



Editorial Article

THE APPOINTMENTS OF RETIRED GOVERNMENT OFFICERS/ PROFESSORS IN PRIVATE PHARMACY INSTITUTIONS ARE POTENTIALLY HURTING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND EDUCATION STANDARDS IN PAKISTAN.

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History:

Received: January 5, 2021
Accepted: January 13, 2021
Revised: February 21, 2021
Collection year: 2021
Status: Published

Identifiers and Pagination:

Year: 2021
Volume: 12
First Page: 1
Last Page: 6
Publisher ID: 22205187.12.1
Doi:
http://dx.doi.org/10.21065/22205187/22205187.050121

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Citation:

Taha Nazir. Appointments of retired government offices/ professors in private pharmacy institutions is potentially hurting the health care system and education standards in Pakistan. . Pharm Rev. Vol. 12. 2021. p1-6

Professors of University are typically the most desirable jobs in the Pakistan. Despite the benefits, the university professors rely on employer provided benefits to obtain the financial security in their retired golden years. [1,3] Thus, the retirement age for men is 60 years, 55 years for women and 50 year (miners) with at least 15 years of contributions. The "Meritorious Professor" means a serving professor of BPS-21 designated under such statutes. All other expressions shall have the same meanings assigned to them under Section-2 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Universities Act, 2012. [4,5]

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP's) has proposed an advance academic scheme. They shared governance to define fundamental professional values and standards for retired higher academic personals. That may potentially assure the higher education's contribution to the common good. AAUP reported a research survey of 567 colleges and universities. They collected information from public (369) and private (198) institutions. Of the surveyed institutions, 42 percent offer a 401(k)-style defined contribution plan; only 12 percent offer a defined benefit pension plan; and 41 percent offer faculty a choice among either a defined contribution plan, a defined benefit plan, or both. The remaining 5 percent offer some kind of combination retirement plan. Professors participating in defined contribution plans face the same challenges as other workers in 401(k)-style plans. Last year several private universities were sued by their own employees for offering high-cost retirement plans. [2]

However, we have the parliamentary democratic systems in Pakistan. The power is vested to the people, who exercise their power through elected representatives in the parliament which is the most superior forum. Heeding the stake holders, the parliament has shown its respect towards its people, which is admirable. It is further added that higher education in Pakistan still lacked highly qualified and capable academicians. At the age of 60, a professor approaches the peak of his research and teaching. Retiring at this stage deprives the nation the knowledge repositories. In some developed countries, the professor never retires. The Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association (FAPUASA) appreciated Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani's in January, 2018 for the enforcement of 75 % tax rebate and a 65 years retirement age. In a statement, FAPUASA Pakistan's then President Dr. Kaleemullah Bareach said, "We are thankful to the senators, especially the members of devolution committee for their efforts to resolve long standing issues of enhancement of retirement age to 65 years and 75 % tax rebate faced by university teachers throughout Pakistan." The recommendations were forwarded to the concerned ministries for implementation. The statement added that keeping in view the importance of higher education, university teachers should be amongst the highest paid professionals. The teaching fraternity in Pakistan is low paid, neglected and their perks and privileges are so

Funding:

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Competing Interests:

The authors declare no competing interests

Additional information is available at the end of the article.

meager as compared to other professions of the country. To attract capable leaders of higher education, the government should play its role by offering the highly qualified university teachers lucrative pays and allowances, and so the 75 % tax rebate is the first step in this direction. [6,7]

In addition of that Higher Education Commission (HEC) is safeguarding the rights of students, as they are the primary stakeholders of higher education sector in Pakistan. A statement of Prof. Dr. Tariq Banuri Chairman HEC was recorded in 2018 regarding the enhancement of university teachers retirement age to 65 years during a meeting at the Commission Secretariat with a large number of faculty members of different universities from all over the country including professors and lecturers. The faculty made a brief presentation on agenda items of the meeting including senate resolutions regarding tax rebate of 75 % for university teachers and enhancement of university teachers retirement age to 65 years; quality of research journals; university autonomy and academic freedom; university acts; appointment of Vice Chancellors and university governance; Tenure Track System (TTS) issues; and a variety of other issues.

