# Decolonizing College Governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Autonomy Challenges in Curriculum, Evaluation, and Institutional Structure

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## Abstract

This investigation focuses on structural and legal challenges that prevent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa colleges from being fully independent. These colleges function under a dual legal system, i.e., intermediate classes under Education Code 1935 and undergrad programs under University Act, that is weakening. The first part is governed by an old colonial law, while the other is related to a newer law. Such a legal framework has created jurisdictional chaos, aggravated by the overlapping mandates of several independent directorates and councils. Although the national policy envisions a unified rational system, 'structural inertia' and 'bureaucratic resistance' indeed maintain a resistance to this rationalization. Using the tools of historical and comparative analysis, in this study, the author asserts that the frameworks of colonialism, together with a deficient designed system, block the academic, administrative, and financial autonomy of these colleges. The paper ends with practical and concrete policy suggestions aimed to help the lawmakers in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa develop a legislative framework to govern the higher education system in the province in a decolonized and coherent way.

**Keywords:** Decolonization, Institutional Autonomy, Higher Education Governance, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Education Code 1935, Policy Reform, Path Dependency.

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# Introduction

The governance of public sector higher education in post-colonial contexts remains a formidable challenge, often characterized by a complex interplay of inherited colonial structures and contemporary reform pressures [38]. In Pakistan, particularly in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), this challenge is exemplified by a profound "governance paradox" among government colleges [31]. Each institution is governed by two conflicting legal frameworks, creating a split system that sustains administrative fragmentation and undermine institutional autonomy at its core [17][32].

To appreciate the scale of this governance challenge, it is essential to understand the sector's size. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a population of over forty million people (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The public higher education sector designed to serve this population is bifurcated: it consists of approximately thirty-five public sector universities, which are autonomous degree-awarding institutions, and over three hundred affiliated government colleges (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Higher Education Department [HED], 2023). These colleges collectively enroll hundreds of thousands of students. It is precisely this vast network of colleges, not the universities themselves, that is the primary focus of this analysis. The governance paradox arises from the fact that these colleges are subject to the regulatory authority of both the provincial government (for Intermediate education) and their affiliating universities (for Bachelor's programs), creating a fragmented system that impacts a significant portion of the province's youth.

This phenomenon has historical roots. The core organizational structure in the region was established during the British Raj, particularly with the *Education Code of 1935* [28]. This rational instrument was designed ensuring for imperial control, bureaucratic standardization, and to maintain the social order, rather than for intellectual freedom or contextual relevance [30][34]. Decades after independence, the effect of this system endures. The education in grades eleven and twelve at colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains governed by this obsolete code, which enforces highly centralized control and top-down administration, severely limiting institutional freedom in areas like curriculum, evaluation, and financial management [17][28][22].

In a clear contrast that highlights the systemic inconsistency, Bachelor of Science (BS) programs at the same institutions fall under the jurisdiction of the more recent *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa University Act* [18]. This places them under the control of their affiliating universities, creating a legal and administrative dichotomy. As a result, principals and faculty of colleges have to manage two different regulatory regimes at the same time [31][32]. This issue becomes more complicated by the involvement of multiple provincial directorates, each asserting overlapping authority, which creates a mix of responsibilities and contested oversight [3].

This structural inertia continues even after the Eighteenth Amendment, which gave provinces full autonomy over higher education policy, and despite provincial reform initiatives outlined in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Higher Education Department's White Paper [17][24]. The sector remains stuck in a top-down model that systematically weakens colleges in three core academic domains (32] [45]. Firstly, it suppresses the decolonization of curriculum, preventing the integration of indigenous knowledge and local sociocultural contexts, which continues a colonial way of thinking [30] [41]. Secondly, it hinders the reform of evaluation systems. These systems still continue to favor rote memorization and standardized testing over critical thinking and applied learning (1). Thirdly, it strengthens internal institutional structures. This leads to colonial bureaucratic hierarchies that restrict innovation and participatory decision-making [5] [13].

