

Problems, Decline, And Devastation Of The Iraqi Higher Education (He) System

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Abstract

The Iraqi higher education system has encountered many issues resulting in decline and devastation. The topic of discussion pertains to the progress and advancement of modern nations. Iraq's intellectual and technical community has been consistently and deliberately targeted through intimidation, abduction, extortion, indiscriminate violence, and purposeful assassinations. The depletion of skilled personnel occurred amidst a widespread attack on Iraq's professionals encompassing medical practitioners, technical experts, legal professionals, judicial officials, and political and religious figures. Many educational institutions were damaged, looted, or closed, and faced shortages of books, research materials, and basic supplies. Before 1991, Iraq's education system was considered among the most exemplary in the region. It boasted a primary school Gross enrollment Rate of over 100% and exhibited high literacy levels for both genders. According to a UNESCO Fact Sheet from March 28, 2003, higher education institutions, particularly those focused on science and technology, were of a caliber that met international standards and was staffed by personnel of exceptional quality. The current situation in Iraq can be attributed to the U.S. invasion and subsequent occupation, which destroyed various facets of the country's education system and it has led to a decline of education. Besides, this invasion and its consequences tarnished the HE system. This paper will try to identify the problems that have caused the decline and showcase the weaknesses of this system.

Originality/value

The originality of doing research on the decline of higher

education in Iraq lies in the fact that it is a relatively new and understudied topic. Most of the research that has been done on this topic has focused on the immediate aftermath of the 2003 US-led invasion. However, there is a growing body of research that is examining the long-term impact of the conflict on Iraqi higher education.

Keyword: Iraq, HE education System, Scientists , corruption, drugs ,accreditation,

1.Introduction

The challenges facing higher education in Iraq now are numerous and varied. The country is still recovering from decades of war and economic sanctions, and the educational system has suffered greatly as a result. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of resources. Iraq's universities and colleges have been unable to keep up with the demand for higher education, and the country's infrastructure needs significant investment. This has led to overcrowded classrooms, inadequate facilities, and a lack of basic supplies and equipment. Another challenge is the lack of qualified faculty. Many of Iraq's universities and colleges are staffed with inexperienced and under-qualified teachers, which has led to a decrease in the quality of education. In addition, there is a shortage of qualified administrators and support staff, which has further hindered the development of higher education in Iraq. The security situation in Iraq is also a major challenge. The country is still recovering from years of conflict and instability, and this has made it difficult for universities and colleges to operate safely. In addition, the ongoing political unrest has created an environment of fear and uncertainty, which has made it difficult for students to focus on their studies. Likewise, many students in Iraq are unable to attend university due to financial constraints, and the cost of higher education is often prohibitively expensive. In addition, the lack of reliable internet access in many parts of the country has made it difficult for students to access online courses and resources. These are just some of the challenges facing higher education in Iraq today. The country needs significant investment and reform in order to create a more equitable and accessible system of higher education.

2.Research methodology

Documentary research, which may include things like government reports, academic papers, and newspaper articles, was used for this study. Documentary research entails gathering and analysing a variety of materials. The researchers thought that this was a good method to acquire an overall picture of the decrease of higher education in Iraq as well as to identify the primary causes that have led to that drop.

3. Research Questions

1. To what extent has the deterioration of higher education in Iraq impacted the nation's economic progress?
2. What are the obstacles encountered by Iraqi universities in their endeavours to reconstruct and enhance?
3. What are the optimal strategies for enhancing the educational standards in Iraq?
4. What are the respective responsibilities played by the Iraqi government, foreign organisations, and private contributors in enhancing the state of higher education in Iraq?

4. Literature Review

4.1 Higher Education System of Iraq

The quality of education in Iraq has been in decline since the 2003 US-led invasion of the country. The country's higher education system has been weakened by a number of educational factors, including the displacement of academics and students, the destruction of university infrastructure, and the lack of access to resources and technology. The displacement of academics has had a major impact on the quality of education in Iraq. Many Iraqi academics have been forced to flee the country due to the violence and instability that followed the US-led invasion. This has resulted in a severe shortage of qualified faculty members at Iraqi universities. Furthermore, the displacement of academics has also led to a decrease in the quality of teaching and research at Iraqi universities. The destruction of university infrastructure has also had a major impact on the quality of education in Iraq. Many university buildings and facilities have been destroyed or damaged during the US-led invasion and subsequent conflicts. This has resulted in a lack of access to resources and technology, which has further weakened the quality of education in Iraq. Many

universities in Iraq lack access to the latest technology and resources, which are essential for providing a quality education and developing research.

