**GIGO Phenomenon at Universities**

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Ideally, Universities are required to produce qualified graduates who can be a useful part of society by serving or become a solution provider to individuals or organizations. The public and private sector jobs are the main consumers of these graduates. The common observation shared by the employers is about lack of work ethics, communication skills, and core knowledge of the subject. They will blame institutions, teachers, and the whole ecosystem of teaching and learning for this. In this regard, the most common issue is compromising standards while admitting students and then the same compromise cycle continues for the rest of the academic cycle. The result is Garbage In and Garbage Out (GIGO). Although, it is a computer science term that truly fits the way most of the private sector and some public sector Universities are enrolling the students in different programs.

As admissions in professional programs are governed by the professional councils, therefore, there are limited chances of compromising admission standards in these programs.

For general programs in Universities, there is some admission quota like self-finance, sports seats, etc which are filled through lowering the admission standards i.e. admission test score, etc. It is observed that students admitted on these quota seats are mostly not interested in the core academics and always participate in sports or related activities on regular basis.

Resultantly, the university administration will allow them to skip classes and participate in local and central sports events to represent University at the cost of their classes and laboratories.

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The faculty members are compelled to consider the present and they are asked to consider their late assignments, quizzes, and project reports. As a result, they get full sessional marks in various subjects. In such circumstances, when one group of students are being facilitated, the rest of the near and dear ones get the opportunity to request for consideration of the same favor. The hardworking students are disturbed and demotivated due to this practice. Further, this allows the non-performers to get promoted in the next semester without fail and the cycle continues during the degree program, and at the end, the degree is awarded little knowledge of the subjects learned during their stay at the campus. There is a need to stop compromising on any pretext.

Students enrolled in Self-finance are welcomed by the Universities due to funding scarcity. Their fee is used for operational and other expenses. Those who can afford the fee for four-year programs can manage University entry test as well in most of the public sector Universities. As they are the source of some funding therefore, they will also get some considerable favor in sessional as well as in the final exams. They will enjoy the special treatment for four years. Now, due to such treatment to these various groups of students, the faculty members do give favor to other students for whom peers, political, religious, and power actors exert pressure for the favor.

During the degree program, students, parents, and others will make efforts in different forms i.e. some students will try to learn, some will find the right person for the approach, few will find ways for how to please some moody teacher, some will wait for the right time to request for a favor, intelligent one will develop a scenario of giving and take, etc. The result of all these efforts will be a successful graduate with a first-class degree most of the time. Most of them will not get a relevant job due to limited jobs being announced or due to failure in job-related entry tests and interviews. There are many private organizations which specify the name of the Universities in their job advertisements. They are concerned about the quality of graduates produced by the public sector Universities.

The developed countries have introduced voluntary qualification examination which graduates may attempt after award of the degree. Many employing organizations will consider the result of a qualification examination for a specific subject while recruiting. This not only assures that a person has core knowledge of the subject but employing organization is also satisfied that person hired have required critical skills. Higher Education Commission has established the Educational Testing Council (ETC) for conducting various entry tests as well as it has started qualification examination for the law graduates who are interested to get registration of Pakistan Bar Council. Such tests can be developed for other professional programs as well as for general programs.

The content of the tests may be derived from the HEC’s national curriculum which is the same for the whole country. It will also develop competition and in-depth learning of the subject. The organizations may consider graduates who have good scores in these qualification exams. This will create a culture of merit and excellence in the country and Universities will be compelled to complete the syllabus of degree programs for a better score of their graduates.

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