

Iraqi Universities

Present Situation, Problems, and Future Perspectives

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- **Introduction**

The graduates are considered to be the final process of the education in universities, and scientific institutions. The Iraqi universities, official or private, is the real source for the process of human, social, economic development for the country. Therefore, higher education in Iraq is the significant and more vital in developing, building the society. The external shape for the Iraqi universities, for the last three decades, it apparently shows that it is based on correct, accurate, and precise. Nevertheless, for whom which are concerned for the universities affaires have a contrary point of view, deteriorating, languishing, weakness, in human, technology, fundamental, in the structure , its clear not obvious. The educational cadres, the teaching staff in the universities, have not given the chance to forge ahead, under the circumstances of the war and embargo (1980 - 2010) which the country suffered from connecting with the scientific, knowledge flowed with the developed countries, which resulted a graduated with limited horizons, and shortage in their specifications, and scientific approach.

As the managerial leadership of the universities, colleges, and scientific institutions, suffered from the restriction and obstacle, which made as executive management for the resolutions from government, without giving the chance for innovation and renewing. Although the scientific programs, the educational agenda, scientific laboratories, periodical magazines, remind attributed to the craps of the ex regime, as it considered to be a history. Crucial time, some attributed to wars, embargo, invasion, others to the political leadership, remain its negative affections on the universities, and higher education. The Iraqi government witnessed a comprehensive collapse, deteriorating, partly in educational system in colleges, which made the present situation for higher education difficult. The academic anticipate its deteriorating, unless the successful strategically measures shall be executed by the executive leadership and management.



▪ Present Situation

The present situation of the Iraqi universities, its conceded problems are not resulted newly, it was ascribed to the past accumulations, which faced the entire country, some of its failure affected the achievements of its teaching function, research, and services to meet conditions. The main issue in higher education is not by renewing the university or not. The renewing, inevitability, stimulate the traditional recovery for better situation, but the most decisive significant issue, is linked with the way, methods, and fixed period to execute that renew.

The Iraq universities managed by Iraqi ministry of higher education & scientific research, are among (21) official universities spread in all across Iraq, (3) foundations for technical & specialized studies, (35) private colleges, and (73) research centers. According to the murky situation, which control Iraq, these organizations, in general, became a target for threatening, incitement, different conflicts.

In frame of the critical situation prevailing in universities, especially which is coordinated with the hegemony trends, the party loyalty, it affected its privacy and independence, and the academic freedom for its lecturers.

To whom who track the audition of the ministry of higher education & scientific research in present situation, finds the trends and necessity of a decent functioning, the high perception typical in patriotic, vocational and careerist. In spite of the crucial period which swept the ministry, and the extravagance loyalty in resting the Iraqi recognition. Accordingly, the scientific concepts flourish, the college trends, writing the researches, studies, thesis, under the patronage of the ministry and its leadership, the renovation, innovation, brilliance for all Iraqis in their trends and differences.

The status quo starting from studying year (2008-2009) witnessed a pioneer scientific progress. Applying to the universities in primary, and higher education is in the peak, without differentiating between the Iraqis.

The significant issue which became apparently in Iraq, with the aggravation, immobility of the official, traditional in Iraqi universities atmosphere, which is initial phase to create the future university, that are distinguished independent, freedom academy, successful administration, able to take strategic initiative to confront the changing which is happening in the technical, scientific, knowledge structure in the developed stage. As those ambitions far from reach, will not be beyond reach any more. The strategic plans implemented by the ministry of higher education, are on equal foot for executing it.

The ministry of higher education and scientific research is interested in the fields of improving the task of Iraqi universities to include:

- 1- Field of teaching function (spreading, transferring the knowledge)
- 2- Field of research function (producing, generating knowledge)
- 3- Field of social service (developing environment, out spreading and implementation of knowledge)
- 4- Field of university function in scientific knowledge structure, and building accumulative knowledge for human, in its global prospective.



According to this base, and to achieve these fields, the ministry of higher education praises the scientific rivalry, competition between Iraqi universities, assuring the importance of knowledge for building new Iraq, and to achieve the genuine perceivable patriotic awakening all across Iraq. The Iraqi universities in its current situation is not only field for teaching, but also its tasks spread to be the center for research and planning for future, to establish a discreet scientific base.

