

Book Review

**Dr. U.A.G. Isani and Dr. M. Latif Virk,
*Higher Education in Pakistan: A Historical
and Future Perspective*
Islamabad: National Book Foundation
2003/2004, pages 426+6, Price: Rs.700/-**

Very little literature on Higher Education in Pakistan is available as enough work on the subject has not so far been done. Though various governments tried to formulate different educational policies for the spread of education in the country, most of these policies could not be implemented because of political and other reasons. This resulted into dismal state of education in Pakistan which could not be more than 45 percent in 1999. There are various reasons for this educational backwardness which have been discussed in this book under review. In 27 chapters along with bibliography and index, Dr. U.A.G. Isani, the principal author, has tried in this book to focus on the need of higher education for social development, constitutional supervision for education, review and analysis of various educational policies, evaluation of International Reports on Higher Education in Pakistan, role of various universities for the spread of higher education in Pakistan, problems of higher education, management of the universities, issues relating to faculty, research, curriculum development and examination system, issue of self-finance in the universities of Pakistan, tuition fees, higher education through distance learning, the role of University Grants Commission (now Higher Education Commission), policies relating to grant of accreditation to various universities, system and procedure relating to equivalence of degrees and diplomas, and finally a plan for future development of higher education has been given in this book. Most of the information presented in this book is a reflection of the thinking of the authors. It has been rightly pointed out by Dr. Isani in this book that “the nation has to look after its Institutions of higher education,

improve their infrastructure, adopt new curricula, have long-term development of faculty and conduct better science education and research” so that the quality of higher education is developed further. It has also been rightly pointed out by the author that the higher education system needs to be changed into a dynamic system to adjust to the changing times and invigorate itself through renewal of efforts from time to time. For this their pursuit of research and scholarship and globalization of economy underscore the international contact of higher education. Example of advanced countries like Singapore has been specifically mentioned where science education and higher sophisticated laboratories in the universities is part of the “developmental infrastructure”.

The book is based on primary sources taped from various ministries, especially the Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission. It is for the first time that any scholar who has himself experienced the problems of education has touched the subject of higher education in such a vast and comprehensive manner. Dr. Isani, the author, himself being the Vice-Chancellor of a premier federal university (Quaid-i-Azam University) with vast experience of dealing with educational management as Chairman, UGC and Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education has taken pains to touch the problem both from academic and administrative viewpoint. Having the first hand knowledge and expertise the author is well-qualified to write on the issue of national importance. If Pakistani nation has to advance it will have to focus on the issue of higher education. Thus, this book has not only contributed a lot in the field of education but has introduced a lot of new primary sources in the field of literature which can be guideline for the future generations. This book is not only going to be a milestone for our educational policy planners, but basis for further discussion in the university circles and academic world. If we learn from the finding and discussions provided in this study, we can frame our national policy of higher education in such a manner which can not only be pragmatic and rationalistic but practical oriented and realistic enough to boost the system of higher education in Pakistan in an excellent manner.

National Book foundation also deserves credit for publishing this very important book in a nice manner and for taking pains to provide index to the book which has enhanced the utility of the book in the academic circles and higher education management.

Prof. Dr. Riaz Ahmad