RAHBAR KISAN INTERNATIONAL

Why PhDs@ Don't Get ?

Published on December 19, 2024

Document Date: Fri, Apr 11 2025 04:45:37 am

Category: ,English,Literature - ,Snippets

Show on website : Click Here

Dr. Umair Riaz, Dr. Abid Hussain, Dr. Junaid Ali Khan

MNS University of Agriculture, Multan

In Pakistan, 75% of PhD scholars secure academic or teaching roles, while the remainder pursue postdoctoral fellowships, commissions, or similar paths. In contrast, 75% of PhD graduates abroad transition into industrial jobs, leaving only a small fraction in academia. This disparity arises due to a key difference: academic-industry collaborations.

In foreign universities, most PhD scholars work on industry-funded projects under professors who have such funding. These collaborations allow scholars to acquire practical skills and gain industrial exposure, significantly improving their chances of securing jobs in the same industry. However, in Pakistan, the academic-industrial collaboration is minimal. Professors typically focus on government-funded projects from bodies like the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC), or the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF). Even if scholars excel in these projects, landing industrial roles remains uncommon due to differing hiring pathways.

The main gap is the lack of industry-academia interaction. Pakistani PhD scholars rarely gain the skills, experience, or networks needed for industrial roles because the majority of research remains disconnected from industry needs.

Bridging the Gap: Practical Steps

To enhance industrial job opportunities for Pakistani PhD scholars, several measures must be taken:

1. **Encourage Professors to Handle Industrial Projects**
    - **Foster Industry Collaboration:** Universities should incentivize faculty to actively pursue partnerships with industries, addressing real-world problems through joint research.
    - **Industry-Sponsored Research:** Offering tax benefits or intellectual property rights can encourage industries to fund academic research, benefiting both sectors.
    - **Relevant Skill Development:** Collaborations would expose scholars to cutting-edge tools and methodologies, making them more industry-ready.
2. **Strengthen University Placement and Career Development Cells**
    - **Support for PhD Scholars:** Placement cells should not only assist undergraduates but also guide PhD scholars towards industrial roles.
    - **Industry-Specific Training:** Offering workshops on corporate culture, project management, and ISO standards will help scholars better understand industrial expectations.

- **Networking Opportunities:** Organizing job fairs, industrial visits, and networking events would enable scholars to directly interact with industry leaders.
- **Resume and Interview Prep:** Career counselors should help scholars tailor their CVs and prepare for technical and behavioral interviews.

3. **Establish Industrial Liaison Offices (ILO)**
   - **Connecting Academia and Industry:** ILOs would facilitate consistent communication and collaboration between universities and industries, helping scholars access industrial opportunities.
   - **Policy Advisory:** ILOs can advise government bodies on policies that promote stronger industry-academia partnerships.
4. **Introduce Industry-Focused PhD Programs**
   - **Customized Research:** PhD programs should focus on research topics co-developed with industries, ensuring that the research has real-world relevance.
   - **Industrial Internships:** Including mandatory internships as part of the PhD curriculum would provide valuable hands-on experience.
   - **Dual Mentorship:** Assigning scholars both an academic supervisor and an industrial mentor would guide their research and career trajectories.

5. **Incentivize Industrial Collaboration**
    - **Government Support:** The government should fund joint ventures between academia and industry, such as matching funds for collaborative projects.
    - **Recognition:** Awards should be established to recognize successful collaborations between scholars, professors, and industries.
6. **Create Awareness Among PhD Scholars**
    - **Market Awareness:** Educating PhD scholars on job market demands, including transferable skills, would help them align their expertise with industry needs.
    - **Cross-Disciplinary Learning:** Encouraging scholars to develop skills like data analytics, communication, and soft skills will increase their appeal to industries.
    - **Success Stories:** Sharing examples of PhDs who have transitioned successfully into industrial roles can inspire others.
7. **Strengthen Alumni Networks**
    - **Mentorship:** Universities can leverage their alumni working in industry to mentor current PhD scholars and provide career advice.
    - **Referral Opportunities:** Alumni can refer scholars to job openings and offer insights into hiring processes.

8. **Promote Spin-Offs and Startups**
    - **Innovation Hubs:** Universities should create centers or incubators to help PhD scholars commercialize their research and start businesses.
    - **Seed Funding:** Providing grants and venture capital would help research-driven startups flourish.

By focusing on these strategies, Pakistan can better prepare its PhD scholars for industrial roles, creating a stronger connection between academia and industry, and fostering a workforce equipped for future challenges.