▪ **Facts and characteristics for the present situation for higher education in Iraq;**

- 1- The universities and institutes in Kurdistan territory are still running locally (with the existence of joint coordinated foundations linked with the central ministry).
- 2- Most of the Iraqi universities have evening study, which the students pay low installment, which are submitted to the same regulations of the formal study.
- 3- The ministry of higher education adopt the policy of accepting all Iraqi high school graduate in its branches (scientific and literary graduate), but the vocational schools have a special regulations to be accepted at the university, which are conclusively to the elite.
- 4- The universities have miscellaneous specialized research centers.
- 5- Iraqi universities, colleges, institutes have consultant offices for providing a different services to the society.
- 6- The official Iraqi universities are financed centrically by ministry of finance.
- 7- The ministry of higher education acknowledges some of the private sector colleges according to conclusive scientific criteria.
- 8- The official higher education remains free of charge, ruled by the Iraqi permanent constitution.
- 9- Iraqi higher education organizations suffering from a vital policy of training for the universities employees, though inaugurating the training and developing centers in all Iraqi universities. As most of the universities have a shortage in efficiency rectifying system for universities performance.
- 10- Some universities have shortage of global and local web, specialized in electronic search, and international communication to match with international, territorial, and Arabic trends.
- 11- Most of the scientific programs and regulations do not cope with the international scientific and knowledge standards.
- 12- Lack of Iraqi universities to a clear policy dealing with social environment surrounded, which associated with work and training developing opportunities, and provides consultants, achieve the surveys held in.
- 13- Losing the direct coordination with other Iraqi ministries, to have the benefits of its research in scientific and knowledge.



The challenges faces the universities are many; need to coexist with the forces, and the affected environments in Iraqi society, in the near future, and to seize the opportunity for enhancing the developed pursue. In fact, we cannot achieve it unless we reorganize the structure of higher education activities according to total comprehensive and strategic vision, formulating a strategic plan, to invest the resources, putting it in effective fields, which impact the entire society, political, and economic sectors in the country.

▪ Iraqi Universities Problems

The problem of higher education in comprehensive, exclusively in universities, is not a new problem, but it's an old dilemma, it has been aggravated recently and rapidly. This sector suffers and still suffering from the absence of organizational frames, due to slack security, and emerges of corruption cases in both financial and administration. The deteriorating which affected the higher education in Iraq, since four decades, resulted from wrong policy for the ex regime, using it for political aims, plus the long fierce wars, which the country involve in, and the phase of sanctions which affected directly the higher education sector, so it was isolated from the global, reflected entirely for the minimizing the scientific, educational, and social level for the students and lecturers equally.

After collapse of the regime in April 2003, the universities were destroyed due to looting, plundering, sabotage, accompany with the war, and corruption spread, decrease of scientific performance, through the absence of standers objective evaluation, for the entire educational process. Many attempts took place, and still taking place to mix the education with policy, from the parties which control the political process, pushing it in sectarian apportionment, which affected in economically, socially, scientifically, and politically. The higher education sector has been neglected in past, though its importance and vital role in Iraqi society. The fate and future of the scientific and knowledge bodies in the country was ambiguity, through directing these bodies in propaganda programs, out of scientific research frame.

The problem in Iraqi universities aggravates occasionally, the waste of scientific principle, humanitarian, organizational has increased. We have, as an academic, sole solution to regain the decent status for the science and knowledge, adopting and formulating rehabilitation strategy for Iraqi universities, depending on rebuilding Iraqi people, qualifying them scientifically, societal, and educational, to be productive reliable figure.

Iraqi universities are facing many challenges of strategic interest, in the performance of its mission and vision of civilization, culture in changing world, among the most prominent of these challenges:



- 1- Keep pace with patterns of education, how it is related to reliability, quality assurance.
- 2- Over the use of modern technical means in education and keep up with scientific development in the world, and catch up with civilization.
- 3- Living with environmental data and the Iraqi unrest, characterized by corruption, sectarianism and deteriorating security situation.
- 4- The development and capacity building, human creativity, which leads the development of universities and harnessing the creative interaction of the reconstruction in human terms.
- 5- Participation in the formation of educational system for Iraqi people to achieve sustainable development.

From our point of view, as academic and objectively honest, bold, the problem of Iraqi universities focused that there is no strategic vision for strategic leaders, relating to the reform of higher education in Iraq according to current circumstances that reflected that not determined the mission of universities spread all across the country, so that help to create a state of the creation of adaptive parties, in scientific equation: lecturer, student, society.

