

# Analyzing the Impact of Public Policies on Higher Education in Southern Punjab

Muhammad Shaukat Malik, Abdul Ghafoor Awan\* and Farkhanda Tehseen\*

*Institute of Banking and Finance*

*Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan*

*\*Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan Campus*

*Corresponding Author Email Address: shoukatmalik@bzu.edu.pk*

## Abstract

**Purpose** - Higher Education Institutions are generally regarded as the main source for transforming the culture, norms and values of a region. This study primarily investigates the impact of public policies (both federal and provincial) on the present state of higher education in South Punjab (Pakistan). The study will also highlight the role of higher education in the overall development of the region.

**Design/ Methodology/ Approach** - In order to present a comprehensive overview, data has been collected from all the public sector higher education institutions of Southern Punjab. Survey Questionnaires were circulated amongst the students and faculty members working in the universities of South Punjab and their opinions were recorded.

**Findings** - Data illustrates that most of the teachers and students (41.38%) were satisfied with the governmental policies during the last few years for the betterment of higher education in the country. A majority (59.38%) of the respondents agreed that importance of education has increased during the last ten years. A majority of respondents also agreed that a recent measure taken by Higher Education Commission (HEC) has given opportunities to students from middle-class families to pursue higher education with ease.

**Practical Implications** - The questionnaire focused on the policies related to Higher Education developed by the federal and provincial governments in Pakistan.

**Originality Value** Limited research has been done, with reference to Pakistan in general and South Punjab in particular. This research study is a pioneer study that tends to explore the impact of public policies on higher education sector and if they have been successful in the overall development of the region.

**Keywords** Pakistan, South Punjab, Public Policy, Access to Education, Globalized Policy

**Paper type** Research Paper

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is one of the most “strategically” important countries in South Asia (Kreft, 2008). Since its independence from British India in 1947, efforts have been made to improve the overall infrastructure of sectors like health, education, technology, industry etc. Although, the present situation for education is not very encouraging, but still education has been regarded as one of the prime sectors in national development (Sabir, 2002). The founder of Pakistan is on record to have said that the future of this country is dependent upon the kind

---

The current issue of this journal is available on the official website of Institute: <http://www.ibfbzu.com/index.php/sajbs/>



**South Asian Journal of Banking and Social Sciences**

Vol. 1, No.01 (2015), ISSN: 2410-2067

© Institute of Banking & Finance, BZU Multan

of education given to our children (Rehman and Sewani, 2010). Several educational plans and policies have been enforced during the last sixty six years, but without any major achievements. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan (2013-14), the present adult literacy rate of country is 58% (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2013-14). Pakistan, like other developing countries, is gripped into serious socio-economic troubles of poverty, unemployment, inflation, and poor health conditions. Education is believed to be the most effective tool that overcome such problems, leaving a cross cutting effect on all aspects of human life. It is one of the major determinants of economic growth in endogenous growth theories (Khattak, Khan, Tariq, Khan, 2012). Keeping in view the significance of education, the developing countries are giving much weightage to the formulation of educational policies and are linking their education sector to the market demand.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan was created in 2002 to serve as the apex body for all matters pertaining to policy, plans, programs, standards, funding and oversight of higher education in the country and transform the higher education sector to serve as an engine of growth for the socio-economic development in the country (HEC, 2014). HEC is responsible to formulate policies, guiding principles and priorities for higher education institutions for promotion of socio-economic development of the country, funding of higher education institutions, accreditation and quality assurance of academic programs and preparation of plans for the development of higher education and express its opinion on all matters relating thereto (HEC, 2014).

