

# Need to Establish Basic Education Commission to improve Quality of Research

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Active and high-quality research is essential to improve our understanding of matters as well as for effective planning and providing better services. The zeal to encourage and support research reflects the intelligence and sincerity of a society towards its citizens and the world. Research is a barometer of academic dynamism and vitality of the society. It is sad that research is on decline in medical field even in the developed countries. There are many reasons; for example, not everyone has an aptitude for research, research is tedious, hard and requires a lot of patience, selflessness and peace of mind. It may not fetch that much money. In developing countries, the situation is pathetic. Funds may not be available and there could be a lot of administrative hurdles.

Despite tremendous progress in various fields of life our current research does not even come close to the enthusiasm of the golden age of science wrongly labelled as Dark Ages, no doubt there was darkness in the Western hemisphere but the other side of the globe was shining with big bang of sciences; embryogenesis of modern sciences had begun. Like the most rapidly dividing cells of embryo with marked discipline and direction, the human potential was being unleashed at light speed by the final divine book Quran and the final messenger of Allah Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

There is fundamental difference between then and now. Now a days research gets its impetus mostly if not entirely from materialism while in that glittering time & place scientific research got its stimulus and momentum mostly from spirituality and sheer love for discovery to recognize the wisdom and power of all mighty God in everything. Learning and research were thus acts of worship and a command from all Mighty Allah (the God) to see, think and ponder over His most amazing, wise and beautiful creations. It was like an eagerness of a child to open the gift box to see what's in it from His most loving and caring Creator. The zeal to learn & explore in that era was equally matched by the enthusiasm and generosity of the

rulers and conquerors to support and fund the institutions of learning and research. Not only the rulers but even common citizens contributed towards building great institutions of learning. Instead of hoarding a lot of wealth they preferred to spend on education and research. No well-to-do person would like to die without leaving an institute of learning and research behind. As a result, the research was for intense love to discover Allah's hidden treasures and for the well-being of the society; its benefits extended to all segments of the society poor and rich alike.

Learning begins when we are in the wombs of our mothers. Children have great potentials; most of the time we underestimate them. Muhammad bin Qasim a notable commander of Muslim army conquered Sind against mighty forces at the age of 17. He then ruled the vast area as one of the most competent, fair and kind rulers who established justice and granted human rights hitherto unheard in that area. One of the most renowned physicians also known as father of modern medicine Ibn-e-Sina was only 22 when he achieved this status. Shah Wali-Ullah Muhaddis Dehleevi was one of the great scholars in Indian subcontinent at the age of 12. In present time Facebook, Google etc. had most contributions from young people.

Habits are formed in childhood. Once bad habits are formed it's difficult to break them. Parents play a crucial role in forming habits in early age. Then teachers play the same significant role in forming habits if they care to do it. Children also learn from their friends and other persons in their environment. In current era Television, Mobile Phones, Internet play an important role in habit formations! Sedentary life style and a lot of screen time have many known bad effects. Good habits bring great dividends while the bad habits could be disastrous. Spending a lot of money on adults with bad habits, is like a heavy person standing on very feeble legs or a tall building with very weak and defective foundations.

So, we must give strength to our basic, fundamental education from very beginning i.e. from cradles. All involved i.e. mother, father and other must be supported and properly guided. The primary, secondary schools, college and undergraduate medical colleges (schools) must be supported in laying down sound foundations for ethical and most desired attributes and characteristics desired for quality research!

For the last few decades there had been tendency to overburden and over-structure curriculum in some countries. Children's backs are broken by heavy bags and their creativity is lost. They are forced to memorize things which perhaps they will never need in their life. Overburdened mind suffers from anxiety neurosis, frustrations and depression.

In developing countries like Pakistan, we need drastic changes in our curricula to make our students think and investigate. We must pay no less efforts to basic education and training than to higher education!

Not everyone could be a good researcher. We have to identify early those who have the traits for research and help them to grow!

Another serious problem is conducting useless research and research for the sake of research which does not help the society. We must be cognizant of the requirements of our society and how much resources we have to benefit the society the most. The final Prophet of Allah Muhammad (PBUH) has made supplications Allah for useful knowledge and protection from useless knowledge!