4.2 Challenges in Higher Education in Iraq

The provision of sufficient higher education and research institutions is vital for any nation to achieve sustainable growth since it enables the cultivation of a highly skilled and educated workforce. Therefore, a well-structured and adequately funded higher education system, together with robust scientific research, is widely seen as the cornerstone for a nation's advancement towards stability and productivity. In recent years, Iraq has seen a succession of wars that have resulted in a rapid degradation of infrastructure and fundamental social services. Among the sectors that have suffered significant infrastructure damage, higher education stands out, with its buildings being subjected to destruction, arson, and looting. In addition to the detrimental impact on infrastructure and persistent security risks, Iraq's higher education system is confronted with the issue of inadequately trained teaching personnel. Higher education in Iraq encounters numerous challenges encompassing infrastructure, the quality of the education system, qualifications of academic staff and faculty, availability of textbooks, scientific research and publications and labour markets needs, governance of education institutions and the qualities of graduates. It is posited that the higher education sector in Iraq has the capacity to assume a significant role in mitigating the escalating sectarian divisions within the nation and cultivating enduring peace and stability, hence facilitating the desired developmental outcomes. Currently, Iraqi universities are facing a deficiency in their ability to provide the industry and the economy with adequately skilled individuals who can fulfil the market's requirements and contribute to the establishment of sustained economic growth.

4.3 Current state of HE in Iraq

According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, there are currently 35 public universities and 75 licensed private universities operating in Iraq. Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research announced that eight Iraqi universities obtained important competitive scores in Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2023.

The World Bank has recently sanctioned a financial allocation of \$5 million towards tertiary education in Iraq, marking its inaugural investment in this sector. The primary objective of the Support to Tertiary Education Project is to enhance the alignment of tertiary education with the country's developmental needs while concurrently addressing the challenges posed by climate change and promoting the employability of graduates. In recent years, Iraq's higher education sector has grown significantly, with a notable 25% surge in student enrollment within public universities. Nevertheless, the overall level of accessibility for the college-age demographic remains relatively low at approximately 19%, which is comparatively lower than other nations within the region. For instance, Tunisia boasts a 32% accessibility rate, Jordan has a 34% rate, and Morocco exhibits a 39% rate. Despite the relatively lower level of participation, it is noteworthy that more than 25% of tertiary education graduates in Iraq remain unemployed or inactive within the country's labour market. The education sector cannot effectively adapt to global trends or adequately address the socio-economic development needs at local or national levels.

4.4 Targeted Killing of Iraqi Scholars

The targeted killings of Iraqi scholars commenced after the 2003 military intervention in Iraq led by the United States. The initial recorded casualty was Mohammad al-Rawi, the recently reinstated president of Baghdad University, whose demise occurred within his medical clinic in July 2003. During the subsequent years, a significant number of academics, encompassing professors, researchers, doctors, and scientists, met their demise. The motivations behind the assassinations are multifaceted and subject to debate. There is a belief held by certain individuals that the acts of violence were executed by sectarian militias, with the intention of specifically targeting academics. This targeting is attributed to the perception that academics were either affiliated with the previous regime or held secular or liberal ideologies. The exact figure pertaining to the casualties among academics remains undisclosed. The Brussels Tribunal, an internationally recognised organisation focused on human rights, has meticulously recorded the fatalities of more than 400 scholars. However, alternative assessments suggest that the actual figure may surpass 1,000. The acts of violence have had a profound and detrimental effect on the academic community in Iraq, resulting in the emigration of highly skilled and educated scholars.