This paper is an effort to examine the policies made by government institutions such as HEC with regards to higher education in the country and what betterment (if any) has taken place during the last few years. The focus of this paper is on South Punjab (Pakistan), where people are generally perceived as deprived and under-developed. Reason for opting to explore South Punjab is that many circles in Pakistan are beginning to voice their opinions about the state of educational facilities available in the region. The presence of only three (03) public sector universities in the region also raises questions over the performance of government in this region. Most of the research done in this domain has focused on primary and secondary education, but there is a potential to explore the standards of higher education being present in this region.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) claims to have paid special attention towards increasing access to higher education in remote areas of the country including those present in South Punjab. The emergence of private and public-private sub-campus (Ali, 2012) of large universities in remote areas is considered as a positive initiative towards provision of higher education facilities in the country. Over the last few years, a total of 55

new university campuses and sub-campus and 31 new universities have been established in rural areas throughout Pakistan (HEC, 2014).

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Majority of the recent literature (Spring, 2008; Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010) in the domain of educational development has focused on globalized policies for education i.e. “best practices” adopted in one part of the world can be replicated in the other part of the world as well. According to Rizvi and Lingard (2010), it is becoming important for countries around the globe to prioritize education in order to develop a competitive workforce. The adoption of a globalized policy for education would also less developed countries to improve their infrastructure and strive to provide better educational facilities to their people. Generally, these reforms and policies emerge in the developed countries and are lent to developing countries (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009).

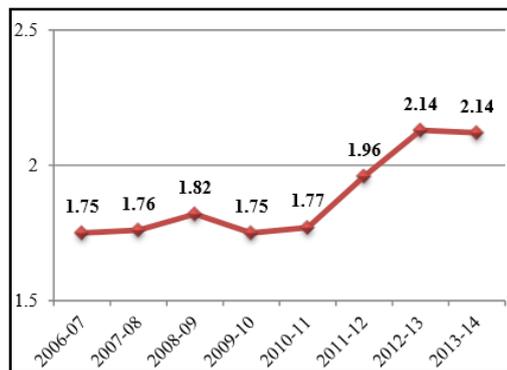
The modern era is driven by global comparative measures such as MDG targets set by United Nations, EFA targets etc. Presence of such measures is an important step towards formulating a system, where performance of countries can be judged with respect to the facilities they provide for education (Spring, 2008). Countries throughout the developed and developing world are benchmarked against these standards and if a country does not display high scores on these standards, a call for reform is generated (Ali, 2012). These global comparisons create the need for ‘catch-up’ by developing countries, leading them to borrow tested education reform solutions from elsewhere.

The demand for higher education is believed to be effected by “...*educational policies, income level, cost of education, access to educational institutions, standard of the lower level of education, the structure of education, the educational background of the parents and quality of teaching*” (Kodde and Ritzen, 1988). According to Campbell and Siegal (1967), the demand for higher education is positively associated with income and inversely associated with price (Cost) of higher education. Over the years, the raised admission standards and cost of education also affect the enrollment rates in universities (Malik and Naveed, 2012).

Pakistan is one of the most important developing countries in the world. Its strategic importance has been recognized by many historians and researchers throughout the world. Since its independence from British India in 1947, efforts have been made to uplift the educational standards of the country. Many governments formulated policies and procedures to enhance the enrollment rates in schools, colleges and universities. As of 2014, according to Higher Education Commission, there are a total of 135 universities in the country, including 74 public sector and 61 private sector universities. Since 2001 the government has

invested heavily in advancing the higher education sector, which has resulted in an increase in the number of universities, enrolment rates, scholarships, graduates (from national and overseas institutions), research grants, and, importantly, the building of a research culture.

The overall budget of Higher Education Commission (HEC) has been on the rise since 2001, though the development budget has been recently curtailed due to unsettling economic conditions of the country (Khawaja, 2013). Besides the utmost importance of the education, literacy rate in Pakistan still remains at 58% (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2013-14). Furthermore, Pakistan has a very low Human Development Index that is 0.551, keeping it at 136th Position in the world (UNDP, 2008). Pakistan spends a very low percentage of its GDP on education. The expenditure on education remained only 2.14% of GDP during the 2013-14 (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2008-9). The following chart shows the expenditure on education in the last few years:



**Figure 1 Education Expenditure as percentage of GDP**  
(Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2013-14)

Universities in Pakistan are generally considered as the major source of higher education and as specified above they have shown remarkable improvement during the past few years. The introduction of private sector, especially the launch of public-private partnership initiatives has opened new avenues of growth for the education sector. According to (Ali, 2012), the government realized the important role of sustained education and the necessity of a well-defined research culture, due to which it established the Higher Education Commission in 2002.

