

Teacher professionalism: Benchmark and Challenges in the University of Balochistan

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Abstract:

University of Balochistan was instituted in the early years of 1970s with the total cost of five and half lac rupees. A finite faculty was appointed to exert cognitive services to usher the gift of higher education to the people of newly fashioned province. Right after commencement, it had only five departments in all. But within a short span of time, the University emerged as the principle source for the production of trained brains for the development of the country in general, and for Balochistan in particular. Similarly, it produced behemoth chunk of professional teachers who have been serving the varsity since then. However, the edifice of professionalism of an individual erects upon the academic background, areas of experiences, training, exposure, and personal toil. A teacher conversant with necessary methods of imparting education and integrated with the cause of learning can be regarded as professional. The paper aims to measure the teacher professionalism, pin point the barricades confronted to it in University of Balochistan, and also suggest some workable strategies to invalidate those challenges.

Introduction:

The professionalism contains a substantial process of learning. From dawn to various stages, the domain of professionalism requires a massive toil and industry. "Professional Teacher is one who performs his duty, transfers his knowledge and remains update regarding national and international developments"^{1*}.

In Pakistan, the professional trainings and institutions regarding enhancement of teacher training exist in a nominal margin. However, in last four to six years this issue has been successful to pull the concentration of government sector including few of non government organizations in primary and secondary level.

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These organizations have initiated a host of programs to broaden the facilities of training for teachers of primary and secondary levels. On contrary, Universities were kept apart from this provocation. “Board of studies and Academic Council must organize proper training for faculty engaged in teaching profession in Balochistan University” 2*.

Moreover, some universities have launched faculty for training and development within the campuses, in which teaching faculty receive training from experts. Balochistan University has also set about a full fledged, well equipped with men and material, center for faculty development. Up till now, the center has carried out a good number of trainings, workshops, and numerous other programs to polish the skills of the teaching faculty. Despite the training center, the state of professionalism in Balochistan University still exerts a bleak signal. Scores of department lack trained teachers, grossly rely upon the faculty of without any elevated degree in education and teacher training skills. Lack of highly qualified teachers poses a fatal threat not only to the ranking of University but also to the standard of the higher education in the province.

Brief Description of Prevailing Milieu:

Our Universities do not seem to be lacking in anything. They have most highly qualified staff, majority of them with foreign degrees, mostly Ph .Ds. Standard publications and research work is demanded from them and they do produce these when required doing so. The Universities are not lacking in talent and capacity, and huge sums are spent on their maintenance and advancement. Still the standards are still falling down. Various causes have been suggested for this deterioration and remedies offered which have been sometimes practically applied. But here seems to be no improvement in the situation.1

Statistics reveals that current lot of teaching faculty despite having certain feathers in the credit line suffers from grim menace of frail performance. List of disciplines lack the required number of staff. A fair amount of available faculty members are either junior or under excessive Burdon of classes, which directly affects their professional capabilities. According to Dr Munir Ahmeed, “Disparity in allocation of the course contents equally poses a considerable threat to the profession of a teacher. By virtue of insufficient staff, faculty members have to manage three to four classes in a single day which is injustice as per the antiquates of the professionalism”. However, such disciplines also exist where not

a single student takes admission and the whole staff delights the unoccupied state of affairs throughout the year.

Table 1. Total number of faculty serving in Balochistan University

S. No	Faculty with designation	Strength
1	Professors	34
2	Associate Professors	24
3	Assistant Professors	133
4	Lectures	288
	Total:	479

Source: *General and Recruitment Section of UOB Quetta 3**

Balochistan University does hold the right to profess some demonstrable competence in the domain of higher education. According to academic section of the university, since 2002 it has successfully awarded degree for M. Phil and Ph .Ds to a total sum of 96 candidates and 822 others are in progress under the auspices of university.