The targeted killings of Iraqi scholars have garnered condemnation from both human rights organisations and the global community. Nevertheless, the killings have not resulted in any legal consequences, and the individuals responsible for the acts have yet to be detained. The following compilation highlights several prominent instances of assassinated Iraqi academics. The targeted killings of Iraqi scholars have had a significant and far-reaching influence on the educational landscape of the nation. Numerous academic institutions have been compelled to cease operations or function with limited capacity, resulting in a decrease in the enrollment of students in tertiary education. The occurrences of homicides have additionally posed challenges in terms of recruiting and retaining highly skilled faculty members. The assassinations of Iraqi academics have had a devastating impact on Iraqi education system, resulting in the loss of its most brilliant intellectual human capital. Furthermore, the perpetrators have caused significant harm to Iraq's cultural heritage, exacerbating the challenges associated with post-war reconstruction efforts in the country. It is imperative to bear in mind the plight of these victims and diligently strive towards holding the perpetrators accountable through legal means.

Iraq's higher education system has been severely affected by decades of conflict and under-investment, which have destroyed infrastructure, displaced and reduced the number and quality of teaching. Iraq's national budget has allocated less than 6% of its national budget to the education sector, placing Iraq at the bottom rank of Middle East countries.

4.5 Quality

The standard of quality of Iraqi higher education system is difficult to evaluate due to the lack of reliable data. Iraq has experienced a period of conflict and instability since 2003, which has had a significant impact on the country's education system. The Iraqi government has made efforts to improve the quality of higher education, but there is still much room for improvement. The Iraqi government has implemented a few reforms to improve the quality of higher education, including the introduction of a national accreditation system, the establishment of a quality assurance agency, and the introduction of a new higher education law. These reforms have been aimed at improving the quality of teaching, research, and governance in higher education institutions. Despite

these efforts, there are still significant challenges facing the Iraqi higher education system. The quality of teaching is often low, and the curriculum is often outdated. There is also a lack of resources and funding for research and development. In addition, the Iraqi government has been unable to attract qualified faculty members due to the lack of job security and low salaries. Overall, the standard of quality of Iraqi higher education system is difficult to evaluate due to the lack of reliable data and the challenges facing the system (Lee et al., 2010).

Al Rubaee (2021) an Iraqi scholar mentioned clearly that the higher education system in Iraq is currently in a state of limited development. The matter of governance and the involvement of university boards in both the public and private sectors are of utmost importance and require attention and must be regulated. The quality of higher education in Iraq does not meet international standards and there is a limited number of highly skilled graduates available to contribute to the reconstruction of the economy.

At the academic level, it is imperative to maintain a proper equilibrium between research and teaching endeavors. Research plays a crucial role in the professional growth of faculty members and the enhancement of teaching practices. Regrettably, the primary emphasis of most universities in Iraq is on instructional activities, with research responsibilities often delegated to students pursuing advanced academic studies. Consequently, this results in the necessity of instructing sizable cohorts and facing substantial educational responsibilities, leaving minimal flexibility for personal academic pursuits.

Research productivity plays a crucial role in enhancing and elevating the university ranking, thereby aligning with the primary objective of the Ministry of Higher Education in Iraq. The number of publications has experienced a notable increase. However, research suggests that funding emerged as the most prominent factor. An essential determinant in motivating academic faculty to enhance their publications. Collaboration, whether national or international, has enhanced research progress. The concept of productivity is of paramount importance in the context of universities, and it is necessary for these institutions to actively foster and cultivate a culture that promotes and enhances this factor. Optimizing scholarly communications, elevating the calibre of work, enhancing overall performance, and initiating academic

journals will help disseminate knowledge. It will also minimize redundancy in research efforts and accelerate the publication process (Jameel and Ahmed ,2020).

Moreover, the independence of the Iraqi universities and the significance of securing long-term, secure, and varied funding for higher education in Iraq is underscored. Adding additional measures to increase university autonomy should go hand in hand with reducing reliance on centralized funding. Restricting the Ministry's involvement to oversight, supervision, direction, and accountability is imperative. This approach ensures transparency in both the public and private education sectors. The rise in the number of individuals completing primary and higher education has strained the labour market. It is necessary to involve the private sector in providing suitable employment opportunities for these graduates. Due to its limited capacity, the public sector cannot respond to fluctuations promptly and adaptively to the needs of the labour market. Promoting transparency in the administration and advancement of the Higher Education Fund and government university funds as supplementary means of financing educational institutions, particularly in times of economic downturn (Salman,2022) .

