



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**The Alienated Academia: Exploring the Lives of Visiting Faculty in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Karl Marx's Theory of Alienation**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the living experience of visiting faculty in higher education institutions, i.e., postgraduate colleges and universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Visiting faculty are sometimes called 'permanent visiting teachers'; they face a lot of hardships and challenges in their journey to achieve the milestones of acknowledgment and stability. We examine the role of visiting teachers and the challenging conditions of the academic job market by conducting an extensive analysis of existing scholarly works. We interviewed forty visiting faculty members, ensuring their confidentiality per their wishes. Our interview guide emphasised themes like employment insecurity, psychological distress, lack of support, and intellectual alienation, following Marx's Theory of Alienation. The study findings are that visiting teachers lack support from their respective departments, are denied research supervision, are given fewer opportunities to utilise the institution's resources, are delayed, and are underpaid. Such difficulties cause the visiting teachers to experience psychological stress; this is consistent with Karl Marx's thesis of alienation, as they feel cut off from the institutions, their coworkers, and themselves. Higher education institutions should implement changes such as fair recognition, prompt payment, more excellent representation, and a calm, harmonious, and expanding environment for visiting teachers. Through provoking a critical conversation, this study hopes to promote a more inclusive academic environment that recognises the priceless contributions of visiting faculty members while pursuing an equitable and prosperous educational system.

**KEYWORDS** Alienation, Discrimination, Disparities, Exploitation, Higher Education Institutions, Job Insecurity, Karl Marx, Psychological Strain, Visiting Faculty

**Introduction**

Higher education institutions like colleges and universities significantly shape the intellectual environment of countries by developing future leaders and advancing knowledge in various academic disciplines. These institutions glorify their academic culture as centres for knowledge, creativity, and greatness. On the other hand, within these institutions, a segment of educators often works in hostile and harsh conditions that risk their personalities and job satisfaction. Higher education institutions ignore this segment, known as "visiting faculty," which faces several challenges, such as exclusion and alienation from work.

Visiting teachers are professionals who temporarily work in colleges and universities on their daily wages. They bring many benefits to colleges and universities. However, they have some problems, such as an unstable status, unstable financial compensation, poor working conditions, and a negative attitude towards them on the part of their colleagues. This paper seeks to describe the challenges and obstacles visiting faculty face in the state of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The province is a widely known place with high levels of academic exploitation and unstable employment.

Many factors contribute to the vulnerability and alienation of visiting faculty members, which is closely linked to Karl Marx's idea of alienation. This study presents vital new information about psychological distress and its imperatives for mental health. The primary research question is: What causes embarrassment among visiting faculty members? The study investigates the reasons for academic hurdles in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, examines their alienated conditions, and proposes ways to create an equal academic environment.

### **Literature Review**

The term "visiting" lecturers indicates a temporary teaching position. It is not clear why this term was introduced in academia. Most junior scholars start and end their careers in temporary teaching positions. Visiting faculty faced difficulties and challenges due to its exploitative nature. To add further, because of the highly competitive job market, many individuals with Ph. Ds tend to accept or seek opportunities as visiting lecturers, assistant professors, or, in a renewed term, as contractual instructors, who only hold temporary positions until acquiring tenure. These temporary positions usually have a burdened workload in teaching, reduced research opportunities, and a lack of surety in a permanent teaching position. These visiting professors usually have a contract committed to either one academic year or, in general, two-year contracts. More so, these visiting lecturers can also have their contracts extended depending on the situation, or it could even be short. While serving as a visiting professor offers valuable pedagogical opportunities, the ultimate goal is to secure a tenure-track position, which can prove challenging. Visiting professors are considered contingent faculty members; however, their remuneration, perks, and employment stability surpass those of adjuncts. However, it should be noted that these positions are temporary and are susceptible to budgetary modifications.

Contrary to the prevailing notion that a visiting appointment invariably paves the way for a tenure-track position, it is essential to acknowledge that this assumption does not universally hold true. Consequently, a considerable number of visiting professors find themselves grappling with professional ambiguity upon the conclusion of their contractual obligations. For individuals aspiring to pursue an academic career, it is crucial to possess a comprehensive understanding of the practicalities associated with the academic job market and to evaluate their alternatives thoughtfully before deciding on a specific position (Woolf, 2011).