Table 2. List of Degree Holders of Ph. D and M. Phil from 2004-2009

S. No	Ph. D	M. Phil	Total
Physical Sciences	12	38	50
Social Sciences	8	20	28
Languages	7	7	14
Others	1 (law)	3	04

Source: *Academic Section University of Balochistan *4*

Balochistan University is currently the principle source for the production of the human capital. Throughout the genesis of the history universities have been contributing their due share in national development. “It is time to explore new ways for these two segments of the society (University and Industry) to produce synergistic results through programmes of co-operative research. Moreover, the term ‘production’ is no more confined to industry alone. It is now generally understood to imply not only the production of material goods, but also intellectual work and services related to government and community activities”². Similarly Balochistan University has been consistently contributing to the market of the province in the domain.

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According to student affairs section, total numbers of 3675 students were accommodated in almost 29 disciplines during the 2008-09. Whereas, for them university has a strength of 370 faculty currently serving in the institution. This is quite sufficient for the mentioned number of students enrolled. The point of fact is the incompatible and declining trend of standard of the university. Add to these, a general observation hails that due to depleting examination system the competency of the students is also on the wane.

Reasons for Debilitated State of Professionalism:

The reasons for waning face of the professionalism are in abundance. Despite the overstated profess of the University administration, the standard has not yet earned commendable headways. The resultant value of whole of the disciplines is as low as an undermanned product. Moreover, the demand is on the rise while the excellence of the commodity is on the lowest ebb. "Perhaps the most common denominator of all specific university problems are cost and personal: because the funds can be managed and the staff of lower-level institutions are somewhat interchangeable, but departure of key professors from a university faculty may be a blow which no amount of increase funds can counter"³

Political face of the province can be charged as the vertex reason for the faint state of professionalism in the University. Since 2008, a good number of the highly qualified faculty members have leaped from Balochistan University to other Universities of the country. Among them included the cream of the faculty, fashioned by University of Balochistan within the span of decades. Most of them were doctorate degree holders and expert in their respective domain of study. It takes us decades to bring fourth faculty of such caliber. Moreover, the same course of action has not yet halted. Thus, political uncertainty mobilized certain faculty members of the University to migrate to other provinces. This can be termed as major fence in front of Balochistan University with regard to compete Universities of other provinces. The desert has bestowed inexplicable harm to professionalism of the University. Following the national criterion of professionalism, University of Balochistan has to make quite a few leaps for securing an appreciable place among the others. Thus, political unrest poses an enormous threat to merit of the learning process.

Table 3. Faculty left Balochistan University due the Political unrest in the Province

1	Prof: Dr. Masoom Yasinzai Vice Chancellor Balochistan University Ph. D from Balochistan University and moved to the Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad (as Vice- Chancellor)
2	Prof: Dr. Nadir Bakhat Dean faculty of State Sciences PhD from Balochistan University to Sargoda University
3	Prof: Dr. Chughtai Head of International Relations Department. PhD from Balochistan University to Sargoda University
4	Prof: Seemi Nagmana Tahir Dean faculty of Arts and Humanities PhD From Balochistan University to Urdu University Karachi
5	Prof: Dr. Mansoor Ahmed Kundi Dean Faculty of Languages PhD From Balochistan University to Gomal University Abatabad
6	Prof: Dr. Shafiq ul Rehman Registrar Balochistan University PhD From Balochistan University To Quaid-i-Azam University as Registrar
7	Prof. Dr. Zafar Illiyas Ph. D From Balochistan University to Allama Iqbal Open University Islambad

Source: *Recruitment Section UOB Quetta 5**

Uncompetitive atmosphere is the Primary reason for the fading caliber of Balochistan University. The attitudes towards the professionalism carry no weight. According to Prof. Dr. Taj Mohammad Breseeg “Motivation is the chief anchor for the establishment of the tradition of the research, which emerges from the sense of competition among the students, lecturers and professors.” Moreover, most lacking in the domain of the teaching faculty, neither it contains proper team work nor interdisciplinary collaboration over specific areas. At the moment there are twenty seven senior faculty members, as illustrated in the table no 4, who enjoy the privileges of Tenure Track System (TTS), which is an incentive for the promotion of research. “TTS has drawn a dividing line among the faculty because so far it has been failed to make any head way regarding the overhaul of the class environment within the Universities.6*” However, those who conduct research are mere interested to get their privilege extended. Class and learning process falls in the least significance of such highly qualified faculty members. Add to these, one can argue for sure that Higher Education Commission (HEC) has never

