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Problems, Trends and Prospects of Higher Education in Underdeveloped Areas of Sindh: A Case Study of Sindh University Laar Campus, Badin

Abstract

This study sought to depict the current picture of higher education in the underdeveloped areas of Sindh, by highlighting its problems, trend and prospects. The empirical studies reflect that education is basic need of every society and higher education is promoting social and economic development with the help of enhancing practical capabilities of people. The Higher education institutions in Pakistan are growing and exploring the current trends and status in the less developed regions of Pakistan. This is a descriptive and explanatory study used simple random sampling that covered 100 respondent from Sindh University Laar Campus, Badin. Close-ended questionnaire comprising seven selected factors (reported studies) each coupled with Likert scale was distributed. Descriptive statistics, Bar Charts, One sample t-test with SPSS 20.0 were used to analyze the data. Results reveal that students having job expectancy and feel satisfied with Sindh University Laar Campus Badin along with its administration, facilities and curriculum; while students are strongly satisfied with teachers. On the other hand students were dissatisfied with the previous education. Students opine that the increased availability of on campus facilities may motivate potential students as a bid to promote higher education in this underdeveloped area of lower part of Sindh province. The study provides implications to the stake holders that in order to promote the higher education and the associated satisfaction and morale of the potential students, parents and guardians, it is need of the hour to ensure a transparent, streamlined and compatible education systems at SSC and HSC levels.

Introduction

Education encompasses development of character and mental powers through systematic instruction. The word "Education" is defined as a process to give intellectual moral and social instructions, especially as a formal and prolonged process, which comprise training or instruction for particular purpose (Isani & Virk, 2003). With the rapid improvement in human development, education is included in the list of basic needs now a days. A good education system can improve the social, scientific, and technological conditions of a country and development of human resource of a country relies upon the quality of education that prevails in a country (Mohanthi, 2000).

'Higher Education' is defined as any of various types of Education given post-secondary learning, usually affording and a named degree, diploma or certificate of higher studies is obtained, at the end of a course of study (Isani & Virk, 2003). Best (1994) opines Higher education is a separate stage substantially different from primary, secondary, elementary, and higher secondary stage. Higher education is considered unsettling; and not always a comfortable experience. It invokes, because at the end the learners come to realize that things could always be seen other than how they look. No matter how much effort is put in, or how much research is conducted, there are no completely satisfactory answer, there is always room for more learning (Barnett, 1990, p.155).

Universities can play a vital role in innovation and economic development for fulfilling public expectations about access to higher education. A new context has been created for higher education with the applications of principles of market economies to the university systems of all countries (Rao, 2003). Encyclopaedia Britannica (1911) defines "University is an institution of higher (or tertiary) education and research which grants academic degrees in various subjects and typically provides undergraduate education and postgraduate education".

Universities in developing countries and in South Asia are being transformed due to fast international, political, and economical changes (Allen, 1988). Hassan (1990) argued that Pakistan is rich in terms of capability of human resources but it is unfortunately backward in education as in certain other spheres of intellectual activities. Hayes (1987) concluded that multidimensional problems are faced by educational system of Pakistan and in South Asian countries; for instance lack of resources, rapid increase in population, shortage of qualified people, political instability, wastage of resources, less participation by private sector, inefficiencies in educational management system, and poor implementation of policies and programme and so on.

Jahangir (2008) advised the reformation of higher education in order of priority enabling sustainable change, and there should be flexibility for making room for more change. Due share of resources every year for education in general and higher education in particular should be made a constitutional obligation for the state. Allen (1988) suggested that outlook should be broad, the feeling of oneness, nationalism, tolerance and spirit of sacrifice should be promoted. By submerging several group interests the attainment of the largest interest of a country will be easier.

In Badin District there is an only higher education institute Sindh University Laar Campus Badin. The University of Sindh established Laar College at Badin (S.U.L.C) as a constituent college in 2007 its main purpose was to provide access to higher education to people living in remote areas in Laar region, afterwards it was upgraded to campus in 2010 (Makhdoom, Bhatti, & Munshi, 2014). This study focuses on the promotion of the higher education and the associated satisfaction and morale of the potential students, parents and guardians of particularly underdeveloped area of lower part of Sindh province.

Literature Review

Higher education plays a key role in carrying changes by integrating all of the numerous demographics of the population. Higher education has been significantly related to the human development index and has greater importance for the underprivileged groups (Joshi, 2006).