While some visiting teachers have successfully transferred into tenure-track posts, most tend to remain in their visiting positions. Within academia, visiting professorships serve as a means for emerging researchers to access higher education institutions, such as universities and colleges. Nevertheless, the responsibilities and functions of visiting professors exhibit considerable variation among different educational institutions, resulting in a lack of clear and specific definitions. Consequently, this situation poses significant difficulties and obstacles within academia. As educators engaged in temporary teaching positions, they encounter challenges within the frameworks of our teaching, research, and service systems. Additionally, they had distinct obstacles to monetary advantages and career advancement. Institutions, departments, and professional associations can assist in making visiting terms beneficial for all parties by scrutinising policies and providing guidance (Henshaw, 2014).

Many universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face a severe teaching staff shortage due to financial constraints and a dearth of hiring in recent years. This shortage has led to a decline in educational quality. The Peshawar University Teachers Association stresses the importance of employing permanent faculty to guarantee the quality of education, as visiting faculty frequently struggle due to inadequate pay and temporary positions. Despite a considerable increase in the number of students, faculty members have not been increased. Likewise, budgeted positions remain vacant. The crisis is exacerbated by low pay for visiting

faculty and financial difficulties within universities caused by budget cuts and decreased funding from the Higher Education Commission.

Due to the fiercely competitive academic job market, individuals with advanced degrees, such as Ph. Ds, frequently take visiting or contractual assistant professorships to pursue tenure-track academic positions. Typically, these positions involve a heavier teaching burden, fewer research expectations, and no service obligations. Visiting professor contracts are typically annual or biannual and can be modified or terminated at the end of the academic year. Although being a visiting professor provides valuable teaching experience, the ultimate objective is obtaining a tenure-track position, which can be challenging.

Visiting professors are considered contingent faculty; however, their remuneration, perks, and employment stability surpass that of adjuncts. However, the roles are still temporary and can be changed based on budget considerations. Contrary to the prevailing notion that a visiting job can often result in a tenure-track appointment, this is not universally true, causing many visiting professors to face professional uncertainty once their contracts end. In order to make informed decisions, it is crucial for those who aspire to pursue an academic career to thoroughly understand the practical aspects of the academic job market and thoughtfully evaluate their choices before committing to a specific post (Woolf, 2011).

Although a few scholars successfully shift to tenure-track employment, the majority do not. Visiting professorships in academia have evolved from transient roles to first opportunities for emerging scholars. These roles vary greatly and usually lack exact definitions, causing academic complications. They may encounter uncertainties in their teaching, research, and service obligations. Visiting posts offer distinct difficulties alongside financial incentives and professional development advantages.

Institutions, departments, and professional associations can assist in making visiting terms beneficial for all parties by scrutinising policies and providing guidance (Henshaw, 2014).

According to Staff Reporter of The Nation newspaper (2023), many universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face a severe teaching staff shortage due to financial constraints and a dearth of hiring in recent years. This shortage has led to a decline in educational quality. The Peshawar University Teachers Association stresses the importance of employing permanent faculty to guarantee the quality of education, as visiting faculty frequently struggle due to inadequate pay and temporary positions. Despite a considerable increase in the number of students, faculty members have not increased in tandem. Likewise, budgeted positions remain vacant. The crisis is exacerbated by low pay for visiting faculty and financial difficulties within universities caused by budget cuts and decreased funding from the Higher Education Commission. Addressing this issue is essential to secure the future of students in the region.

Similarly according to Bureau Report of The News International newspaper (2022), the state-run universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are seeing instances of financial exploitation concerning visiting faculty members. In light of escalating living expenses, the remuneration they earn per class amounts to a modest sum of Rs 600, contrasting with the rates of Rs 900 in Karachi and above Rs 1000 in Punjab. The visiting faculty members are responsible for teaching six classes per week, resulting in a monthly salary of approximately Rs 14,400. The insufficient monthly income is not disbursed regularly, resulting in derision among the student population. Prominent scholars advocate for the Higher Education Department to adopt an equitable remuneration rate.

A visiting lecturer at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, experienced exploitation and financial struggles after teaching for over four months without payment. After applying

for remuneration, they faced bureaucratic red tape and lost files. The lecturer expressed frustration and decided to seek payment no longer. They urged the Higher Education Commission to streamline visiting contracts and make universities accountable for timely and fair compensation, urging graduates and young scholars to be cautious and advocate for fair treatment (Rahman, 2022).

