at the primary level, different standards of education, meagre budgetary allocation for education sector, political interference, low quality of curricula and textbooks, fast growth of population, poverty and unemployment, and substandard evaluation system, serious financial and management problems, wide disparities between regions and genders and the poor physical infrastructure.

Doctors and engineers appear in competitive examinations because they do not find jobs in the public or private sector. This is the most agonizing dilemma of Pakistan education malaise meaning that both are underemployed that is their marginal productivity is less than if employed in the relevant field. Students expressed dissatisfaction on the semester system and BS program. BS program has killed the students because they are bogged down in the vicious circle of plethora of courses which not only affect their health but also their academic performance. BS program is replaced by BA/BSc. MPhil and PhD admissions are reduced to minimum in the light of demand and supply to avert future problems.

Lecturers in universities enjoy the lucrative scale BPs-18 while doctors, engineers, civil servants are inducted in BPS-17. University teacher's induction in BPS-18 cannot be justified on any ground. This must be stopped once for all. Doctors, engineers, CSS officers and other categories of civil servants are not less important than university teachers.

Step-motherly treatment of these civil servants will adversely affect their performance and will certainly add to bad blood.

Another most deplorable aspect is the so-called Tenure Track System [TTS] that is supposed to have done more harm and damage to the national exchequer than alleged good. The faculty hired on TTS is receiving fabulous financial benefits which on one hand, has put an unnecessary burden on country's meagre resources plagued by current, fiscal deficits and low tax-GDP ratio and the other hand, this system is instrumental in making rest of the faculty in inferiority complex. TTS is done away with once for all. Lack of job opportunities and rapid population growth are potential factors responsible for falling standard of education. When students are aware that their hard labour will not bear fruit, they lose interest in working hard.

References

- Afzal, M. (2005). Relative efficiency of public versus private schools. *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 24(1), 15-35.
- Afzal, M. (2009). Population growth and economic development in Pakistan. *Open Demography Journal*, 2, 1-7.
- Akhtar Umar I. (2014). Pakistan's education system: Key challenges and policy recommendations. *GTTN (NUST Global Think Tank Network) Policy Insight NO.2*
- Aziz M., David E. B., Salal H., Emmanuel J. Larry R. & Zeba S. (2014). Education system reform in Pakistan: why, when, and how? *Policy Paper No. 76 IZA*, Germany.
- Concerns, *Research Report No. 172*, Islamabad Pakistan Institute of Development Economics.
- Essay Forum (2015). Decline in education standard, No author
- Ghazi, S. R. Ali, R. K., Muhammad S. H., Shaukat; Fatima &, Tanzeela, Z. (2010). Causes of the decline of education in Pakistan and its remedies. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 7 (8), 9-18.
- Government of Pakistan, *Economic survey* (various issues), Islamabad, ministry of finance, economic advisor wing,
- Humphries, L. R. | Updated October 9, 2018). The top 3 educational systems in the world.
- Mahmood (1999). Educational developments in Pakistan: Trends, issues, and policy
- Mohyidin, R. (2017). *Education Reform, Dawn, October 26th, 2017*
- Okoroma, N. (2007). The falling standard of education in Nigeria: implications for national development. *Journal of research in education*, 4(2), 67-74.
- PSLM (Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey) (2014-15) National / Provincial /District Government of Pakistan Statistics Division Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Islamabad March- 2016
- Vijaya, M. & Haridasan, V. (2011). Evaluating the effectiveness of educational institutions using frontier analysis. *International Journal of Management, IT & Engineering*, 1(3), 26-43.
- Waqar-un-Nisa, F. Shakil, A. F., & Lodhi, F. A. (2010). The main reasons of declining educational standards at secondary level in Karachi, Pakistan. *Educational Research and Reviews* 6(2), 152-160.
- World Economic Forum (2012), *Global Competitiveness Report* <http://reports.weforum.org/globalcompetitiveness-2011-2012>.
- Zaman, M.M (2017). *Higher education for the next 70 years*. Express Tribune August 15th, 2017