For most of Pakistanis access to higher education is still challenging. Very less PhDs are produced in all Pakistani universities as compared to the other countries of the world. Higher Education Commission is monitoring universities and degree awarding institutions both in public and private sector for quality education which is also confronting structural issues, functional and instructional problems (Rehman, 2008). Vast amount has been invested in education sector for development of country by Government of Pakistan through knowledge and technology. Though it is still facing various problems which are either from the institution or from government side. For full development more vigorous approach is required through cooperation among society, education institutions and government (Khan, Shah, & Azam, 2011).

The World Bank (2000) reported that higher education in many developing countries is considerably contemplated by four factors; Lack of vision, Dearth of financial and political commitment, Conditions of initial disadvantage and, Distractions of globalization. It further

advised for formulation of strategy for educational reforms in various countries according to their circumstances as developing countries should have prospect to advance obsolete models, and get up-to-date rather live in past. It also observed the archaic systems of some of the well-off countries and suggested reforms for them.

Iqbal (2004) enlisted the nine problems hampering education system of Pakistan that are; Limited access of students in universities, Inadequacy and misappropriation of funds, Low quality of academic, administration, research and equipment, Lack of required knowledge and skills in faculty and staff, Defective examination system, Ignorance in character building of the students, Over intensified private sector, Lack of cooperation between university and industry and, Dearth of good governance. He also suggested for introduction of new disciplines in universities, establishment of open universities commencement of night classes with transport facilities and strict enforcement of rules and regulations. He also recommended the ban on summer vacations and political activities in the academic institutes.

In this age of global competition higher education institutions in Pakistan are still emergent and struggling organizations. The Government of Pakistan has brought substantial improvements for enhancing the performance of universities in Pakistan by way of developing infrastructure, launching quality assurance plans and increasing employees' salaries. However higher education still needs solemn efforts for stabilization of higher education system in Pakistan (Sarwar, Aslam, & Rasheed, 2010). Higher education institutions need to live up to the expectations of society and must be adaptive to the fast moving new world. They must also be receptive to emergent demands of the growing students' population (Haider, 2008).

Makhdoom et al. (2014) conducted an empirical study on "students' attitude towards business studies" by filling out the questionnaire taking 'personal goals of students', 'interest in the field' and 'curriculum and instructions' as independent variables. They concluded that students opt a discipline with the prospects of prosperous career. Thus the motive behind the choice of a discipline is immensely important in higher education.

Realizing the significance of higher education, Government of Pakistan has taken radical measures in enhancing the quality and quantity of education, The Dearing Report (1997) describes the importance of higher education in these words "For the state, higher education has become a crucial asset, It must recognize what it will gain from ensuring well-being of higher education, In return higher education must recognize its obligation to society as a whole".

Objectives of the Study

The central theme and aim of the study is to depict the current picture of the higher education in the coastal belt comprising Thatta, Sijawal and Badin districts highlighting the problems and their remedial measures for the promotion of higher education in Sindh and economic development in the national interest.

- To explore and describe the current trends and status of higher education in the region.
- To diagnose the major problems and obstacles obstructing the growth and development of higher education in the region.
- To devise remedial measures/strategies to address the identified problems.
- To acquire insight into academic research through the proposed empirical study benefiting the students, faculty and higher education in the region in particular and Sindh in general.
- To cater to the specific manpower needs by the way of customization and liaison with the industry.

- To provide implications to the local employers as stake holders enabling them to formulate counter strategies in connection with internship, training programs, recruitment and compensation policies and practices.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant level of job expectancy in students of higher education in Badin.

H2: The students are overall satisfied with higher education in Badin.

H3: The students are significantly dissatisfied with the previous educational system as to provide appropriate inputs to Higher Education.

H4: The students are significantly satisfied with the facilities provided at higher education institute in Badin.

H5: The students are significantly satisfied with the performance of teachers at higher education institute in Badin.

H6: The students are significantly satisfied with the efficiency of administration of higher education in Badin.

H7: The students are significantly satisfied with the curriculum adopted by higher education institute in Badin.

Method

Research design in this study consists of descriptive and explanatory studies. Simple random sampling technique was applied to cover 100 respondent from Sindh University Laar Campus as a case study. Close-ended questionnaire comprising 13 items measuring response on four point Likert scale – 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree – was distributed. The questionnaire was based on seven selected factors namely; 'Overall satisfaction', 'Job expectancy', 'Previous education', 'Administration', 'Teachers' Performance', 'Facilities' and 'Curriculum', and one item was enquiring about 'Remedial measures' required to be taken for improvement. Besides Descriptive stats, Bar Charts, one sample, t-test with SPSS 20.0 have been used to analyze the data.

