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Editorial Article

CATASTROPHIC FAILURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SARGODHA: DETAILS OF CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT

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Abstract:

This article analyzes the reported governance crisis at the University of Sargodha, situating it within broader challenges of public-sector higher education in Pakistan. Drawing on publicly available reports, stakeholder accounts, and institutional audit concerns, the study explores patterns of alleged mismanagement, administrative opacity, and weakened accountability mechanisms that have undermined academic quality and public trust. The analysis highlights how bureaucratic overreach, politicized decision-making, and insufficient regulatory oversight can produce systemic failures affecting faculty morale, student outcomes, and institutional credibility.

It's need of time to combat against corruption in Pharmacy Education. We need an urgent Dismissal of Professor Dr. Sajid Bashir, Principal of Lords College of Pharmacy, Lahore, Pakistan.

Pharmacy education and the pharmaceutical industry play a pivotal role in the development of life-saving medicines. This process involves highly systematic and scientific stages—from the preparation of active pharmaceutical ingredients to their conversion into dosage forms such as tablets, syrups, injections, ampoules, creams, ointments, suppositories, pessaries, and suspensions. Operations like mixing, drying, granulation, heating, coating, and pressing ensure that medicines meet the rigorous standards required for therapeutic use.

However, when corruption infiltrates academic and industrial pharmaceutical institutions, it not only squanders public resources but also gravely damages the integrity of both healthcare and education.

A striking example is the collapse of a large-scale pharmaceutical manufacturing project worth approximately Rs. 0.8 billion at the University of Sargodha. After eighteen years of development, the project was destroyed due to severe mismanagement and corruption. This failure resulted from the alleged misconduct and poor leadership decisions of Professor Dr. Sajid Bashir, who at that time served as Dean of Pharmacy. The continued presence of such individuals in academic leadership positions poses a serious threat to institutional credibility and public health.

Following his retirement, his appointment as Principal of Lords College of Pharmacy in Lahore has further intensified these concerns. His past record and the allegations of corruption make his position untenable, as it jeopardizes both academic standards and the healthcare system. Therefore, his immediate dismissal is imperative to restore transparency, rebuild public confidence, and protect ethical values and health standards in Pakistan.

The University of Sargodha Disaster: A Cautionary Tale of Corruption and Mismanagement

Launched in 2005 alongside the Pharm-D program, the *University of Sargodha Pharmaceutical Laboratories Project* aimed to establish a modern drug manufacturing facility. Unfortunately, the initiative collapsed due to procurement irregularities and the purchase of substandard, used machinery.

Professor Dr. Sajid Bashir—then serving as Dean of Pharmacy and a key stakeholder in *M/s University of Sargodha Pharmaceutical Laboratories*—is accused of purchasing outdated equipment from the industrial area near Saggian Bypass, Lahore.

These transactions are documented under the following purchase orders:

UOS/RC/11-412 dated 21 March 2011

UOS/RC/10-160 dated 25 May 2010

UOS/RC/11-616 dated 18 October 2011

UOS/RC/11-615 dated 18 October 2011

UOS/RC/11-624 dated 21 October 2011

Although the Central Licensing Board issued Manufacturing License No. 000859/167 on 12 June 2017 under the Drugs Act 1976, the project ultimately failed. Later, the University voluntarily surrendered the license through letter UOS/PIU/1666 dated 19 November 2018, which was subsequently canceled by the Board in its meeting on 26 February 2019.

While this action appeared administrative, it effectively nullified eighteen years of investment and wasted significant public funds. Had the facility been repurposed for academic or research use, it could have served as a valuable national asset.

A formal petition (No. 379/627 dated 25 April 2022) was submitted to the Governor of Punjab and Chancellor of the University of Sargodha, Mr. Omer Sarfraz Cheema, demanding strict disciplinary action and recovery of losses. Multiple official correspondences—including letters from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the University administration—further substantiate the evidence of corruption and negligence.

Irrefutable Evidence of Systemic Corruption

Beyond the Sargodha case, multiple records reveal a consistent pattern of misconduct by Professor Bashir. His appointment as Professor of Pharmacy (BS-21) was marred by the use of invalid academic credentials and unauthorized evaluation reports, which were later challenged in the Lahore High Court.

Furthermore, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reportedly faced obstacles in obtaining relevant documents from the University, indicating deliberate concealment of information and lack of transparency.

These events highlight how entrenched individuals exploit weaknesses within oversight bodies such as the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to escape accountability.

The Present Threat: Professor Bashir's Appointment at Lords College of Pharmacy

Despite the Sargodha scandal, Professor Dr. Sajid Bashir was appointed Principal of Lords College of Pharmacy, located at 53-M, Quaid-e-Azam Industrial Estate, Kot Lakhpat, Lahore—an institution affiliated with the University of the Punjab. He faces serious allegations of fraud, dishonesty, and financial irregularities.

Allowing such a figure to lead an academic institution undermines the credibility of pharmacy education and endangers the professional development of future pharmacists. His participation in

major scientific events such as the *21st International Pharmacy Conference and Exhibition (IPCE-2024)* and *ICONRIPS 2025* has been criticized as an insult to genuine scientific endeavor.

Entrusting an institution's leadership to a person with such a blemished record is a direct threat to the integrity of Pakistan's pharmaceutical education and public health systems

The Call for Accountability and Reform

The removal of Professor Dr. Sajid Bashir from Lords College of Pharmacy is not merely a punitive action against an individual—it represents a vital step toward systemic reform. His tenure has been marked by corruption, waste of public funds, and violation of institutional ethics.

The Punjab Higher Education Commission, the Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, and concerned university authorities must conduct a thorough investigation into his misconduct and implement his immediate dismissal. Repeated appeals from the Pakistan Pharmacists Association (PPA) and other professional bodies emphasize that the nation can no longer afford silence or inaction.

Conclusion: The Future of Education and Healthcare at Stake

The University of Sargodha case stands as a stark warning—but Professor Sajid Bashir's continued presence in leadership positions renews that danger. Failure to act decisively will only deepen the roots of corruption within Pakistan's educational and healthcare systems.

His removal will not only serve as a symbol of accountability but will also affirm Pakistan's commitment to protecting education, research, and healthcare from the clutches of corrupt interests. The defense of knowledge and human well-being must take precedence over the preservation of any individual's influence or position.

Editorial Statement:

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