Can the Iraqi universities in their current situation contribute seriously to alter Iraqi Reality?

According to our work, with limited materials and human resources, weak abilities, the bad values organizational citizenship, how can Iraqi universities to establish, built, develop, and strengthen academic values that are consistent with the tradition of civilized societies? Can it achieve the requirements with the existence of the power conflicts and unconscious behavior in social responsibility, in defining the university student fate? And drawing the moral behavior? Does that mean the university administration stand still at this case, and not endeavor in the formulating of higher education reform, and rebuilt the proper development of human capital, social, innovative, and knowledge, equal with the developed countries? Certainly the Iraqi universities whatever it face of crucial circumstances, challenges, they are undoubtedly distinguished open system of knowledge, research, and intellectual, which supplies the state institutions and society with developed, innovative human resources, that contribute in achieving the renaissance of the country, advancement, development, and building the future.

The responsibility of Iraqi universities has mounted recently, and started increasing, especially after taking a distinct role by applying the spirit of good citizenship, promote their zealous spirit, outcast violence and sectarianism, enhance brotherhood, development their knowledge and research. As well as facing the challenges, avoid the repercussions of security situation, political, social, economic, and the regressive steps that emerge from; and remove the obstacles which face the reform of effective higher education.



Iraqi universities which are work in a climate full with chaos and corruption and bad security situation, has many problems and negative aspects which effect its educational efforts, and its off course formed a real danger on Iraq future, and this include:

- 1- The disintegrated educational courses in all specialties, which is not engorging the cognitive formulating for the students, and do not engorge the discussion between students. At the same time the Iraqi universities still use the same old educational courses without any change or reconsideration, and the continuous of this unhealthy educational situation is a result of the shortage in financial, morale, and technical motivation for the researchers and academic professors to prepare a new advanced educational courses.
 - 2- The unjustified increasing in the numbers of employees in Iraqi's universities, specially for the employees which have a master degree and below, the assistance teachers and technical trainers with no real qualifications, beside the absence of the correct educational methods, and the absence of the modern management methods in the universities, and the weakness in using the new technology in formulating the universities, and its development
 - 3- The sluggishness in the universities laws and regulations, which encourage the careless attitudes, which makes the universities as a place for getting privileges, salaries and social relations which is so far from science, knowledge and academic life.
 - 4- The spread of sectarian, and violence phenomena, which lead to the coercive displacement to the students, and the creation of sectarian universities which lead to create a climate of fear and fright and continuous worry between students, which creates many difficulties and obstacles related to rehabilitation of students to the correct academic life and this also related to the limited of the linguistic abilities of the students , and the decrease in willingness to study and research, beside the lack in developing the students' abilities because of the absence of motivation the competition sprit between students.
- **Future Perspectives**

There are many recommendations may help in building respectable universities which may become similar to international universities, and these recommendations include:

- 1- Directing the universities toward educating its students with the direction that makes them a good citizens, who have a real abilities and a vision motivates them to adapt the criticize thinking, problems analysis, and taking the responsibility in searching for the right solutions for the Iraqi society problems and dilemmas.



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- 2- Establishing a scientific research centre specialized in academic education, and this centre should be independent from sectarian and races attitudes. Depended upon measurements and tests, and work in preparing advanced work programs, draw the higher education plans, establishing workshops by researchers and academic professors from inside and outside Iraq. Also this centre should be responsible for:
 - a- Stopping the phenomena of cheating and academic corruption through designing an effective programs and polices within the comprehensive strategy of rehabilitating universities.
 - b- Reformulating all academic courses in all colleges and reformulating the teaching methods, and authoring books.
 - c- Narration of management and technology, and developing new strategies for human resources management in high education at the fields of selecting, hiring, training & development, and performance evaluation... etc
 - d- Find new agreements with Arabic and international countries to establish a cooperation partnerships for training the professors and rehabilitating them, specially for teachers and teachers assistance
 - e- Work to create the scientific and cultural climate inside universities, to enhance the culture of good citizenship, love and indulgence.
 - f- Adapting the formulation of the comprehensive strategy for high education and scientific research, and identifying of a clear mission and advanced vision for its strategic leaders, beside the identifying of the effective methods to manage the knowledge inventory which represented by (intellectual capital, social capital, gifts management and knowledge management) taking in its consideration the social responsibility for the universities and institutions.
- 3- Showing the delightful aspects of the dispassionate and efficient academic professors, and this may be done through the establishment of effective measurement for the creative professors by the ministry of higher education and scientific research, also the ministry have the responsibility of taking care the creative professors financially and morally, after the ministry takes in its consideration the international practices in this field, and boldness that the ministry reuse the law of protecting the Iraqi scientists 1979, and we find that from the other responsibilities of the universities are:
 - a- distributing the correct and relay able information about its vision , mission, objectives, programs, decisions, polices, academic degrees, studying fees, financial conditions, requirements for acceptance and graduate, members of trustees boards and members of teaching committee.
 - b- Preparing the code of ethics for professors and students
 - c- Preparing the climate of transparency and integrity in financial, managerial, and scientific intercourses. And establishing an effective system for judgment in light of identifying a specific standards, and equity.