According to Dutta (1999), Socio-economic status is also said to have considerable impact on higher education. Pakistan is regarded as one of the most diverse countries in terms of income distribution and access to education (Khattak et al., 2012). It is easier for people living in urban areas to secure admission in top-class institutions, however on the other hand it is increasingly difficult for people of rural or remote areas to get access to even mediocre institutions. This divided tends to create problems for government to enforce a uniform educational policy. Over the years, major universities were located in big cities and the students from rural areas had to travel to the city in order to earn a reputable

degree. Sometimes this “shifting” was financially and socially not viable, however things have changed during the past few years and opening of campuses, sub-campus and private institutions in remote areas has been considered an encouraging sign. However, issue still remains with the financial viability of poor people to educate their children in private campuses, which charge twice or thrice the fee that their parent university is charging.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are among the most important sources of knowledge and innovation. As a result, governments are rethinking how to maximize the benefits from higher education for skills and development not only at the national, but also at the regional level (Aziz, Bloom, Humair, Jimenez, Rosenberg, Sathar, 2014). Higher education institutions can play multiple roles in their regions, e.g. knowledge creation through research and technology transfer; knowledge transfer through education and human resources development and cultural and community development which create the conditions where innovation thrives. For government the key justification for supporting innovation-related activities in HEIs is their potential socio-economic impact and the benefits that may result from new products, services and companies.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the gaps identified in the literature, the following are the main objectives of this study:

- i. To investigate the role of higher education in societal development, particularly in South Punjab (Pakistan).
- ii. To analyze the issues related to “access” of educational facilities in the rural areas of Pakistan, taking evidence from South Punjab.
- iii. To determine if government policies over the past few years have been successful in providing quality education in rural areas of Pakistan.

In order to seek answers to the research questions highlighted in the preceding section, quantitative research study was undertaken. A survey questionnaire was developed to generate primary data and the population consisted of two of the major public sector universities of South Punjab.

**Table 1 Sample of the Study**

Sr.No.	Institution Name
01	Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan
02	The Islamia University, Bahawalpur

All the students and faculty members at Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan and The Islamia University Bahawalpur were selected as the population of the study. The study

was based on survey technique, with the sample selected through “Probability Sampling” method (multistage cluster sampling), which according to Connolly (2007) serves as the foundation of all statistical tests. After determining the target population size in selected universities, sample was calculated with the help of statistical formula at confidence level 95% (margin error 5%).

Departments of Social Sciences and Department of Management Science of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan were the sampling frame of the study. Data collected from respondents of respective departments at one point of time so the time dimension of the study is cross sectional. A questionnaire was developed to analyze the public policies towards higher education in southern Punjab. The questionnaire comprised of five point Likert scale to evaluate the role of public policies at higher education institutions of Bahawalpur and Multan. A total of twenty-two questions were present in the questionnaire.

The validity of research instrument was measured from ten experts from Department of Management Sciences of BZU and IUB. For the validation of research tool researcher distributed the first draft of the questionnaire to the experts. In the light of their feedback, some statements were deleted and some were modified. The final draft of the questionnaire was applied to check the validity of the tool. For this purpose initially ten faculty members and twenty students of district Bahawalpur were selected. After the completion of the pilot testing, responses were feed on SPSS and following results were extracted from the pilot testing. The reliability value of the questionnaire was 0.875.