4.6Accreditation

The accreditation of private universities in Iraq is a complex and evolving issue. Private universities in Iraq are not currently accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR). However, the MOHESR does recognize the degrees of some private universities, such as the American University of Iraq (AUIS) and the University of Kurdistan Hewler (UKH). In addition, the Iraqi government has recently begun to recognize the accreditation of some private universities by international accreditation bodies. For example, the University of Kurdistan Hewler (UKH) has been accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (AACSB) and the American University of Iraq (AUIS) has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Despite this progress, there is still a long way to go before private universities in Iraq are fully accredited by the regulator . It is important to note that the regulator does not recognize the accreditation of any private universities by international accreditation bodies. As such, it is important for private universities

in Iraq to continue to pursue accreditation to ensure that their degrees are recognized by the government. The pursuit of accreditation by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) is of paramount importance for private universities in Iraq, as it guarantees the recognition of their degrees by the government.

4.7 Private Universities

Private universities in Iraq have been affected by this decline, due to the displacement of academics and students, the destruction of university infrastructure, and the lack of access to resources and technology. In recent years, Iraq has witnessed the opening of many private universities, which allowed those with low averages to enroll in studies. There is great randomness in granting investment opportunities at the level of private universities where there is indication that those investors are supported by political party leaders. The university licensing process is influenced in some way or another. On top of that there are breached regulations on geographical location of these universities perhaps due to corruption. The concentration of private universities on highways is a mistake and requires the government to reconsider in line with the needs of citizens, and urban planning. There are objections by traffic officials and local citizens that it should be moved outside the borders of the capital Bagdad to reduce the burdens caused by it and traffic accidents. The teaching and learning process is hurdled as many teachers are under pressure because of the large number of students in the classrooms, and the lack of teaching aids and laboratories. The measurement of quality standards of faculty performance in the classrooms still lacks, in addition to the security threats to which faculty and students are exposed by some clans. The private universities and colleges suffer from the quality of graduates from secondary schools. The trend is that they recruit students with weak achievements and low marks. Besides, the curricula are stereotyped because they depend on the sectoral bodies that do not take into consideration the advancement in science and market needs. It is noticed that most of the majors of private colleges are financial, administrative, and legal sciences, as well as computer science, software, and operations research. This gives an indication of poor planning to link university programs with the market needs. There is a need to measure the efficiency of these universities through cycles of quality examining the quality faculty, curriculum, teaching methods and assessment. Thus,

private colleges must not be given independence in choosing programs and curricula, but this should be managed and approved by the regulator in line with the market needs. On the other hand, students are not getting educational academic guidance and counseling as such units do not appear as a functional unit within the private colleges. The regulator does not interfere in doing conferences or seminars to evaluate the roles and progress of these universities. We have no concrete evidence that they apply international standards of quality and accreditation. Private universities and colleges do not focus on the training of students to gain the applied skills from the core of the concerned specialization; they only focus on the theoretical side. It is a main drawback in the teaching and learning process. Failure to follow up on the current and expected developments in the labor market and to design its curricula and in the light of these developments. Most of the buildings of private colleges do not meet the international architectural standards of universities, which is a prerequisite for their establishment and recognition. The space and facilities standards are not met, and you find classes with big numbers that do not allow engagement between instructor and student 1:50 may be more in some instances. The quality of graduates was not at the required level, and this affects the quality of human investment (Shakir, 2022; Alwan, 2018)

One crucial aspect is that the licensing and recognition for private universities need to adhere to international standards. It includes factors such as the clarity of vision and mission, the quality of infrastructure, the qualifications of teaching staff, the programme and curriculum development level, and the effectiveness of teaching methods. As a result, private colleges urgently need evaluation, reform, and development in alignment with international standards (Iraq International News Agency, 2023).