Limitations

The topic seemed to be a challenge in the sense that carrying research in an area where people hardly cooperate with researchers due to certain reservations and skepticism i.e. confidentiality concerns, lack of congenial research environment, intellectual curiosity and so on. Such constraints confined the scope of the study.

Future Research

A comprehensive study encompassing a wide array of the factors inhibiting the growth and development of higher education in Laar region may broaden the insight into the predicament.

Results & Discussion

Job Expectancy

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job expectancy	100 100	1.00	4.00	2.8333	.78052

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Job expectancy	22.126	99	.000	1.83333	1.2138	1.3082

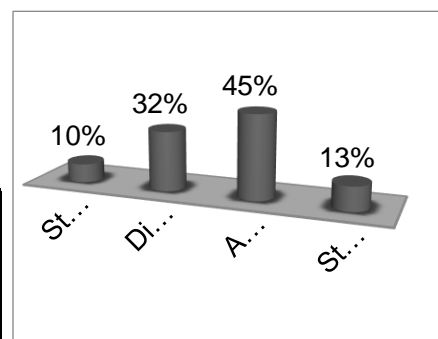


Table 2

Above reveals significant P value .000 and provides scientific evidence to prove Hypothesis 1. It is reflecting high level of job expectancy among the students pursuing higher education. This is due to greater availability of job opportunities in Badin since the number of graduates in Badin is relatively low and consequently disequilibrium exists with reference to supply of and demands for manpower particularly for a few small enterprises including NGOs whereas for large enterprises the banks, sugar mills and oil refinery companies based in Badin. Chart 1 also exhibits that students agree that there are job opportunities in the region. Hence we can exclude this factor out of the causes of deterioration of higher education in Badin

Overall Satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall Satisfaction	100	1.00	4.00	3.2600	.74698
	100				

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 2					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Overall satisfaction	16.868	99	.000	1.26000	1.1118	1.4082

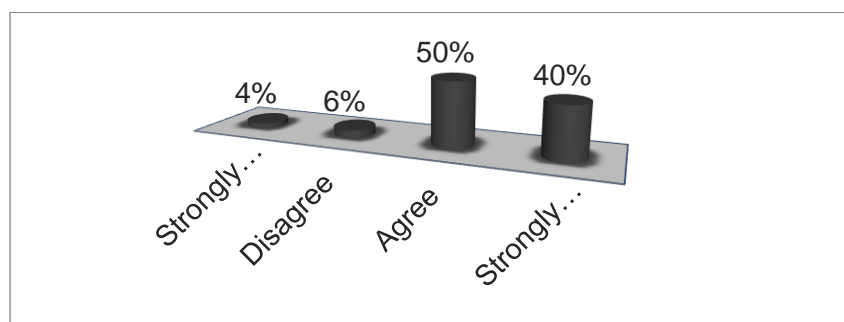


Table 3, Table 4 and Chart 2 are exhibiting that students are overall satisfied with higher education. P value 0.000 of overall satisfaction level of students regarding performance of higher education in Badin is significant which reflects that the institution itself is efficiently working and thus establishes that this factor is not among the causes of deterioration of higher education in Badin as well as pointing out fingers at the remaining factors which are still to be discussed ahead

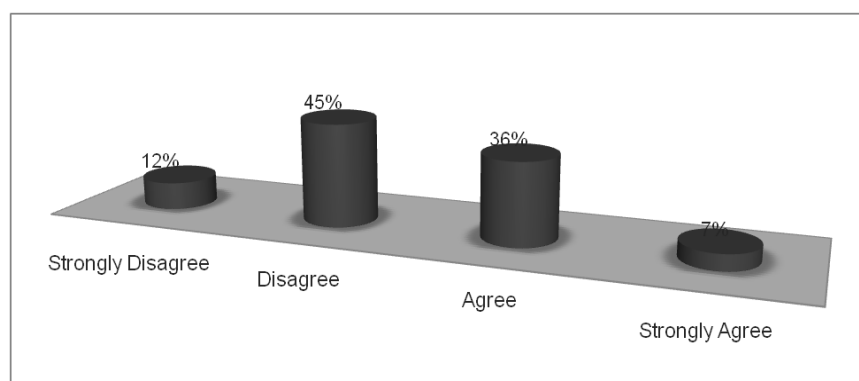
Satisfaction with Previous Education

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Previous education	100	1.00	4.00	2.3800	.78855
	100				