Moreover, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 17 of the Pharmacy Act, 1967 (XI of 1967), the Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, with the approval of the Federal Government, make the regulations regarding the Pharm-D graduating program dated July 20, 2005 (No. 1-7/2005-PCP) . In section 3-6 of Chapter II- Pharmacy Education Objectives it is described that Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm-D) course shall be to prepare a health caring and community oriented pharmacist who is competent to deal with the common health and pharmaceutical problems of the people in a scientifically sound and cost-effective manner using appropriate technology and holistic approach. A student after completion of his study in Doctor of Pharmacy Degree shall be eligible to practice pharmacy. The teaching in all the subjects of Doctor of Pharmacy Course shall be integrated as far as possible. Additionally, the pharmacy graduate at the conclusion of his study in Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Course must possess specific knowledge of the principles of science that are essential for understanding the human structures, functions and behavior in health and disease. A pharmacy graduate at the conclusion of his study in Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Course shall have sound knowledge of drugs development, therapeutic uses, toxicological manifestation, toxicology, drug administration, pharmaceutical care, drug posology and unbiased source of drug administration. Moreover, a pharmacy graduate at the conclusion of his study in Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Course shall be able to conduct interviews, take drug history of patients correctly, acquire ability to communicate and make accurate observations; understand simple laboratory investigations and diagnostic reports, and interpret tests; perform administrative duty as member of health care team as well; promote rational drug use and dispense drugs rationally; know the requirements of dispensing; refer patients appropriately when required; monitor the prescription with reference to drugs interactions; monitor the adverse drug reaction and medication errors; dispense drugs aseptically; maximize the effect of drugs on patients; supervise the procurement, storage and drugs delivery system; provide information pertaining to poison and drugs to other health professionals and public; act as Secretary, Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee; and perform his role as member of the Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee evaluate and select drugs for the formulary.

In addition to the abilities specified in clause (1), a pharmacy graduate should also acquire understanding of pharmaceutical manufacturing techniques; adequate training in the fields

of Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA), warehouse and packing of drugs; understanding of pilot scale manufacturing; concept of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP); pharmaceutical research and development; economics of purchase for hospitals and community pharmacy; proper storage conditions; and basic principles of pharmaco-economics, pharmaco-vigilance, pharmaco-dynamics and pharmaco-epidemiology. Whereas, the Section 6 (Character and attitude objectives) of chapter II (Pharmacy Education Objectives) define that a pharmacy graduate at the conclusion of his study in Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Course shall be able to display virtues and personal character such as sense of responsibility towards patients, community and colleagues; respect patient's right of confidentiality; obtain informed consent; recognize his Professional limitations; develop and maintain good relations with patients and all persons concerned in the delivery of health care; educate, guide and help in adoption of preventive and curative measures against disease; improve his Professional knowledge, skills and attitudes continuously with a critical and enquiring approach; show willingness to take part in education and training of students, para- medics and colleagues in health education; assume leadership in the health care delivery team as well as accepts the leadership of his seniors, demonstrating a spirit of teamwork; and identify himself with the community.

Moreover, the guidelines elaborated in Section-16 describe the teaching shall be aimed at different aspects of drugs and pharmaceuticals used in different diseases. The therapeutic/ pharmacological groups of drugs will be taught according to the classification of World Health Organization. The students should know the relationship between drug concentration and biological response, drug action overtime, factors affecting absorption, distribution, binding, metabolism and elimination of chemicals, structure activity relationship, biological changes that result from repeated drug use, tolerance, addiction and adverse effects. Process of drug interaction with cellular macromolecules to alter physiological function and site of action including knowledge about proper selection of drugs has also to be covered. Furthermore, section 19 (Requirement of educational facilities), chapter VII (Educational Facilities) emphasize on imparting good education by providing and maintaining the adequate educational facilities. Properly qualified and properly committed teaching staff should be provided on the basis of a minimum teacher student ratio of 1:10. Pharmacy institutions should have a faculty development plan and a career structure. Good teachers should be rewarded appropriately. Teachers should be provided with adequate support staff and equipment including access to computers. Pharmacy institutions should develop organized teacher's exchange programs with other pharmacy institutions at home and abroad. Training programs for teachers should be compulsory. All the permanent faculty members must have first degree in pharmacy and a valid registration with the Pharmacy Council. The institution shall allocate suitable funds enabling their permanent faculty members to attend at least two scientific moots in a year in the relevant fields for the purpose of "Continued Education" with in the country or abroad. Pharmacy education shall be imparted as a science which supports development of faculty; and a facility which supports functions of faculty as educators, and students as learners. Educational activities should involve determination of strategy, use of large variety of audio-visual aids, teaching techniques and computers. A large number of principles of learning have to be applied to the design and practice of teaching. Objective oriented and properly structured evaluation techniques shall be made to become an integral part of the educational process.