4.8 Iranian Intervention in HE Sector in Iraq

To expand its influence in Iraq and to break the Iraqis will be due to long years of war and hostility. Iran has long seen Iraq as its sphere of influence as announced by their officials, and it has used its financial, political and military power to exert control over the country's political and economic affairs. Higher education is one area where Iran has been particularly active trying to make soft move opening several of its own universities in Iraq and providing financial support to Iraqi universities. Doing this, it aims at

controlling society and making a swift change in people's faiths and convert them into the belief in Wilayat Al Fakeeh. To promote its own ideology, Iran is a theocratic state, and it seeks to promote its own brand of Shi'a Islam in Iraq and the region . Higher education is seen as an important gateway to do this, as it can be used to train future generations of Iraqis in the Iranian ideology.

To help rebuild Iraq's educational system. The Iraqi educational system was severely damaged by the US-led invasion of 2003, and Iran has stepped in to help rebuild it in the pretext of helping in rebuilding Iraq HE system . This includes providing financial support, sending teachers and professors to Iraq, and opening new universities. This is explained by appointing a HE ministers that is pro Iran and is facilitating and taking the steps to open doors for Iranians.

Iran's intervention in higher education in Iraq has been met with mixed reactions. Some Iraqis welcome the Iranian assistance, as they see it to improve the country's educational system. Others, however, are concerned that Iran is using its influence to promote its own agenda and to undermine Iraq's sovereignty. This is a great concern for most Iraqis who believe in their Iraqi patriotism and their Arab affiliation.

We bring here examples of this intervention , establishing Iranian universities in Iraq. Iran has established a number of its own universities in Iraq, including the Islamic Azad University of Iraq and the Al-Mustafa International University. These universities offer a variety of courses, and they are open to both Iraqi and Iranian students. Furthermore , Providing financial support to Iraqi universities. Iran has provided financial support to a number of Iraqi universities, including Baghdad University and Mustansiriya University. This support has been used to improve the infrastructure of these universities, to provide scholarships to students, and to hire new faculty members. Besides , sending teachers and professors to Iraq, Iran has sent a number of scholars and professors to Iraq to teach at its universities and to train Iraqi faculty members. This has helped to spread Iranian ideology and establishing the grounds for the new dogma .

Iran's intervention in higher education in Iraq is a complex issue with no easy answers. Iran has several motives for its involvement, and it is also clear that this involvement has had a significant impact on the Iraqi educational system. It remains to be seen how

this intervention will play out in the long term, and it is likely to be a main source of tension between Iran and Iraq for many years to come. Some other examples like Iraq doubles accredited Iranian universities (Shafaq News, 2020) . Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has doubled the number of accredited Iranian universities from 33 to 62. The Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education has approved 33 Iranian universities, out of which 14 are eligible for scholarships. Thus, Iranian universities can accept Iraqi students in the form of scholarships, ultimately attracting more Iraqi students to Iranian universities Iran (Front Page , 2022) . Furthermore, during the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Iraqi embassy and Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Amjad Hamid Muzaffar expressed that numerous Iranian universities rank highly in international indexes. By entering into various MoUs, Iraq stands to gain from these scientific capabilities. Additionally, they advocated for the implementation of Persian Language courses for Iraqi students and expressed their willingness to collaborate in efforts to lure Iraqi students to the medical sciences institutions in Mazandaran. This memorandum of understanding (MoU) emphasises the collaboration between the University of Mazandaran and Iraq in several areas, including the advancement of educational and research endeavours, organisation of joint international conferences, and provision of short and long-term courses for the faculty and professors of Iraqi institutions. Iran has just established a medical institution in the sacred city of Karbala, Iraq, as a means to enhance its influence in the region (Iran Press, 2022).The establishment of the first foreign branch of the Tehran University of Medical Science in Karbala is now underway.

President of Baghdad University is very anxious to bring the Iranians universities to work in Iraq (University of Baghdad website , 2023) . He mentioned that Due to their proximity, Iraq and Iran should form research teams, exchange professors, visit professor programs, and form joint scientific committees, especially with the University of Baghdad, which has successful cultural exchange programs with several universities worldwide.

Another partnership between Islamic universities in Iran and Iraq to expand scientific cooperation as Iran's Razavi University of Islamic Sciences and officials from University of Kufa reached agreement to expand scientific cooperation between the two Islamic academies(Taghrib News,2022) . This is followed by Iran's

Islamic Azad University (IAU) is planning on opening branches in Iraq and Syria as the Islamic Republic continues to assert its political and strategic influence across the Middle East (Sulalvany, 2018).