## 4.0 RESULTS

Quantitative data analysis contained tables and graphs of opinions taken by respondents. The third objective of the study was to investigate the impact of public policy on Higher Education in Southern Punjab. The collected data was analyze on the base of questionnaire on the role of public policy in higher education that was tabulated and analyzed using, mean score, t-test, standard deviation, frequency and percentage.

The detailed analysis of data presented as follows.

**Table 2 Prospects of acquiring Higher Education in Pakistan**

Scale	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know enough to say	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>f</i>	73	287	222	61	7	2.45	0.852	.035
<b>Compare Mean:</b>		<b>Teacher = 2.36, t. -2.022</b>			<b>Students = 2.50 t. -2.070</b>			

Data in table represents the opinion of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab about the status of higher education study in Pakistan. Opinion of 650 teachers and students were collected, of which, 11.2% subjects were of the view that higher

education study in Pakistan is excellent, 44.2% opined that higher education study in Pakistan is good, 34.2% viewed it as fair, 9.4% said that higher education study is poor and 1.1% didn't know enough to give any opinion. Overall, most of the subjects of the survey (44.2%) viewed higher education in Pakistan as good. The mean was worked out to be 2.45 and standard deviation was computed to be 0.852. Its (P) value is significant and less than 0.05.

**Table 3 Necessity of getting Higher Education in Pakistan**

Scale	More Important	Less Important	About the same	Don't know	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>F</i>	510	97	31	12	1.30	0.46	.000
%	78.5	14.9	4.8	1.8			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 1.40, t. 3.271      Students = 1.24 t. 3.202**

The table describes the views of people on the necessity of Higher Education in Pakistan in the present era. Data in table depicts the opinion of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab. It is quite clear from the data that 78.5% of the subjects were of the view that currently higher education is more important, 14.9% said that the importance of higher education has decreased, 4.8% were of the view that importance has not changed and 1.8% didn't comment on the statement. Most of the subjects under survey, (78.5%) opined that compared to 10 years ago, getting a higher education today is more important. The mean of the data was 1.30 and standard deviation was found out to be 0.646. Its (P) value is significant and less than 0.05.

**Table 4 Cost of getting higher education in Pakistan**

Scale	More costly	Less costly	About the same	Don't know	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>f</i>	526	71	43	10	1.80	0.606	.000
%	80.9	10.9	6.6	1.5			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 1.44, t. 4.629      Students = 1.20, t. 4.329**

The data in the table above describes the views of people on the expenses of Higher Education in Pakistan in the present era, compared to expenses 10 years ago. Data in table shows the opinion of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab. It is quite clear from the data that 80.9% of the teachers and students were of the view that currently higher education is more costly, 10.9% said that it is less costly now, 6.6% said that the expenditure has not changed while 1.5% didn't comment on the topic under review. Overall survey showed that majority of the teachers and students (80.9%) said that Higher Education has become more costly compared to that of 10 years ago. The mean of the collected data was found to be 1.29 and standard deviation was worked out to be 0.656. Its (P) value is significant and less than 0.05.

**Table 5 Getting Higher Education has become challenge**

Scale	More difficult	Less difficult	About as difficult	Don't know	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>f</i>	249	307	63	31	1.81	0.797	.018

%	38.3	47.2	9.7	4.8
---	------	------	-----	-----

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 1.82, t.373 Students = 1.80, t..382**

The data in the table above describes about the acquisition of Higher Education in Pakistan presently, compared to that 10 years ago. Survey conducted depicts the opinion of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab. 38.3% of the subject, including teachers and students, said that difficulty has increased, 47.2% were of the view that difficulty has decreased, 9.7% opined that it is about as difficult as before, while 4.8% had no opinion in this regard. Overall data has shown that most of the teachers and students (47.2%) opined that Higher Education acquisition has become less difficult than before. The mean of the data is 1.81 and standard deviation is 0.797. Its (P) value is significant and less than 0.05.