What's required for quality research? For good quality research we first need to spark the flame of query, investigations, reverence for new discoveries and then inculcate, good habits of management including respect for your time and energy, time management, avoidance of useless activities. We have to make them to work hard and realize the importance of being disciplined and organized. We desire from our students motivation, habit of hard work, clear vision and lack of prejudices and myths. Resilience, endurance, determination, lofty high objectives are assets. As great poet Iqbal says; "I love those young people who climb to the stars"!

Pakistan Government is spending billions of rupees to improve the research culture in our universities through Higher Education Commission (HEC) and provided lot of funds. Unfortunately, we did not get the desired successes. Definitely more research papers had been pouring in but the quality of the research still remains very dismal. As a result, Pakistan is still far behind many countries in research; there must be

something wrong. We must analyze the situation and come up with the solutions. When we try to "impose" research on adults we encounter hundreds of problems including laziness, lack of enthusiasm, greed, dishonesty, cooked up data, insertion of the names of those as authors who don't even know the subject of the research. Based on these fake or substandard research people are promoted, salaries are increased; that's all grown up adults with bad habits and lack of enthusiasm want. They care least for honest and hard work-based research. Definitely there are a few noble souls who engaged in genuine research as passion and who do not cross the lines of ethics.

In order to push research, research papers are made mandatory for certain postgraduate programs like Fellow of College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan. The mandatory requirement does produce some papers but the quality of these are however generally not too high. Most of the papers are audit type and that's also of one or two institutions. As record keeping is generally poor in these countries and therefore population-based data is generally not available. Then there is problem of fake authors who manage to insert their names as authors without doing real work.

In order to get high quality research, we must focus on early education and training. We need to establish fundamental or basic education commission to focus on the curricula and training from cradle. We must not leave this job to Boards comprised of some Government servants but rather we must get input from all walks of life. I remember back in 1982-1984 when I was in the faculty of University of Iowa Hospitals USA my professor of Neuropathology was member of a working group on curriculum of first grade of primary school; with him there were other members of common walk of life such as nurses, and teachers etc. They were doing voluntary work. With such representation the curriculum caters the true needs of the society. In Pakistan such an important task of curriculum had been assigned to some bureaucrats and Government servants who have very little vision and no spark to change the society. Needless to say, this is one of the main reasons we are not having the good leaders and reformers to change the society. We need to correct the society if we want good people in all walks of life and vice versa. Bad habits do not go away easily.

Why can't we create hospitals and laboratories in the country at par with USA? The answer is simple we do not have required discipline in the society. We have to

recruit people from the same society which hardly cares for laws and discipline. For example, we do not have satisfactory system of storage and transport of sensitive chemicals amenable to perish in no time on exposure to heat. Many people break the traffic signals and never caught or punished. The children see their parents and the society doing all this and they acquire the same habits.

In nutshell we have to inculcate ingredients for quality research and discipline at very early age. Children are smart with lot of potentials; it's we who have to make their habits sound from cradles, in schools and colleges based on honesty, integrity, hard work, confidence, serenity, selflessness and courage. It's we the parents and the teachers who have to make them realize the value of their precious time and their potentials. We must unleash their potentials and strengths. We must not kill their creativity by overburdened and overstructured curricula as useless knowledge is a poison for hidden potentials and creativity.

At home and in schools we must encourage their explorations and make them to have sound confidence in the things they observe. In order to improve their communication and expression we should make them write short articles, stories .and get them published.

Research methodology must be made part of the school curriculum.

All efforts had to be made to kindle the Research spirit. In Muslim countries these efforts must include teaching Quranic ayas stressing on thinking and exploring with open mind, rejecting all superstitions, negating unverified theories, verifying everything before accepting it, removing hesitation to ask questions, motivation to explore, to analyze and to reject even the most established theory! These were the factors that led to founding of the modern and fundamental sciences with jet speed that golden era of science aka "dark ages"!

Research requires inner strength, calmness, honesty and enthusiasm to accept the failure or undesired results and to repeat the procedure many times without giving up. Such virtues should be inculcated by parents and teachers in the children at home and in the schools and colleges. In Muslim countries the best source for inculcating these values is Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) followed by examples of the great companions and the great scientists and great patrons of sciences. The Government and the civil society must actively support these goals! This will insha Allah go a long way to improve the quality research at our institutions in future.