

Longer selection process of teachers, affordable fees, periodical revision of curriculum and research promotion are some of the recommendations in a seminar on university education

# Making w University

**A** seminar on 'Improvement of quality and standards of education in the universities' was held at the Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology of Punjab University.

Many teachers believe that the seminar was held at the behest of Governor Punjab as part of government's drive to break favourable ground for the implementation of Model Universities Ordinance (MUO).

The seminar aimed at encompassing the views of a university that boasts of more than 21,000 students and around 500 faculty members in a small auditorium that could house only 152 people to be precise.

Moreover, the participants were not selected at random but after strict scrutiny. None of them were encouraged to participate with a note of dissent that could cause displeasure to the government. The rehearsal of the seminar was held for two consecutive days prior to the actual seminar in which the participants were made to go through an ordeal about what to say and what to avoid during the actual proceedings. The participants also included vice-chancellors of public and private sector universities along with leading educationists.

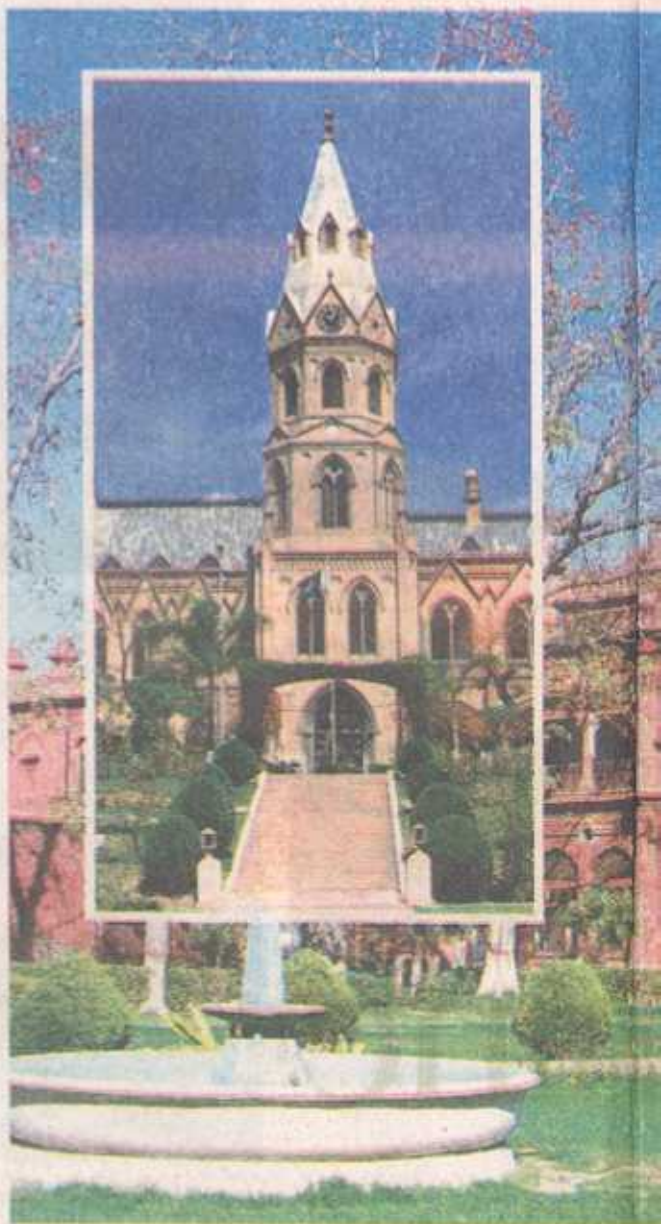
It added more to the concerns of participants when none of them was given more than a couple of minutes to speak on the sensitive topic that was considered by many as a futile exercise. The focus was more on endorsing the designs of the

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listening to  
the point  
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the stake-holders in education sector, the faculty members of the university said on condition of anonymity. They feared the government would take the views of minority as that of majority to justify the implementation of MUO.

Despite all the criticism, the seminar went ahead as scheduled. There were four sessions; on teachers, curriculum, students and making the environment conducive to learning in universities.

The report on teachers session demanded their say in decision-making at government level. It called for a national approach towards education and pointed out the disproportionate ratio of universities, teachers and students. The report was prepared by Ghalib Mahmood of Center for Management Sciences.

The report stressed upon a more strenuous and longer selection process of teachers where their suitability to the



profession should be judged during a period of 2-3 years. It suggested to appoint them as teaching assistant or research scholar. The teacher employed should have command over the subject, effective communication skill and ability to respond to the questions besides 'right kind of attitude' for the job. Teachers from other universities of the world should be invited through link programmes and extension in their jobs should be subject to efficiency.

The recommendation stressed on higher salary packages for public sector university teachers commensurate with private sector. It laid stress on recognising the work of teachers in monetary terms to let them focus on their jobs. It also implied pre-service and in-service training along with training before promotion to higher grade with regular feed-back of such training programmes. Regarding performance evaluation of teachers, it was recommended that it should be mainly linked with research work while taking into account students opinion as well.

The discussion on students was in five components includ-

ing admission, learning process, incentives and fee structures, discipline and their personality building in universities. The report on this session was presented by Dr Asfaq Ahmed of Punjab University Law College.

The recommendations given included admissions on standardised comprehensive tests and merit along with subject specific interview monitored by the institutions themselves and external agencies. Transparency in admission on reserved seats and measures to attract foreign students through proper advertisement on website were also stressed.

The report said the participants suggested the need to encourage student participation in learning process and enhanced use of information technology with continuous involvement of students throughout the year through all available means like projects and presentations. To increase confidence level of students it was suggested to give them opportunities as teacher assistants and encourage research. Suggestions were aired about negative marking for low attendance, misbehaviour and low

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