Compounding this paradox are well-meaning but ultimately misguided decentralization efforts. Intermediary bodies like Joint Management Councils (JMCs) were created to devolve management to the district level. Instead of promoting independence in true letter and spirit, they often add an extra layer of bureaucracy [17][36]. The lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities among these various governing bodies creates operational ambiguity, resource duplication, and critically extended decision-making processes. This situation deepens administrative inefficiency [24] [35].

National Education Policies have long identified this fundamental flaw, proposing the logical solution of shifting Intermediate classes to a separate higher secondary tier, thereby enabling colleges to focus exclusively on providing quality Bachelor's education [21]. However, comprehensive sector reviews confirm, this reform remains largely unimplemented. This is a clear example of policy-practice gap stymied by deep-seated institutional inertia, a lack of sustained political will, and the complicated federal-provincial dynamics that develop post-devolution [12] [40].

Consequently, the broken governance structure not only generates severe functional incapacity but also paradoxically preserves a legacy of colonial-era centralization. This system that actively hinders meaningful, trans-formative educational reform that seek to decolonize knowledge and practices [30] [42] [41]).

Anchored in a robust historical, legal, and policy analysis, this study therefore seeks to answer the critical research question: How do the colonial legal foundations, chronically fragmented institutional structures, and persistent policy stagnation collectively constitute a governance paradox that systematically impedes autonomy in curriculum, evaluation, and administration within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's government colleges?

While existing literature has separately addressed the themes of colonial legacies in South Asian education [30] [34] [4] , post-devolution policy challenges [12] [40] and general administrative inefficiencies in Pakistani higher education [17][35], the novelty and significant contribution of this research lie in its synthesized, multi-level analysis of the unique "governance paradox" as the central, underlying mechanism that impedes decolonization. This study moves beyond solid explanations to pioneer the argument that the *pathological interaction* between the anachronistic 1935 Code and the modern University Act within a single institution creates an operational environment that actively precludes autonomy. Additionally, it uses the twin theoretical lenses of path dependency and decolonization theory not only to diagnose how past colonial choices tightly limit reform.  It also offers feasible context-specific pathways for systematic reform. By drawing comparative lessons from successful autonomous college models implemented in similar post-colonial contexts [9], this paper gives legislators and policymakers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a clear understanding of systemic flaws and a solid, theory-based plan for meaningful change that is relevant to the local context and aims to empower.

# Literature Review

## 1. Colonial Foundations and Legal Duality

The effects of colonialism on the educational system in South Asia have been extensively studied and documented. The Education Code of 1935 was not made to encourage new ideas but to create a group of people who would work under the control of colonial government, which is a

common way to control knowledge [30] [34] [35]. This old system is still used in KPK, and it keeps a "topdown, command-and-control" approach that stops institutions for making their own decisions [9]. The central control stops colleges from making changes to how they assess students, what they teach, and even small administrative tasks without getting many approvals [15]. Using the Education Code of 1935 along with the University Act creates a serious problem, making colleges follow conflicting rules and priorities from two different authorities [30].

## 2. Fragmented Institutional Oversight

The issue of disintegrated governance is often talked about when discussing higher education in Pakistan. Bureaucratic fragmentation is used to maintain control from the center and prevent institutions from becoming strong and independent [17]. Having three separate directorates causes confusion, leads to repeated communication, delay decision-making, and result in total lack of clear and thoughtful plans for colleges [17]. This fragmentation is seen as the main problem stopping real change in higher education in KP, as power is spread out but not actually given to those who need it [23].

## 3. Reform Policy and Its Non-Implementation

The ongoing gap between policy objectives and their execution is a significant challenge in bringing reforms in colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa higher education system. A major issue is separating Intermediate and Bachelor-level education, a reform that continues to drain resources and confuse educational goals [17] [21]. This failure to implement persists despite clear policy directives and broad acknowledgement of the issue.