**Table 6 Students are unable to pay their dues for Higher Education**

Scale	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.D	Sig.
f	202	250	112	61	25	2.17	1.001	.550
%	31.1	38.5	17.2	9.4	3.9			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 2.24, 11.371 Students = 2.12 t. 1.368**

The data in the above table describes the views of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab about the statement "Students have to borrow too much money to pay for their higher education". 31.1% of the teachers and students strongly agreed with the statement, 38.5% of them somewhat agreed, 17.2% of them somewhat disagreed, 9.4% strongly disagree, 3.4% teachers and students neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 0.5% of the total subjects didn't comment on the statement. Overall data illustrates that most of the teachers and students (38.5%) somewhat agreed with the fact that students have to borrow too much money to pay for their higher education. The mean of the data is computed to be 2.17 while standard deviation is 1.100. Its (P) value is insignificant and above from the value 0.05.

**Table 7 Parents can pay the university dues with ease**

Scale	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.D	Sig.
F	52	115	197	259	99	3.14	1.021	.829
%	8.0	17.7	30.3	39.8	12.2			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 3.00, £-2.791 Students = 3.23 t-2.720**

The table describes the views of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab about the statement "Parents can bear university dues of their students easily". 8.0% of the subjects under survey strongly agreed with the statement, 17.7% of them somewhat agreed, 30.3% of them somewhat disagreed, 39.8% of them strongly disagreed, 4.2% neither agreed nor disagreed, while 8.0% of the teachers and students under survey didn't comment on the statement. Overall data illustrates that most of the

teachers and students (39.8%) strongly disagreed with the fact that parents can bear university dues of their students easily. The mean of the data is 3.14 and standard deviation is 1.021. Its (P) value is insignificant and is above the value of 0.05.

**Table 8 Value of Higher Education in Pakistan**

Scale	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>F</i>	174	227	74	107	68	2.54	1.425	.758
%	26.8	34.9	11.4	16.5	10.5			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 252, t. -.259**

**Students = 2.55 t. -.257**

Data in the table illustrates the views of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab about the statement "Students appreciate the value of a college education only when they have some personal responsibility for paying what it cost". 26.8% of the teachers and students included in the survey as subjects strongly agreed with the statement, 34.9% somewhat agreed, 11.4% of them somewhat disagreed, 16.5% of them strongly disagree, -10.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. Overall data illustrates that most of the teachers and students (34.9%) somewhat agreed with the fact that students appreciate the value of a college education only when they have some personal responsibility for paying what it cost. The mean of the data is 2.54 and standard deviation is 1.425. Its (P) value is insignificant and is above the value of 0.05.

**Table 9 Fee Strategy of Universities**

Scale	Work to keep the costs down	Raise prices whenever they can	Don't know enough to say	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>F</i>	266	270	114	1.80	0.606	.000
%	40.9	41.5	17.5			

**Compare Mean Teacher = 1.78, t. 185**

**Students = 1.77 t. 184**

The table above describes the opinion of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab about the fee strategy of universities regarding higher education. According to the views of teachers and students taken as the subject of this survey, 40.9% said that universities work to keep the prices down, 41.5% said that universities raise prices whenever they can, while 17.5% said that they didn't know enough to comment. Overall data portrays that major proportion of the teachers and students (41.5%) were of the view that universities work on the principal of raising the fee whenever they can, although the views are quite similar in the first both options. The mean of the data is 1.77 and standard deviation is worked out to be 0.736. Its (P) value is insignificant and is above the value of 0.05.