A close look at this intervention is not innocent, it reflects the persistent of Iranian authorities to continue its program of sovereignty over Iraq and promoting its wilayat al Faqeeh eventually. It is a focal point in the Iranian policy in the area. Higher education will suffer even more when this expansion continues, and universities will be a battlefield for conflicting ideologies. The collaborations will not benefit Iraqi students or their economy as Iran looks at its own interests and Iraqi proxy governments are incapable in serving the Iraqi people (Tishreen Revolution).

4.9 Iraqi universities: classrooms turn into platforms for Political Parties

The issue at hand pertains to the politicization of Iraqi universities, where classrooms have become arenas for various political parties (mostly Shia parties and Iran Proxy) to promote their agendas. The Iraqi universities have been impacted by the infiltration of political parties, resulting in the transformation of their premises and spaces into platforms for the promotion of partisan agendas. Upon entering the colleges in Baghdad, visitors are greeted by an array of pictures, slogans, and posters, creating an atmosphere that fosters the dissemination of electoral propaganda. Political agendas are sometimes concealed within student activities, such as book fairs, social gatherings, and festivals. The issue at hand extends beyond student recruitment and encompasses various aspects of education and training within contemporary political parties. This includes examining the study platforms of these parties and addressing concerns regarding the undue influence exerted by professors on students, thereby compromising their safety. This phenomenon is evident among students who experience poverty, leading them to become entangled in certain circumstances while living in impoverished conditions.

Similarly, at the University of Anbar, a prominent political party originating from Anbar successfully enlisted numerous students into its membership during the election period. This was achieved through the party's enticing commitments of potential appointments and financial incentives in the event of election victory. The organizers provided us with assurance that a series of

football tournaments were hosted by a single entity, with the intention of attracting a significant participation from university students. The province of Anbar has emerged as a prominent battleground for electoral competition as the parliamentary elections draw nearer. Social researchers caution against the potential risks associated with influencing the cognitive development of university students during this critical stage of their lives, which is widely recognised as a pivotal juncture for personal growth and decision-making. It is imperative for the Iraqi government and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to promptly implement measures aimed at preventing any form of political activity within university premises. It is evident that the attraction of securing promising job opportunities, which are highly sought after by Iraqi youth, may lead numerous students to detach themselves from their families and surroundings, ultimately surrendering to the influence of political factions. It is imperative to establish a clear boundary, wherein Iraqi universities are regarded as a red line that no political party is permitted to engage with.

In a survey by (Al Shammari , 2018) demonstrates that the allure of job opportunities, which are highly coveted by Iraqi youth, can potentially lead many students to relocate from their homes and communities, and become susceptible to the influence of political factions. This highlights the importance of safeguarding Iraqi universities as an institution that remains free from any political party's interference.

In a strange development the authorities adopted the newly implemented surveillance spying systems encompasses the universities of Kufa, Karbala, Babel, Maysan, Dhi Qar, Basra, Muthanna, and other institutions in southern Iraq. It is important to note that all the universities and institutes are government-owned, with future plans to include private university institutions. This was supported by the Hashad Al Sahaabi (Al Shammari ,2015; Al Shammari, 2016). Moreover , they opened an office for within University Security Department on the sixteenth floor of the presidency of the University of Baghdad managed by one of the Hashad Al Shaabi leaders.

4.10 Weak Legislators, Invisible corruption, and Drugs .

The Education Committee in the parliament believes private universities and colleges contribute to Iraq's increasing

unemployment rate .The private education industry in Iraq has been associated with several challenges, such as substandard educational outcomes and heightened unemployment rates, mostly attributed to the haphazard formation of institutions without adequate feasibility assessments. Numerous instances have been reported whereby private institutions have engaged in deceptive practices by admitting students without obtaining proper accreditation. Despite investing significant financial resources in their education, the outcome of individuals' future remains uncertain. There is a need for enhanced educational attainment among most graduates from private educational institutions, in order to align their qualifications with established academic benchmarks. This phenomenon may be attributed to the relative ease with which individuals get these degrees, since students at private educational institutions sometimes receive inflated marks that they may not necessarily merit. Subsequently, they have competition from students enrolled in public education institutions who possess a more advanced degree of study(Zidane,2017).Then again Invisible Corruption as explained by faculty from