Such policy failures are often blamed on a mixed of bureaucratic rent-seeking—where officials want to keep a vested interest in the status quo to preserve power and privileges—and a lack of ongoing political support for reforms that offer no immediate political capital [5] [14]. Rizvi's (2011) analysis of Pakistani higher education supports this ongoing gap between policy intent and implementation reality, especially in structural reforms that challenge established interests.

The situation after post-18th Amendment context has made things more complicated when it comes to implementation. With uncertain federal-provincial responsibilities and lack of coordination mechanisms have created additional obstacles to executing trans-formative reforms at provincial-level [17][24]. This confusion within institutions allows for the dissemination of responsibility, making it all too easy to justify to maintain the status quo.

The challenges we face are augmented by the deep-seated institutional inertia that traces back to the colonial-era *Education Code of 1935*. This generates powerful path dependencies that resist any changes that might threatening established bureaucratic hierarchies [28] [35]. Furthermore, top-down policies are designed in a way that neglects the voices of grassroots stakeholders and fails to offer feasible implementation roadmaps. As a result, these policies lack local legitimacy and operational functionality [24] [36].

Consequently, well-identified issues and logically sound solutions often get stuck in a cycle of non-implementation. This produces a governance paradox and preserves colonial-era structures that obstruct institutional autonomy and stop genuine efforts to decolonization of higher education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (30] [11] [14].

## 4. Autonomy Deficits and Path Dependence

The literature normally shows a strong relation between institutional autonomy and the quality of education they provided, with self-governing institutions demonstrating greater responsiveness to labor market needs and academic innovation [6] [8]. However, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, colleges are stuck into a colonial-era governance model, which really limits autonomy [28] [35]. This structural constraint is causing significant faculty dissatisfaction, with surveys showing that more than 85% of college faculties are in favor of autonomy of colleges [18]. The centralized, one-sizefits all curriculum—a direct colonial legacy—actively suppresses epistemological diversity by marginalizing indigenous knowledge systems and hindering educational pluralism [30] [21]. This governance model creates what scholars term a "cognitive empire," fundamentally contradicting the very goals of decolonization [42] [7]. The system remains stuck in a less than ideal state where bureaucratic inertia overrides both professional readiness for change and current needs of educational [35] [18]. This autonomy deficit is not just an administrative issue; it's an epistemological injustice that urgently requires structural reform.

## 5. Comparative Perspective: India's Structural Reform

India's journey provides a powerful compelling counter-model. Since the 1970s, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has actively supported the "autonomous college" concept, giving selected institutions freedom in the field of academic, evaluation, and innovate teaching practices, all while remaining affiliated with a university for degree awarding. This policy is known for improving teaching quality, promoting academic innovation, and creating a more

dynamic college sector. This allows that legal and administrative decolonization is not only possible; it can also bring significant benefits. It provides a clear prototype for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to follow and move beyond its colonial legacy [9].

## 6. Comparative Frameworks for Decolonial Governance

While the autonomous college model in India served as significant regional benchmark [9], broader comparative study reveals different pathways for decolonizing governance across postcolonial higher education systems. Around the world, there has been an uneven but ongoing effort for both institutional autonomy and knowledge decolonization. This, provides critical lessons for places like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa [38].

Within South Asia, methods have been largely state-led and incremental. The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh, for example, has aimed for gradual autonomy for degree colleges. However, these efforts remain constrained by ongoing bureaucratic centralization that continues to inhibit meaningful self-governance [37]. Similarly, Sri Lanka's efforts to localize curricula and incorporate national knowledge system remain vulnerable to political interference and policy uncertainty, which limiting their long-term impact [27].

Beyond the region, more radical movements, often led by student have emerged. In South Africa, the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall campaigns fundamentally challenged the colonial foundations of university governance, curricula, and institutional symbolism. They argued that substantive decolonization requires a decisive break from colonial imitations and a profound focus on indigenous knowledge systems [2] [35] [25].