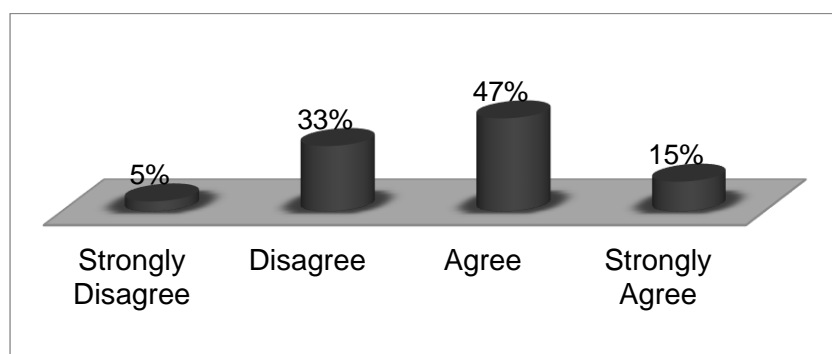
One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 4					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Previous education	-20.544	99	.000	-1.62000	-1.7765	-1.4635



As evident from Table 6 the significant P value 0.000 that hypothesis No.3 may be accepted establishing that the students hold severe dissatisfaction regarding their secondary and intermediate education providing inappropriate inputs to Laar campus, Table 5 and Chart 3 are also depicting the same. The result corresponds to the literature that the education at HSC and SSC levels in Sindh is questionable.

Satisfaction with Facilities



The significant P value in Table 8 above provides statistical evidence that hypothesis 4 is acceptable. Thus it substantiates that students feel satisfied over the facilities provided to them and hence this factor is excluded from the causes behind the inhibited growth of higher education in Badin Table 7 and Chart 4 also supports the same.

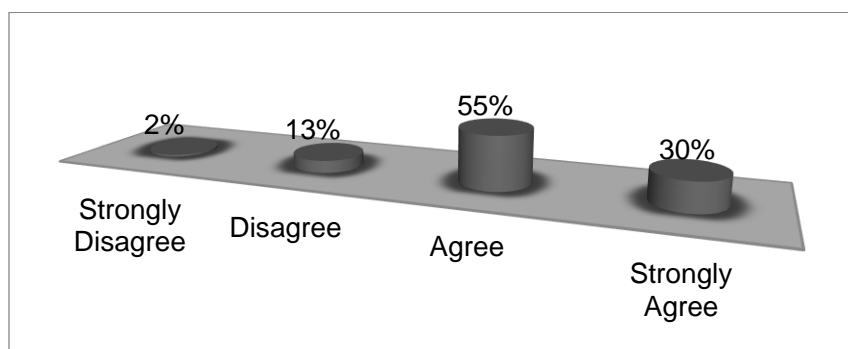
Satisfaction with Teachers

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers	100 100	1.00	4.00	3.1300	.70575

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 1					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Teachers	30.181	99	.000	2.13000	1.9900	2.2700



Significant P value in Table 10 and Mean score 3.1300 in Table 9 provide basis for acceptance of Hypothesis 5. Chart 5 also shows majority's agreement with the perception of satisfactory performance of teachers. The result corresponds to the literature that the teachers at higher education institutions are up to the mark. Hence this factor is excluded from the assumed factors as the causes of the problem.

Satisfaction with Administration

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Administration	100	1.00	4.00	2.6700	.89955
	100				

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Administration	-3.668	99	.000	-.33000	-.5085	-.1515

In Table 11 and Table 12 the significant P value and mediocre Mean score reflect that the students are somewhat satisfied with the efficiency of the campus administration, nevertheless significant P values provides evidence to accept the Hypotheses 6, which asserts that students are significantly satisfied with the efficiency of the campus administration, Chart 6 also supports it. Reported studies on the performance of out campuses of the public sector universities of Sindh i.e. Mirpurkhas, Badin, Dadu campuses, could not be found to compare the results, yet as far as the local newspapers and magazines are concerned the results are corresponding.