Basra and Southern Technical Universities. They conducted research comprising of a sample that included experienced academics and assessing higher education corruption. Iraqi higher education has more invisible corruption. Detecting and revealing such illegal practices is difficult. However , students, academic staff, and administrative entities share interests, which promotes this kind of corruption. This shows that integrity and corruption awareness must be promoted in Iraq's higher education sector(Alsaad & Mohsen , 2017).The fatal environment created by drugs is rearing of the society which reflects on Higher education institutions. According to the President of Drug Free Iraq organisation, the prevalence of drug usage among certain age cohorts in Iraq exceeds 40 percent. Furthermore, the speaker said that the demographic most prominently engaged in drug use falls within the age range of 15 to 35. However, it was observed that most individuals seeking treatment for substance abuse in rehabilitation facilities fall within the narrower age bracket of 17 to 25. According to the report individuals grappling with addiction are deterred from seeking treatment due to apprehensions about potential legal ramifications and societal stigmatization . The risk of existence of businesses commonly referred to as "drug-pushing

cafes," whereby shisha is secretly infused with narcotics, without the knowledge of the investors (Rahim,2022).The scale of the problem is so huge and putting great influx on the education system with no near hope of finding practical solution . The Drug Control Directorate within the Ministry of the Interior has announced a proposal submitted by the Ministry of Health. The proposal aims to conduct comprehensive examinations of all civil servants to ensure their adherence to drug abuse prevention measures. Additionally, it has been brought to light that the Ministry of Health has submitted a proposal to conduct comprehensive screenings of all state employees to ascertain their safety with regards to drug abuse. According to experts, Iraq was reportedly without drug use during previous regimes. However, the prevailing vulnerabilities and complacency within the current state have contributed significantly to a widespread drug problem. This issue has been exacerbated by the repeated assertions from higher authorities that 50% of young individuals are involved in drug use.

One parliament member explained that the Islamic parties have drug-production facilities tied to government entities and recognised and characterised by various security services. They cannot even approach them since these parties have armed militias and militaries that control a number of ministries, and the government cannot simply hold them responsible because they occupy high-ranking positions in important government agencies (Munir,2022).

5.Conclusion :

It seems that the US invasion of Iraq and the complications of events afterwards had impacted badly on the country systems. It is not only HE is damaged but other institutions , especially disintegrating the society structure , smash family unity , and youth future . The scourge of corruption permeates all facets of life with weak governments who are not able to enforce the law because of corruption . In this paper ,we concentrate on HE, being the core sente of building the human capital of the country . Since 2003 till now the HE is struggling and graduate to the market unqualified manpower as I explained earlier .This will affect the employability rate as there are statistics that shows high unemployability .The overall government performance is not encouraging and there are no signs of progress on all fronts . International bodies are identifying these drawbacks with no hope of change .

In this research our concern is higher education, an important body that is responsible for the future country's human resources that constitute the driver of the economy. From the review at hand, we can gather that Iraq is facing complex challenges which may not be resolved easily. The consecutive governments shaped Iraq as a sectarian country not capable of progressing as a nation with great history.

Professionally speaking, higher education needs a comprehensive reform which may not be achieved unless there is a political and economic reform. To solve this dilemma decision makers must function above and over tendencies and trends, and to look the welfare of their country and future generations. It is obvious those neighbors who have an agenda to absorb Iraqis resources and keep it weak.

In summary, the extensive ramifications of the United States' military intervention in Iraq and the ensuing complexities that followed have had a detrimental impact on several aspects of the nation's diversified institutions, going beyond the scope of higher education. The aforementioned ripple effect has penetrated several institutions, becoming intertwined with the fundamental structure of society, causing disruptions in familial cohesion, and diminishing the future prospects of the younger generation. Corruption has been deeply entrenched in several aspects of society, as government has been weakened and faces challenges in upholding the principles of the rule of law.