In a different yet complementary approach, federal universities in Brazil have established governance models based on formal community participation. This structural change involves integrating community stakeholders into institutional decision-making processes. It establishes durable mechanism for shared authority and decolonize autonomy that operates within the state system [41] [39].

When taken as whole, these global cases show that autonomous structure is a common issue. They demonstrate that successful reform is not achievable through legislative or policy changes alone. Rather, it requires the development of a broad societal and institutional consensus on the concrete meaning and desired ends of decolonization itself. A range of approaches to autonomy

and decolonization can be seen when comparing these different postcolonial models. This offers a valuable repository of strategies and cautions for reformers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (See Table I).

*Table I: Comparative Models of College Autonomy and Decolonization in Postcolonial Contexts*

| Country/ Region | Key Reform / Initiative | Primary Driver | Autonomy Granted | Persistent Challenges | Key Lesson for KP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| India | Autonomous College Status (UGC) | Policy Reform | Curriculum Design, Internal Examination, Fee Structure | Uneven Implementation, Quality Assurance | Statutory autonomy can spur innovation; requires robust accountability mechanisms. |
| Bangladesh | National University Reforms | Gradual Decentralization | Limited Administrative & Academic Powers for Affiliated Colleges | High Centralization, Bureaucratic Delay | Incremental reform is possible but must be deep and substantive to be effective. |
| South Africa | #FeesMustFall / #RhodesMustFall | Student-Led Movement | Intense focus on Epistemic Decolonization of Curriculum | Political Resistance, Funding Constraints | Reform requires strong bottom-up pressure and a mandate to indigenize knowledge. |
| Country/ Region | Key Reform / Initiative | Primary Driver | Autonomy Granted | Persistent Challenges | Key Lesson for KP |
| Brazil | Community-Participatory Models | Legislative & Institutional Policy | Community inclusion in governance, local knowledge systems | Scalability, Resource Allocation | Participatory governance can make institutions more responsive to local needs and epistemologies. |
| Sri Lanka | Curricular Localization | National Policy | Integration of national epistemologies and cultural content | Political interference, infrastructural limitations | Curriculum reform is a core, achievable component of decolonization. |

# Methodology

This study uses a qualitative, historical-comparative methodology to analyze a college governance structures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) through the lens of decolonization [25]. This

approach is well-suited to examine complex institutional phenomena that are deeply embedded in historical contexts and influenced by long standing processes [35] [19].

# Data Collection

The analysis relies on two primary categories of data. Primary data consists of key policy and legal documents that form the regulatory architecture of higher education in KP. These include the *Education Code of 1935* [28], the relevant *University Act* [32], national education policies [21], official reports from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan (Higher Education Commission [HEC], 2023), and reviews from international bodies like the World Bank [18] [46]. Secondary data is drawn from a comprehensive review of scholarly literature on education policy, governance reform, post-colonial studies, and decolonization theory [17] [30] [42] [4].

### 1. Analytical Framework

The analysis is structured through a dual theoretical framework. First, the concept of path dependency is used to explain the institutional inertia and lock-in effects that perpetuate colonialera governance models despite reform efforts [35] [26]. Second, decolonization theory provides the critical lens to critique existing power structures, epistemological dominance, and to envision emancipatory, contextually relevant alternatives [46] [42] [41].

### 2. Comparative Analysis

A systematic, structured comparison is central to this methodology [29]. The institutional case of KP is juxtaposed with the Indian model of autonomous colleges [9] [43]. This comparative dimension serves to highlight divergent post-colonial pathways, identify transferable policy lessons, and ground the critique of KP's system in a viable regional alternative, thereby moving beyond mere problem identification to suggestive policy prescription.

### 3. Limitations

As a qualitative study, its findings are context-specific and not intended for broad statistical generalization. Furthermore, the analysis is dependent on the availability and authenticity of official policy documents and reports. Nonetheless, the study provides an in-depth,

theoreticallyinformed diagnostic that is essential for understanding the structural impediments to decolonizing college governance in KP.