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- d- Emphasis of ethical aspects in the scientific and academic courses
- e- Taking in consideration the implementation of advanced researching programs, and the guarantee of academic freedom in publishing, and the freedom of opinion to the members of educational committee Prepare and develop the university students according to advanced and rich programs deals with building personality, and develop their willingness to research and participating in Iraq future through:
 - a- Depending on a clear policy to train and develop the youth, and this could be done through organizing workshops and conferences in cooperation with other Iraqi ministries and civil society organizations.
 - b- Encouraging students to write and prepare researches and presenting initiatives to develop university, colleges and create the climate of love and patriot sense. Also the universities are responsible for encouraging the movement of arts and sports between its students.
 - c- Spending more concern to universities libraries for both qualitative and quantitative aspects, and depending more on using new technologies in managing it.
 - d- Presenting a fixed financial aid to students, the this is very important issue in current period, also its important to reconsider the program of students loans, and ensuring the health care for them.
 - e- Taking care about completing the building of the university student personality, from many aspects like scientific, psychological, and social aspects, its also very important to pay more attention to build the values aspects between the students, to face the financial corruption and to face the cultural invasion.
 - f- Paying more attention to the secondary services and work to improve it, like students residence, clubs, transportations, and cultural & sports facilities
 - g- Encourage the environment of scientific research with all the requirements and to all students, in a way that guarantee the production of scientific researches, which may serve the country, also its very important to pay more attention to establish a system for rewarding the original and valuable researches.
- 4- Issuing an integrated regulations that quarantines the academic, financial and managerial independence of the university away from the continuous interfere of the ministry of higher education and scientific research, and the constrains of the ministry of finance in having the right budget for presenting the best services, its also necessary for the university to stop using the high centralization and formality in its relationship with colleges and scientific departments, and focus more on strategic planning and controlling.
- 5- Achieve the legal security for the campus and stop the interfere of the political parties in its work, and secure the university from all the shapes of patronage, besides depending more on scientific academic measures in hiring the head of universities and departments away from the political, sectarian and races aspects, and may its fine to use elections in choosing them.



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- 6- **Using an intensive academic standards in establishing new departments, night studies, private and free universities, and high studies and never leniency in this issues, and it well be better if its depend on central planning and controlling from the ministry.**
- 7- **The importance of using quality standards in all Iraqi universities, and this could be done through the establishment of independent committees or agencies for academic evaluation, and these committees may be responsible for helping the universities in developing and enhancing the total quality application in the universities.**
- 8- **Adapting the pioneer role in renewing the teaching and educating methods, and using the new techniques in scientific research, besides understanding the Iraqi society in current and future circumstances.**
- 9- **The Academic leadership most depend more in its thinking upon a clear philosophy for diagnosing and analyzing the environmental opportunities and threats, and identifying the point of strength and weakness in its internal environment, and work to change the situation after observing the negative aspects of it.**
- 10- **Formulating a comprehensive strategy at the universities level, include the drawing of strategic plan and effective policies, which transfer the vision and mission into programs and work plans, with regard to take in consideration the importance of evaluating these plans periodically and adjust it according to the needs of different situations.**
- 11- **The university should directing the attention into the good models in individual and group behavior, especially with the issues that related to adhering to Iraqi noble values, and the right ethics, and support the honorable attitude in self building for students and professors, and these could be done through the spread of ethical, democratic climate which lead to the achievement of society building and in all sectors.**
- 12- **The government should dedicate its efforts and its qualitative resources and in a generous way toward pay more attention to enhance the basic inputs for the university and specially those who related to students, professors, academic courses, infrastructures and management.**

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