Satisfaction with Curriculum Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Curriculum	100	1.00	4.00	2.9200	.69165
	100				

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 1					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Curriculum	27.760	99	.000	1.92000	1.7828	2.0572

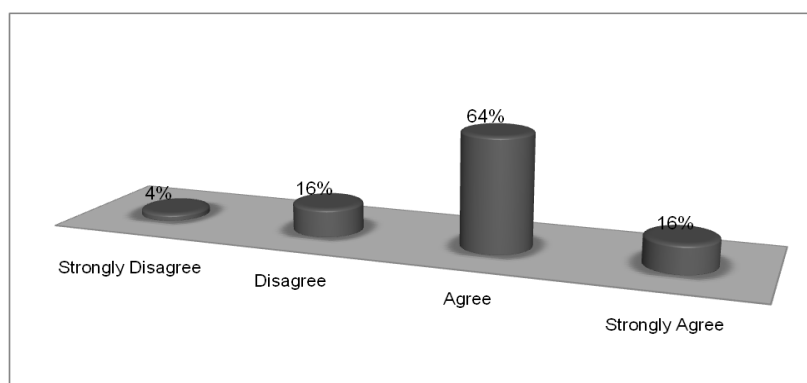


Table 13 and Table 14 shows the Significant P value in and Mean score 2.9200 that provide basis for acceptance of Hypothesis 7. Chart 7 also exhibits agreement of majority towards this notion. The result corresponds that student feels satisfied with curriculum activities thus the curriculum is much more important and must continue to be given.

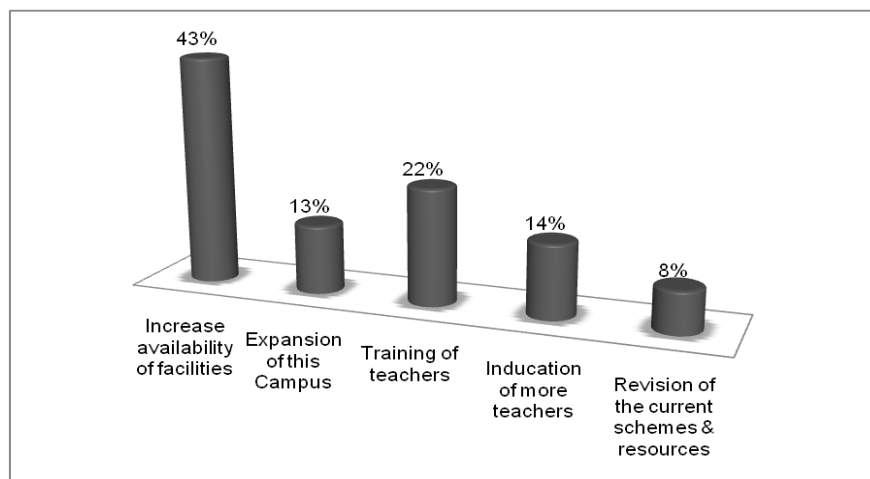
Remedial Measures Required

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Remedial measure	100	1.00	5.00	2.3100	1.36104
	100				

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 2					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Remedial Measure	2.278	99	.025	.31000	.0399	.5801



It was enquired which remedial measure is required for the instituting that will bring substantial change and improvements in the campus. Majority of the students opined that facilities should be increased at the campus, while a significant number also emphasized on teachers' training and increase in their number. Table 15, Table 16 and Chart 8 exhibits the results.

Conclusion

The present study categorically reveals that overall, the students feel satisfied with Sindh University Laar Campus Badin which was studied as a sample to portray higher education in Badin vis a vis problems, trends and prospects. The city has witnessed a disappointing growth and development of higher education, as only one institution has been in action to provide it, nevertheless the response and output are wide of the mark, if enrolment rate factor is taken into consideration. Various factors were probed to find out the causes behind the low response of development in higher education in Badin. Job expectancy was observed to be high as influenced from the fact that most of the graduates are working in different organizations in and out of Badin, thus this factor did not portray a clear picture of the causes behind the tardy growth of higher education in Badin. The students seemed to be quite satisfied with the performance of the teachers, on-campus facilities and efficiency of the administration of Sindh University Laar Campus.

On the other hand, when it came to the factor "Previous Education" the factor depicted a clear picture that students were found strongly dissatisfied with the fact that the campus is receiving minimum acceptable input of students to produce quality graduates. According to the respondents, this factor is one of the causes inhibiting the optimal promotion of higher education in Badin. In fact, some of the students relinquish their studies and the first year of the degree programs offered at the campus, whereas those who complete their degree programs

can hardly compete in the mainstream. Hence it is assertively concluded that input education is one of the factors obstructing the growth and development of higher education in Badin.

Implications

The study provides implications to the stake holders that in order to promote the higher education and the associated satisfaction and morale of the potential students, parents and guardians, it is need of the hour to ensure a transparent, streamlined and compatible education systems at SSC and HSC levels. Furthermore, students opine that the increased availability of on campus facilities may motivate potential students as a bid to promote higher education in this underdeveloped area of lower part of Sindh province.

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