## Analysis and Discussion

### 1. Legal Dualism: A Foundation for Conflict

The simultaneous application of the colonial-era *Education Code of 1935* and the modern *University Act* creates an institutional schism, forcing college principals to navigate two incompatible regulatory worlds [28] [32] [17]. This dualism comes from colonial administrative tactics designed for control rather than coherence [31][30]. For Intermediate classes, every administrative detail including textbook selection to minor expenditures needs approval from the provincial Directorates. This enforces a rigid, centralized command structure [17] [3]. In contrast, BS programs follow the academic calendar and syllabi mandated by their affiliating university.

This creates a separate governance track [32] [18].

This regulatory clash consumes a significant amount of administrative energy, creates operational confusion, and renders holistic institutional planning impossible [17][30]. The resultant fragmentation effectively sustains what decolonial theorists term a "coloniality of power." It keeps a governance model that prioritizes bureaucratic control more than institutional autonomy and academic relevance [30] [42].

## 2. Institutional Overlap: Designed Inefficiency

The presence of multiple oversight bodies results in significant administrative inefficiency and functions as a deliberate mechanism to prevent the consolidation of local institutional authority [30] [3] [36]. A college may receive contradictory directives from different directorates, while the Joint Management Council (JMC) often asserts its own competing priorities, which leads to jurisdictional conflict and operational paralysis [31][24]. This intentional fragmentation is the biggest barrier to meaningful devolution. It diffuses accountability and ensures that no single entity bears full responsibility for institutional performance [46] [23]. Consequently, systemic failures can be perpetually attributed to "the other" office, preserving a status quo of centralized control and bureaucratic inertia [17][35].

## 3. The Ghost of Reform: Why Policy Fails

The persistent failure to implement the rational policy of transferring Intermediate education to a higher secondary tier—despite its consistent endorsement in national policy documents—epitomizes the phenomenon of policy evaporation in post-colonial bureaucracies [21] [33]. This non-implementation is not an oversight but a direct outcome of calculated political and bureaucratic inertia [5] 14]. The existing governance structure, though widely acknowledged as dysfunctional, generates significant political rents, including opportunities for patronage, administrative control, and the preservation of colonial-era hierarchical authority [31]][17] [30].

Furthermore, the post-18th Amendment governance landscape has created a convenient ambiguity in jurisdictional responsibility between federal and provincial entities, which opponents of reform strategically exploit to delay or dilute substantive structural change [3] [17]. As North's theory of institutional path dependence suggests, the existing system creates powerful

vested interests that actively resist change to maintain the status quo from which they benefit [35] [26].

Ultimately, reform remains a "ghost"—a specter of what is possible but never actualized—because implementing it would require dismantling entrenched power networks and redistributing authority toward local institutions, a threat to existing beneficiaries of the centralized system [17] [30] [14]. This analysis moves beyond technical explanations of policy failure to highlight its deeply political and ideological foundations in the legacy of colonial control.

## 4. The Autonomy Deficit: Symptoms and Readiness for Change

The empirical evidence points to extensive and manifest systemic autonomy deficits impacting all facets of academic life. Colleges remain constrained by an inflexible, outdated curriculum that is largely unresponsive to both modern global challenges and local cultural contexts, thereby failing to equip students with relevant competencies [17] [34]. This is exacerbated by an evaluation system that continues to prioritize rote memorization over the development of critical thinking and analytical skills [22] [1]. Furthermore, administrative innovation is stifled by excessive bureaucratic red tape, which delays decision-making, discourages initiative, and drains institutional resources [30][24].

These limitations are not incidental but are direct consequences of the structural and legal fragmentation detailed in prior sections [28] [32] [17]. However, empirical evidence reveals a significant readiness for change among academic stakeholders. Research indicates that faculty members—the primary agents of educational delivery—are not resistant to reform but are instead strong advocates for greater autonomy. Surveys reveal overwhelming support (over 85%) among college faculty in KP for delegated authority in areas including pedagogical innovation, curriculum design, and internal assessment [17]. This demonstrates conclusively that the primary barrier to modernization is not a lack of capacity or willingness at the institutional level, but rather deeply implanted structural rigidities and a conspicuous lack of political will to enact meaningful devolution of powers [5] [33] [14].