This research focuses on the crucial field of higher education, which plays a fundamental role in cultivating the people resources that drive a nation's economic vitality. Since the year 2003, the field of higher education has been confronted with ongoing difficulties, leading to the development of graduates who lack the necessary skills to meet the requirements of the labour market. The incongruity is starkly reflected in the alarming levels of unemployment. The overall performance of the administration exhibits a sense of stasis, lacking signs of progress on several fronts. The flaws in question have been adequately noted by international observers, so creating a sense of ambiguity over the potential for significant reform.

Within the convoluted context, the higher education story in Iraq reflects the multifaceted nature of the nation's challenges. The inadvertent actions of successive governing regimes have

inadvertently entangled Iraq inside a complex fabric of division, so overshadowing its culturally significant historical past and impeding its capacity to progress as a cohesive and unified state. To facilitate the revitalization of higher education, it is crucial to implement a comprehensive reform that addresses both structural revitalization and a reevaluation of political and economic paradigms. The urgent need is for resolute leadership that surpasses fleeting political inclinations and immediate fads, placing the well-being of the country and the future generations it protects as the highest priority.

However, this undertaking occurs in the presence of neighboring actors that are competing to exploit Iraq's resources and maintain its state of vulnerability. The current situation confronting higher education in Iraq symbolizes the wider array of difficulties that the country is grappling with, necessitating a unified and comprehensive effort to overcome them. The intricate web of difficulties is intricately connected to the recovery of the country, requiring cooperative efforts that include many sectors of society.

Within the complex and intricate web of geopolitical dynamics, the presence and actions of Iran assume a significant and transformative role. Iran has intentionally tried to influence Iraq's political and economic trajectory via a diversified strategy, using financial, political, and military capabilities. The domain of higher education has emerged as a platform for Iran's soft power projection, shown by the building of universities inside Iraq and the provision of financial assistance to indigenous educational institutions. This collective effort serves to further Iran's aspiration to promote its ideology, namely the ideals of Wilayat Al Fakeeh, and spread its vision of Shi'a Islam across the area.

The consequences of this action are complex and diverse. While some officials in Iraq see Iranian engagement to improve their educational system, concerns arise over the loss of Iraq's sovereignty and the possibility for manipulation of its future. Iran's involvement in higher education goes beyond mere creation, as it includes providing financial support, deploying scholars, and expanding Iranian academic institutions in Iraq. The impact of this influence has generated many responses, giving rise to discussions over Iraq's self-governance and the ideological shaping of future generations.

During these processes, universities in Iraq have undergone a transformation, becoming spaces where domestic political groups engage in activities that imbue higher education with a strong political character. Unauthorized access has undermined the integrity of the academic environment and placed at risk the cognitive growth of students, possibly influencing their perspectives on the world. Additionally, the presence of invisible corruption and drug misuse exacerbates the difficulties faced by the HE system, reflecting wider social issues.

It is crucial to implement a comprehensive approach to address this issue effectively. It is imperative for the Iraqi government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, to take significant measures to safeguard the autonomy and ethical standards of universities. It is imperative to establish stringent boundaries that prohibit political engagement inside educational establishments, while simultaneously addressing the allure of private universities that contribute to the exacerbation of unemployment. The implementation of surveillance systems, although raising concerns about privacy, highlights the critical need to address and mitigate political influence and corruption.

The difficult balancing act between foreign help and the preservation of national sovereignty is a prominent concern. International collaborations, whilst enhancing the quality of education, should not undermine Iraq's autonomy. An integrated strategy is necessary to foster academic achievement, prioritize the welfare of students, and nurture a collective sense of national identity.

Iraq's higher education system finds itself at a critical juncture, when a convergence of foreign factors and internal challenges shape its future direction. When formulating a strategic plan, it is essential for national leaders to give precedence to the long-term well-being of the nation and its citizens. The formulation of policies aimed at safeguarding educational institutions as strongholds of intellectual development, resistant to unwarranted external influence, lays the foundation for a successful and autonomous Iraq. A collaborative and devoted effort, driven by a strong commitment to the growth and unity of the country, serves as a precursor to overcoming existing challenges and initiating a period of intellectual enlightenment and progress.

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