**Meaning of Higher Education**

Higher Education is defined any of the various types of education given in post secondary institutions of learning ,and usually affording, at the end of a course of study, a Degree, diploma or certificate of Higher Studies. Higher Educational Institutions include not only Universities and Colleges, but also various Professional Schools that provide preparation in such fields as law, medicine, business, art, music and engineering.

The World Bank Study on Higher Education defines “all formal post-secondary institutions that train middle and high level professional personnel in degree, diploma and certificate granting programmers” (The World Bank, 2000).

**Importance of Higher Education**

Pursing a higher education, starting with an associate’s degree or a bachelor’s degree, perhaps working up to master’s or doctorate-level studies, leads to better job prospects and higher paying positions. Higher education can also lead to a healthier and more balanced life, according to some research, all of which may factor into a decision to study at this level.

1. **Career Benefits**

With a college education, you will probably make more money. Unemployment rates are also affected by higher education. Along with these benefits, you’re likely to have more career chaises and will probably be able to change careers more easily than those who have not completed some form of higher education.

1. **Social Benefits**

One is less likely to live in poverty if you have earned a college degree. Higher education has other societal benefits, too. If you earn a college degree, you’ll probably be better able to spend money to stimulate the economy.

1. **Personal Benefits**

Pursuing higher education may help you to become more sensitive to cultural differences and be able to respect the beliefs of all types of people. After completing a college degree, you’ll have a broader set of career options, which often leads to increased personal choice and freedom.

**Need of the University**

Before discussing the need of the university, it is important to understand what university is. A University is a place where students come from every quarter for all kinds of knowledge. It is a place for the communication and circulation of thought by means of individual interaction. It is the place to which various schools make contributions; in which the intellect may securely range and speculate. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, discoveries are verified and perfected, and errors are exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge.

University education is more than the next level in the learning process; it is a critical component of human development worldwide. It provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labor market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and myriad of other personnel.

The universities are schools of education, and schools of research. But the main reason for their existence is not to be found either in the mere knowledge conveyed to the students or in the mere opportunities for research afforded to the members of the faculty.

**Modes of the University**

Up till now we have been studying the need and importance of university education. Now we will discuss in detail what the modes of university education are, how the students select them and what are the factors that influence their selection of appropriate mode.

The Modes of university education are as listed below;

1. Face-to face
2. Distance
3. Online

**Challenges of Higher education in Pakistan**

The status of higher education in Pakistan in not encouraging, although this sub-sector has registered enormous growth after 2002, when Higher Education Commission was established and Government of Pakistan started according priority to tertiary education.

1. Participation rate higher education level is low; Gross Enrolment Ratio is just 10%. Only 8% of relevant age group of 17-23 years are enrolled in tertiary education.
2. Most of the universities and their campuses are concentrated in urban centers and more developed regions of the country, hence restricting accessibility of millions of youth in rural and under developed areas to access to higher education opportunities.
3. Only 27% faculty members of universities possess higher qualification of PhDs.
4. Most of the universities lack a culture of research. Ratio of internationally recognized research publication is minimal.
5. Budgetary allocations for higher education are not proportionate to the needs of the country.
6. Quality of higher education is not compatible with international standards. None of the Pakistani universities is included in the list of top 500 universities of the worlds.
7. HEIs are also facing issues relating to governance. Appointments of senior leadership in universities are sometimes politicized, thus affecting quality of education and research in these institutions.
8. Due attention is not paid on Research and Development (R & D). Linkages between universities and industry are weak.

**Role of Higher Education Commission**

The Universities in Pakistan are the major sources of higher education and its growth showed remarkable expansion in the recent past. Realizing the crucial role of higher education in quality research for sustained education and economic development, the government of Pakistan dissolved the University Grants Commission (UGC) and established Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2002 with aim to strengthen higher education with special focus on research in applied fields of science and technology within the country.

**HEC Programs and Projects**

The running of following programs may be credited to HEC.