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sanctioned TTS for the cause of making money without bothering to care for classes. Thus, such sentiments pose a heavy lose to the earning process of the University.

Table 4. Faculty Serving on TTS

S. No	Designation	Strength
1	PhDs	06
2	Associate Professors	02
3	Assistant Professors	19
	Total:	27

Source: *Recruitment Section UOB Quetta 6**

Another reason incorporating the waning posture of criteria could be termed as the placement of the Ph. Ds over the administrative positions. The principle duty they carry out is the management of files. As professor Emeritus Dr Mahmood Ali Shah expressed, “Balochistan University is not a research oriented institution but rather an administratively driven institution. Host of the decisions are made under consideration of administrative needs rather than the demands of learning procedures, where even a clerk in administration section bears the courage to disregard a professor”. That is the reason why a considerable chunk of senior professors are serving in administration. In fact, if one can be sure of something, he would be sure of this that they have never been excelled for the clerical deeds. Nevertheless, the trained faculty all over the globe performs the duty for which they have skilled. Add to these the overwhelming number of the doctorate degree holders serves in the administrative section of Balochistan University.

University lectureship is no more considered as a prestigious profession as it was regarded some years back. The ever fast technological development and mounted innovative demands of the market has altered the tendencies. The young and aspirant lot either leaps towards the services or switch to highly paid occupations. Moreover, the remaining join universities with the aim to find it a relax profession. The very sense of leisure ruins their cognitive skills. Gradually, they begin to consider classes as burden. Such tendencies annihilate the standard of the learning process. “Although much has been said about the personal

development of the individual within the context of formal education, there is wide gape between what we want to do and what we are doing to enhance the development of young people.⁴

The aggressive behavior of students equally contributes to intervene in the proper learning process. University of Balochistan and its faculty witness number of events in which teacher have been victim of the violent behavior of the students. However, Punjab University is also not spare of this. “The New York Times”, and national news papers of Pakistan reported. That “Professor Iftikar Baloch, the principle of the college of Earth and Environmental Sciences and Chairman of the committee on discipline in Punjab, was severely Beaton by dozens of members of the Islami Jamiat Taleba (IJT), the student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami.⁵”

Another ill omen happens to be the politically influenced appointments. Somehow, different pressure groups have managed to get their workers appointed in host of disciplines. They have still retained their integrity and bring the problems of outside to campus. “All the societal problems find their way to the institutions. Due political flux in the province Balochistan University troubles time and again and the learning process fail to sail smoothly” Dr. Taj Muhammad Bressegh commented. The immediate ramifications of such faculty fall over the main stakeholder i. e. the students. Most of the faculty members appointed by the recommendation of the pressure groups are unable to deliver appropriate lectures. Despite enhancing the professional capabilities they often indulge in the management of examinations or such other deeds to find some extra earnings. Moreover, doing so, they not only abide by the groups they once belonged to, but also accommodate their attaché in the process. Therefore, this horde of the black sheep in the faculty can be regarded as principle barricade to the effective learning and teaching process in the University.