**5. Learning from the Neighbor: The Autonomous College Model of India**

India's higher education path provides an instructive model for systemic reform through its wellestablished autonomous college framework [9] [43]. This method, started and backed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), gives qualifying colleges significant academic and administrative freedom. They can design their own curricula, develop pedagogical approaches, and conduct internal assessments, all while stay connected with a public university for degreeawarding purposes [9].

A most important achievement of this model is its shift in accountability. It moves from a focus on compliance with input-centric regulations to a results-oriented approach that emphasizes educational outcomes, innovation, and institutional responsibility [6] [43]. This transition is key to decolonizing governance. It substitutes external control with institutional agency and professional autonomy [42] [25]

conversely, KP's colleges remain stuck in a strict procedural framework, where strict adherence to centralized directives from multiple bodies stifles the capacity for cultural relevance, academic excellence, and pedagogical innovation [17][30]. This ongoing oversight reflects what decolonial theorists identify as a fundamental lack of epistemic trust in institutions of the Global South [21] [7]. By keeping tight control over curricula, assessment, and administration, the current system not only impedes operational efficiency but also creates a sense of dependency on outside knowledge. This actively hindering the development of contextually relevant knowledge production and emancipatory educational practices that promote freedom [30] [42].

**6. Emerging Governance Challenges in the 21st Century**

Beyond long-standing colonial legacies, KP's government colleges face mounting 21st-century governance pressures linked to global and technological transformation. The rapid digitalization of education demands greater institutional flexibility to develop context-specific e-learning models, integrate digital pedagogies, and prepare students for evolving knowledge economies—capacities that rigid, colonial-era governance structures actively suppress [9]). Concurrently, labor market volatility requires curricula that are agile, interdisciplinary, and locally relevant. Furthermore, the post-COVID-19 environment has starkly revealed the vulnerabilities of an overly centralized system, as colleges were incapacitated and unable to adapt teaching,

examination, or resource allocation mechanisms in a timely manner [23]. These challenges are underscored by international commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 16 on Strong Institutions), framing higher education reform not merely as a provincial concern but as a global imperative. Linking the decolonization agenda to these modern pressures underscores the critical urgency of creating an autonomous, responsive, and resilient college sector in KP.

## 7. Field Insights: Stakeholder Perspectives

To better understand on-the-ground autonomy deficits, a small exploratory consultation was conducted with faculty and administrators from three government colleges in KP. Respondents consistently emphasized that the current governance system squanders institutional energy on bureaucratic compliance rather than academic development. One senior faculty member noted, *"We spend more time filling forms and seeking approvals than on teaching or innovating in the classroom."* A college principal highlighted the profound operational contradiction: *"In the morning, I follow the Directorate's rules for Intermediate classes; in the afternoon, I follow the University's regulations for BS programs. Our college is split in half."* Significantly, nearly all respondents expressed a strong readiness to design locally relevant curricula and implement internal evaluation mechanisms if granted statutory autonomy. These firsthand accounts reinforce the paper's central argument that the primary blockage to reform lies not in a lack of stakeholder capacity or will, but in deep-seated structural rigidity and political inertia.

# Policy Recommendations for Legislators

To break the cycle of colonial governance, legislators must enact bold, structural reforms informed by decolonial theory [46] [35]

1. **Enact a Unified KP Colleges Act:** Repeal the Education Code of 1935 and pass a new KP Colleges Act. This Act should place all college education under the University Act, while delegating specific autonomies to colleges, fully embracing the spirit of the 18th Amendment [3].

2.  **Rationalize Administrative Oversight by Statute:** Legally mandate the dissolution of the multiple directorates and establish a single, streamlined Directorate of Collegiate Education with a role shifted from controller to facilitator and quality assurer [30].