1. Capacity building of the faculty

2. Under taking of revision of curriculum

3. Development of infrastructure of higher education

4. Award of indigenous scholarships

5. Grant of foreign scholarships

6. Patent filing support

7. Travel grant for participation in the conferences

8. Increasing collaboration between industry and university research

9. Bringing in technology reforms

**The Assessment**

Assessment is formally defined as measure of performance (Gagne et. al., 2005). Education assessment is the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Assessment is a mechanism for providing instructors with data for improving their teaching methodsand for guiding and motivating students to be actively involved in their own learning.

As such, assessment provides important feedback to both instructors and students. Assessment gives us essential information about what our students are learning and about the extent to which we are meeting our teaching goals. But the true power of assessment comes in using it to give feedback to students.

**Reasons for Assessing**

Selection

Certification

Describing

Aiding learning

Improving teaching

**Modes of Assessment**

Diagnostic

Formative

Summative

**Diagnostic Assessment**

Diagnostic assessment is intended to improve the learner’s experience and their level of achievement. However diagnostic assessment looks backwards rather than forwards. It assesses what learner already knows and the nature of difficulties that the learner might have, which, if undiagnosed, might limit their engagement in new learning. It is often used before teaching or when a problem arises. Pre-tests, Self-assessments and brief interviews are its types.

**Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment provides feedback and information during the instructional process, while learning is taking place, and while learning is occurring. Formative assessment measures student progress bit it can also assess your own progress as an instructor. Observations, Homework, Reflections journals, Question and Answer sessions, Conferences, and In-class activities are its types.

**Summative assessment**

Summative assessment takes place after the learning has been completed and provides information and feedback that sums up the teaching and learning process. Typically, no more formal learning is take place at this stage, other than incidental learning which might take place through the completion of projects and assignments. Examinations, Final examination, Term papers, Projects, Portfolios, Performances, student evaluation and Instructor self- evaluation are its types.

**Types of Education**

**Formal Education**

Formal education system refers to an organized and systematic system that is structured and administered in accordance with the per-specified set of policies, rules and laws. The system is systemic and organized in terms of objectives, curriculum and instructional methods that essentially involve a teacher, students and the institution itself.

**Non Formal Education**

Whenever in any system one or more of formal education features are absent, we can name that system of education being non- formal. Non-formal education occurs when the educational strategy does not require students’ attendance lessening the contract between students and teacher and most of the learning activities take place outside the institution as for example home reading and assignment etc.

**Informal Education**

Informal system of education is relatively different from formal education system and from non-formal system of education.This system of education is not regarded as a systematic and organized system and does not essentially consist of the educational objectives and subjects that are part of traditional curriculum. Informal education includes reading magazines, newspapers, listening radio, watching TV and attending seminars, seminars, lectures and conferences.

**Distance education**

Distance education system is one of the core types of non-formal education. This system of education refers to an educational process characterized by distance between the teacher and the learners. In other words all or most of the teaching learning activities are happing with presence of distance between the teacher and the learner.

**Technology in Higher Education**

Technology is having impact on internationalization of higher education by exploring the new way to embed it in the teaching learning process. Reports and findings of the research focused upon the future of technology in higher education argue that technology has become an inevitable element of effective teaching and learning process in present era.

**Mid-Term Trends**

1. Major mid terms trends are related to redesigning of learning space: in order to maximize active learning technology has remodeled learning space to ‘smart’ rooms. Smart classrooms are accommodative for deeper learning approached.
2. Measuring learning: another important mid-term is continuous and error free assessment and evolution of learning. In this regard some technology tools alike learning analytics and visualization software are used to facilitate accurate measurements.

**Short- Term Trends**

1. Blending learning designs: innovative online learning approaches and strategies for example flipped classroom can be used to align instructions with diverse needs of learners.
2. Collaborative learning approaches: Technology helps in using collaborative learning approaches through online communication. These approaches encourage both learners and teachers to use an interactive for working together on real-world challenges.