**Table 10 Opportunities of getting higher education for low income families**

Scale	Less Opportunity to get higher	More opportunity to	About the same	Don't know	Mean	S.D	Sig.
-------	--------------------------------	---------------------	----------------	------------	------	-----	------

<i>f</i>	520	65	62	3	1.30	0.656	.001
%	80.0	10.0	9.5	0.5			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 1.37, t.2.074.**

**Students = 1.26 t.2.013**

The data in the table above depicts the views of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab about the opportunities available to qualified students from low-income families to get higher education. Data shows that (80.0%) of the subjects under the survey said that less opportunities to get higher education are available to such people, 10.0% said that more opportunities are available, 9.5% said that they get the same opportunities, while 0.5% restrained themselves from commenting. Overall data shows that most of the teachers and students (80.0%) gave the feedback that students from low-income families get less opportunities for higher education. The mean of the data is 1.30 and standard deviation is 0.656. Its (P) value is significant and less than 0.05.

**Table 11 Academic Standards of Higher Education**

Scale	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>f</i>	201	243	87	56	63	2.32	1.333	.680
%	30.9	37.4	13.4	8.6	9.7			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 2.40, t. L233**

**Students = 2.40, t.1.241**

The data in the table signifies the opinion of teachers and students from universities and colleges of southern Punjab on the issue of deteriorating academic standards in the universities of Pakistan. 30.9% of the teachers and students included in the survey as subjects strongly agreed that academic standards are deteriorating, 37.4% somewhat agreed, 13.4% of them somewhat disagreed, 8.6% strongly disagree, 6.6% neither agreed nor disagreed, while 3.1% of the subjects didn't comment on the statement under consideration. Overall data portrays that most of the teachers and students (37.4%) somewhat agreed that academic standards are deteriorating in the universities of Pakistan. The mean for this data is compiled to be 2.32 and standard deviation is worked out to be 1.333. Its (P) value is insignificant and is above the value of 0.05

**Table 12 Admission Policies are designed in accordance with the demands of the society**

Scale	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>F</i>	206	222	110	70	42	2.28	1.258	.000
%	31.7	34.2	16.9	10.8	6.5			

**Compare Mean: Teacher = 2.58, t.882 Students = 2.10, t4.649**

The data in the table above helps us find out the view teachers and student of this specific region about admissions being in accordance with development and man power needs of the society. As per the point of view of the subjects under the survey, 31.7% strongly agreed with the statement, 34.2% somewhat agreed with the statement, 16.9% somewhat disagreed, 10.8% strongly disagreed, 4.2% neither agree nor disagreed with the statement

and 2.3% didn't gave their opinion about the statement under discussion. Overall data presents that majority of teachers and students in the survey, that are (34.2%) of total are somewhat agreed with the statement "Admissions are in accordance with the development and human resources needs of society." The mean of the data is 2.28 and standard deviation is 1.258.Its (P) value is significant and less than 0.05.

**Table 13 Linkages of University and Community**

Scale	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>f</i>	229	230	88	37	66	2.24	1.365	.015
<i>%</i>	35.2	35.4	13.5	5.7	10.2			
<b>Compare Mean:</b>		<b>Teacher = 2.49, t. 3.711</b>		<b>Students = 2.09</b>		<b>t.3.673</b>		

Data in the table above identifies the point of view of teachers and students about the statement "University should outreach to the community through extension in its services". As per the point of view of the subjects under the survey including teachers and students from colleges and universities of Southern Punjab, 35.2% strongly agreed with the statement, 35.4% somewhat agreed, 13.5% somewhat disagreed, 5.7% strongly disagreed, 6.0% neither agree nor disagreed and 4.2% of the total subjects didn't gave their opinion about the statement. Overall data presents that majority of teachers and students, that are (35.4%) of total, were of the opinion that universities should somewhat outreach to the community through extension services. The mean of the data was 2.24 and standard deviation was 1.365.Its (P) value is significant and less than 0.05.