Additionally, the Prime Minister Imran Khan granted direction to the Establishment Division to implement new retirement rules for government employees under which they can be retired even before reaching 60 years of age (superannuation) on the basis of their performance. He also directed the Establishment Division to send the new rules to all ministries and divisions so that these could be implemented. New retirement rules, which were notified on April 15, 2020 are called the Civil Servants (Directory Retirement from Service) Rules, 2020. Under new system, a government employee can be retired before attaining 60 years of age on the basis of performance. The employee will also be retired if he/she has been on more than one occasion placed in category 'C' by Central Selection Board (CSB), Departmental Selection Board (DSB) or Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) under the Civil Servants Promotion (BPS-18 to BPS-21) Rules, 2019 or the employee's conduct is unbecoming. Under sub-rule(1), prior to retirement at the age of superannuation or exercising the option of premature retirement, cases of civil servants will be referred by the secretary or cadre administrator concerned to the relevant retirement board or retirement committees if it is determined that grounds for directory retirement as specified in rule 5 have become applicable. Under the rules, if the competent authority, after examining the recommendations of the retirement board or retirement committees and other record placed before it, agrees with the recommendations for directory retirement of a civil servant, he shall issue a show-cause notice to the civil servant concerned informing him of the grounds on which it is proposed to make the directive for directory retirement and, will provide him the opportunity of personal hearing if so requested by the civil servant concerned. In the cases where the prime minister is the competent authority, he may designate a BS-22 officer for granting personal hearing to the civil servant(s) on his behalf. On receipt of reply of the civil servant and after giving him the opportunity of personal hearing, when the competent authority is satisfied that further retention in service of the civil servant is not in public interest, the competent authority will pass an order for directory retirement. [8]

But, unluckily, current administrative and teaching situation of private pharmaceutical institution contravening the international standards and requirements specified in clause (1), sub-section (2) of section 17 of the Pharmacy Act, 1967 (XI of 1967). Almost all private pharmacy teaching institutions in Pakistan have appointed the retired government officers or professors. These over-aged faculty members have fully enjoyed their services in government institutions/ departments and eventually retired with respect and honor. The retirement itself is an official declaration that these individuals are not-fit anymore for such posts. Their retirement notifications confirm the non-compliance with the requirements of administrative and/ or academic position. Technically and scientifically they are not now able to deliver and perform the duties assigned with required standards. Thus, the non-compliance of medical, legal and physical standards prohibits the selection board, board of directors (governor) or university syndicate to hire such candidates for advertised critical positions. So, this is dilemma of Islamic republic of Pakistan that same retired officers/ professors become more useful and fruitful in private pharmacy institutions. They are preferably hired at competitive price and flexible package. Pharmacy Council of Pakistan granted permission and made them eligible to occupy the positions of chairmen, deans, director and/ or professor in any desired private pharmacy teaching institution. Thus, the respected officers/ staff retired from government institutions/ departments should promptly be barred to spoil the career of young students of Pharm-D (5-year degree program) and/ or M.Phil in all private pharmaceutical institutions in Pakistan. The students spend the prime

time of their life to obtain standard education. Parents make investment by paying all the charges/ fees/ prices in best possible fashion. But, unluckily, the illegitimate venture of retired government officers, business entrepreneurs of private pharmacy institutions and Pharmacy Council of Pakistan is potentially hurting the education standard and health care system in Pakistan. Therefore, an urgent action is requested to save the career of young students/ scholars. The retired, physically unfit and over-aged teaching staff appointed in private pharmacy institutions in Pakistan should be replaced with competent, ambitious, up-to-date and healthy faculty/ staff members. That will definitely improve the quality of education, academic administration, teaching standards in Pakistan.

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