Integrity and lack of ownership also contribute in the devitalization of the learning process in Balochistan University. The entire hierarchy seems least interested in the rank of the institution among the other fast growing Universities of the country. According to HEC ranking of the 69 top national Universities on basis of research publications in 2008, Balochistan University secured a commendable 18th position with 40 publication, much ahead than the well funded Balochistan University of Information and Management Sciences (BUIIMS), lies on 61st with two publication in 2008 and Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University Quetta on 68th with a single publication in 2008. They do not care a fig for the number of the research articles published or in progress in national or

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International journals. Publishing of the research articles in national and international journals is the principle issue which needs efficient maneuvering and marketing of the affairs, otherwise publishers do not entertain. Dr Munir Ahmed rightly expressed, “Researchers are troubled with the behemoth discouragement by the owners of the National and International journals regarding publication of the research articles.” Previously, Agha Gul the Ex Vice Chancellor launched an incentive regarding enhancement of the research culture within the University. According to the stimulus package those who succeeded to get their article published in International journals could received an amount of ten thousand rupees in cash. Whereas, for article published in local journals, writers clinched a sum amount of five thousand rupees. By and by, this enticement raised the rank of University and placed it among the highly contributing Universities of the country. But regretfully, the very idea was considered as impractical by the administration in the office and revoked it once for all. Therefore, no more illustration than this can better justify the devoid of sincerity of administrators with the cause of the Institution.

Dissimilarity between the researches carried out and demands of the market contains a huge gulf. “Most of he researcher now done by the scholars in foreign universities is either irrelevant or even inimical to our national interests. There is no proper planning or specific program for research in our country. The government and the universities are equally indifferent to what field of research a scholar may choose and what may be its relevance to our national requirements. On the individual level the only objective before our scholars is primary careerism. In developed countries research is directly related to industry, and in the majority of the cases it is the industry that sponsors research and gives the project to university. We have neither the industry of the developed world, nor its problems. Consequently, a scholar who has done some valuable research abroad, finds himself useless in his own country where neither those problems exist on which he has worked nor does he ever again see the apparatus on which he conducted his research.⁶”

University campus enjoys lucrative worth of two think tank institutions i.e. the Area Study Center and Balochistan Study Center. Ironically, due to host of problems, contributions of both the institutions in the domain of research are insufficient to prove their existence. “Structural flaw halts proper functions of Area Studies and Pakistan Study Centers in Pakistan. There are six Area Study Centers and Six Pakistan Study Centers exist as federal institutions within the

premises of respective Universities and operate under those which are barricade to the independent function of the Centers” said by Munir Ahmed Baloch Director Area Study Center Balochistan University Quetta. Moreover, institutions of such stature entertain full-fledged classes in other parts of the country. Despite sufficient men and material these institutions always remains under performance.

Conclusion:

The gauge of the professionalism apparently varies from one region to another. However, all of those could be brought home on a single agenda of well being of students. As has been already discussed in the report, that University of Balochistan contains a massive quantity of resources in term of men and material to cater a standardized education to students. They have capacity and skill to deliver elevated services to the institution under well calculated projects. In term of enrolled Students University of Balochistan does not lag behind than any of the national varsity. A well deliberated exploitation of the human capital necessarily bestows a meaningful service to the province. The above mentioned statistics obviously maintains that the menace of mismanagement and lack of the proper improvisation are the chief hindrance and fatal to the performance of the University. Over and above the very indifference poses a gradual depletion of the edifice it has constructed in decades. Infact, once it has enjoyed a commendable ranking among the top universities of the country. Therefore, it is high time to ponder that, why the very position could not maintained by it for long? Digging out the reasons responsible for fading face of the institution, and tackling those with earnest responsibility and ownership, we can not only gain the fore sacked position, but also retain it to lead an elevated position among the other universities of Pakistan.

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ENDNOTES:

- 1* Interview of Prof. Dr. Taj Muhammad, Breseeg,
Department of History University of Balochistan, Quetta
- 2* Munir Ahmed, Dr. Director Area Study Center University of Balochistan,
Quetta
- 3* Recruitment Section of Balochistan University.
- 4* Academic Section of Balochistan University
- 5* Recruitment Section of Balochistan University
- 6* Interview of P Ali Shah, Prof Emeritus Dr.
- 7* Recruitment Section of Balochistan University

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