**Table 14 Budget for Higher Education**

Scale	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.D	Sig.
<i>f</i>	97	164	136	216	37	2.90	1.204	.533
<i>%</i>	14.9	25.2	20.9	8.6	5.7			
<b>Teacher = 2.89, L-1.336</b>		<b>Students = 2.92 1.-1.323</b>						

Data in the above table illustrates the view teachers and student of this specific region towards the funding of government for higher education. As per teachers point of view, 14.9% of the teachers and students strongly agreed that government is providing sufficient budget for higher education, 25,2%of them somewhat agreed, 20.9% somewhat disagreed, 33,2% strongly disagreed, 4.8% of the total neither agree nor disagreed and 0.9% teachers and students didn't gave their opinion about the statement. Overall data presents that majority of teachers and students, that are (33.2%) of total, strongly disagreed with the fact that government is providing sufficient funds to the higher education. The mean of the data is 2.90 and standard deviation is 1.204.1ts (P) value is insignificant and is above the value of 0.05.

The general descriptive results illustrate that most of the teachers and students (55.4%) are of the opinion that standards of higher education are improving in Pakistan. Empirically, it is quite clear from the data that majority (80.9%) respondents feel that higher education has become more costly in Pakistan during the last 10 years, while very few of the respondents disagreed with this statement. Data analysis further found that most of the teachers and students (68.5%) were of the view that higher education is important in today's world for successful life while almost 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the participants responded against the statement. Data also shows that most of the teachers and students (75.7%) believe that vast majority of people living in rural areas who are qualified to go for higher education are unable to do so due to lack of opportunities available to them. However, in other statement 47.2% of the participants believed that access to higher education have become easier during the past few years.

Data explained that most of the respondents i.e. both teachers and students (67.5%) were agreed with the fact that students have to borrow too much money to pay for their higher education and that parents can hardly bear university dues. On a positive note, 61.7% of the respondents believed that awareness towards attaining higher education has increased over the few years, which showed that government has been successful in imparting awareness of education and its benefits. With regards to the disparity present in the educational standards of public and private universities, almost 75.5% of the respondents believed that there is a need to establish a linkage between public and private sector higher education institution so that both can "learn" from the best practices and successful models of each.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the research questions of the study it is concluded that public attitudes are sensitive to the relationship between the perceived importance and necessity of higher education and perceptions of access. A major research question of the study was to find mechanisms to cater to the educational needs of the people located in South Punjab.

People are comfortable with the idea that higher education is becoming even more essential, but concerns have been raised about the access to educational facilities. Situations often become difficult, when these two elements i.e. Realization about the benefits of higher education and Access to institutions, do not keep pace with each other. The rapid growth of population has created intense competition for scarce resources. The spread of electronic media has made the people realize the value of education as an instrument of upward social mobility. Consequently, there is a keen contest for the limited seats in universities particularly in professional and technical institutions. This has also placed the

entire education system under stress, leading to cheating and other unfair practices, bringing the system almost to collapse.

Data concluded that most of the teachers and students were of the opinion that higher education studies in Pakistan are fair while most of the teachers and students opined that higher education has become more important compared to its importance 10 years ago. Data further concluded that higher education has become more costly now. Higher education is important in today's world for a successful life. Without getting higher education one cannot get proper job. Data also concluded that most of the teachers and students gave the feedback that students from low-income families get less opportunities for higher education. Based on the results and inferred conclusions, the following recommendations are being made:

1. Job oriented curriculum must be designed / modernized. It seemed that policy makers modernize the curriculum on emergent basis where as comprehensive curriculum designing required minimum 3-5 years as per experts' opinion.
2. A continuous system of planning and forecasting should be developed to respond to changing and increasing demands for higher education in view of the changes in the demographic picture.
3. Merit should be the only consideration for entry to higher education. Access to higher education must be based on entrance tests, if so desired by an institution.
4. Fee free universities may be established in remote and neglected areas of the country (specifically southern Punjab) as researcher has conducted the research in this area which is the most neglected area.
5. Institutional diversity is the answer to stipulated greater access to higher education. In order to train the manpower a large number of technical, vocational institutions would be needed.
6. New disciplines/emerging sciences (specifically in skill field not only in traditional disciplines) should be introduced in the public sector universities and those departments which have lost utility should be downsized or merged or even closed down.
7. Public sector universities should be encouraged to enlarge their intake by establishing additional campuses, ensuring all necessary academic, administrative and financial infrastructures.
8. Guidelines should be laid giving reasonable ratios to be followed by degree colleges and universities to ensure optimum utilization of resources.
9. Quality assurance mechanism should be strengthen and sanitized as lucent academic system not fulfilling the requirement of the job market current demand.