3.  **Legislate the Intermediate Transfer with a Timeline:** Codify the transfer policy into law with a strict, phased 3-year implementation timeline and dedicated funding.

4.  **Grant Statutory Autonomy in Curriculum and Evaluation:** Empower eligible colleges to become "Autonomous Colleges" with the right to design a significant portion of their contextually relevant curriculum and conduct internal assessments, fostering epistemic pluralism [24] [36] [9].

5.  **Mandate Decolonial Capacity Building:** Create a dedicated fund for leadership training focused on decolonial administration, ethical accountability, and managing financial and academic autonomy responsibly [35] [23].

To address these interconnected barriers, a coherent set of policy interventions is required, mapping solutions directly onto identified problems (See Table II).

*Table II: Structural Barriers and Corresponding Policy Recommendations for Decolonizing College Governance in KP*

| Structural Barrier | Resulting Consequence | Proposed Policy Recommendation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Legal Dualism (Education Code 1935 vs. University Act) | Administrative confusion, split institutional identity | Enact a Unified KP Colleges Act to repeal the 1935 Code and integrate all college education under a modern, autonomy-focused legal framework. |
| Fragmented Institutional Oversight (Multiple Directorates, JMCs) | Duplication, blurred accountability, delayed decisions | Rationalize Administrative Oversight by statute; dissolve overlapping directorates and clarify JMC roles to streamline decision-making. |
| Policy Non-Implementation (Failure to transfer Intermediate classes) | perpetuation of all above barriers | Legislate the Intermediate Transfer with a binding, phased timeline and dedicated funding to make the policy irreversible. |

| Centralized Control over Curriculum & Evaluation | Rigid, outdated pedagogy; stifled innovation | Grant Statutory Autonomy to eligible colleges for curriculum design and internal assessment, linked to quality assurance. |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of Modernization & Resilience | Inability to adapt to digital, global, or health crises | Foster Digital Innovation & Resilience by establishing a dedicated technology fund and training programs for colleges. |

# Conclusion

The governance of government colleges in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a paradox. It is a system trapped by its own colonial history, where well-intentioned policies are consistently defeated by a fragmented and self-contradictory structure. According to this research, the core problem is not a lack of solutions, but a deeply embedded "governance paradox"---a pathological interplay between a modern university act and colonial-era legal code, exacerbated by deliberately fragmented oversight and a persistent lack of political will to implement known reforms. This structure actively blocks the administrative, academic, and financial autonomy necessary for colleges to thrive in the twenty-first century.

The repercussion are severe. It leads to a curriculum disconnected from local realities, an evaluation system that rewards memorization over critical thinking, and an administrative environment that prioritizes compliance over innovation. This is not merely an administrative failure; it is an epistemological injustice that perpetuates a colonial legacy of control and stifles the potential for indigenous knowledge and contextual relevance.

However, this study also reveals a significant readiness for change among the faculty and administrators on the ground. The barrier is not a lack of capacity or will at the institutional level, but the structural rigidity imposed from above.

The path forward requires decisive legislative action. Lawmakers must move beyond incremental adjustments and enact bold, structural reforms. This includes passing a unified KP Colleges Act to replace the obsolete 1935 Code, rationalizing the chaotic oversight system into a single facilitative body, and legally mandating the long-delayed transfer of Intermediate education with a clear timeline. Most importantly, it requires granting colleges statutory autonomy, empowering them to design their own futures.

By studying successful models, particularly India's autonomous college framework, and by applying the lessons of decolonial theory, KP can break free from its path dependency. The goal is to transform colleges from outposts of a colonial bureaucracy into vibrant, self-governing centers of learning that are responsive to their communities and capable of meeting the challenges of a globalized world. This is not just an educational reform; it is an essential step in the broader project of decolonization and intellectual emancipation for the province.

**Generative AI Statement:** "No AI software programme was used in the writing and preparation of this Commonwealth Opinion."

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