## REFERENCES

1. Ali, S. (2012). Education policy borrowing in Pakistan: Public-private partnerships. *Education in the broader Middle East: Borrowing a baroque arsenal, Oxford: Symposium Books*, 23-40.
2. Ali, S., Tahir, M. S. (2009). Reforming education in Pakistan – tracing global links. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education*, 3(15), 1-16.
3. Altbach, P.G., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L.E. (2009). Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution. *World Conference on Higher Education, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*.
4. Aziz, M., Bloom, D.E., Humair, S., Jimenez, E., Rosenberg, L, Sathar, Z. (2014). Education system reform in Pakistan: Why, When and How? *Institute for the Study of Labor – Policy Paper Series*, No. 76
5. Campbell, R., & Seigal, B.N. (1967). The Demand for Higher Education in United States: 1919-64. *The American Economic Review*, 57(3), 482-494
6. Dutta, J., Sefton, J., & Weale, M. (1999). Education and Public Policy. *Fiscal Studies*, 20(4), 351-386.
7. Economic Survey of Pakistan. (2014). *Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan*
8. Higher Education Commission Pakistan. (2014). List of Recognized Universities and DAIs. *Learning Innovation Division, HEC Islamabad*
9. Khattak, N.R., Khan, J., Khan, I., Tariq, M. (2012). An analysis of the demand for higher education in Pakistan with special reference to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *City University Research Journal*. 3(1)
10. Khawaja, S. (2013). Public Policy: Formulation, Implementation Analysis. *Pakistan Focused – Islamabad, Pakistan*.
11. Kodde, D.A., & Ritzen, J.M.M. (1988). Direct and Indirect Effects of Parental Education Level on The Demand for Higher Education. *Journal of Human Resources*, 23(3), 356-371
12. Kreft, H. (2008). The geo-political importance of Pakistan. *Institut fur Strategie- Politik-Sicherheits and Wirtschaftsberatung, Berlin*.
13. Lowry, R.C. (2001). Government Structure, trustee selection and public university prices and spending: Multiple means to similar ends. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45, 845-61.
14. Malik, R., & Naveed, A. (2012). Financing Education in Pakistan: The Impact of Public Expenditure and Aid on Educational Outcomes. *RECOUP Working Paper*, No. 42
15. Meier, K.J. (2000). Politics and the Bureaucracy: Policy Making in the fourth branch of government, *Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers*.

16. Ministry of Education and Training - Pakistan. (2012). Year Book. *Ministry of Education and Training Pakistan*
17. Northern Illinois University. (2004). Northern Stateline Economic Development Region: Critical Skills Shortage Report Manufacturing Industry. *DeKalb, IL: NIU Outreach, Centre for Governmental Studies.*
18. Perna, L., Finney, J., & Callan, P. (2011). A story of decline: Performance and Policy in Illinois Higher Education. *Institute for Research on Higher Education.*
19. Rehman, M.H., & Sewani.S.M.S. (2013). Critical Analysis of the Educational Policies of Pakistan. *The Dialogue*, 3(3)
20. Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). Globalizing Educational Policy. *Routledge London United Kingdom.*
21. Sabir, M. (2003). Gender and public spending on education in Pakistan: a study of disaggregated benefit incidence. *Social Policy and Development Centre Pakistan, Conference Paper No. 48*
22. Spring, J. (2008). Globalization of Education: An Introduction. *New York- NY Routledge*