In higher education institutions like Oberlin, there is a notable shift towards hiring visiting assistant professors rather than tenure-track positions due to budgetary and administrative reasons. Currently, Oberlin has a relatively low percentage of adjunct faculty, but this may change in the future. Hiring long-term faculty is crucial, benefiting students with better attention and mentorship, faculty with research opportunities, and the institution by attracting competitive academics seeking stability. Oberlin's low student-to-instructor ratio allows for close student-faculty relationships, leading to detailed feedback, personalised advice, and intellectual growth through immersion in specialised fields. However, reliance on adjunct faculty can disrupt this dynamic due to their short-term presence and potential sudden departures, affecting students' academic plans and faculty advising. Faculty members need stable positions to excel in research and teaching, contributing to the institution's long-term success as stated by The Oberlin Review Editorial Board (2023).

Female guest professors in the government colleges of Agar Malwa district, located in Madhya Pradesh, India, are subjected to unfavourable treatment. The remuneration for performing identical work responsibilities is comparatively lower for non-tenure-track academic members. Individuals are compelled to fulfil their obligations even in instances of illness or following significant surgical procedures without being granted the opportunity for maternity leave. When researchers attend conferences or other venues to present their research papers, colleges may reduce their wages while permanent faculty members continue getting full salaries. If a book were to be written on the challenges surrounding guest professors, its length would likely be substantial, making it challenging to locate individuals willing to teach or learn from it (Multani, 2017).

Concerns have been raised by students and academics regarding the prevalence of non-permanent faculty members, including retired professors, in numerous higher education institutions in the country. This reliance on visiting faculty members has led to issues related to commitment and expertise compared to permanent faculty. Many qualified individuals, including PhD holders, are unemployed due to limited permanent university positions. To address this, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) should implement policies prioritising hiring permanent faculty members, enhancing the quality of higher education and generating employment opportunities. Permanent faculty members would dedicate more time to teaching, student engagement, academic research, and innovation. (Muzaffar, et. al. 2020)

Additionally, this approach would ensure consistency in the teaching curriculum and increase the likelihood of favourable academic outcomes. The absence of permanent faculty has caused staff shortages in various university departments, leading to department closures or allocating multiple responsibilities to available staff. This situation negatively impacts education quality and limits students' academic choices. Therefore, the HEC should encourage universities to hire permanent faculty members across all departments to improve educational standards and support students (Azad, 2023).

In recent decades, there has been a significant rise in the number of part-time faculty in academic institutions. Due to decreasing funding and growing enrollment, contingent faculty are expected to continue playing a major role in these institutions. These temporary academic positions often lack support and commitment from the hiring institutions. Despite debates in developing countries about the work and employment conditions of this contingent academic labour force, limited research exists, especially concerning developing

countries like Pakistan, which has undergone significant market-driven managerial reforms in higher education. The situation of visiting faculty, an understudied group, has been particularly overlooked. The findings highlighted several concerning aspects: visiting teachers are inadequately compensated, lack job security, receive little to no institutional support, and are treated as secondary members of academia, ultimately leading to burnout (Adan & Naz, 2022).

The paragraph discusses the dynamics of the visiting faculty model in Indian educational institutions, focusing on business schools. It highlights the mixed reception of this model, with some institutions viewing it as a temporary solution and even looking down upon it and refer the visiting faculty as "taxi faculty". Numerous educational authorities emphasise the pivotal role of tenured faculty members in fostering institutional development and facilitating decision-making processes. Nevertheless, utilising the visiting faculty model is deemed a cost-effective approach, particularly when employing faculty members from the local area, compared to the more financially burdensome alternative of recruiting permanent faculty. India is now experiencing a deficit in faculty members, which poses a significant obstacle for educational institutions in recruiting highly qualified educators. Despite the cynicism surrounding it, the visiting faculty model possesses several advantages. The programme aims to familiarise students with effective instructional practices, a frequently deficient facet due to the scarcity of faculty members.

Moreover, the model provides novel ideas and alternative views within the academic sphere, mitigating intellectual stagnation risk. Certain educational institutions, such as the Indian School of Business (ISB), have implemented a successful hybrid faculty model, wherein half of the faculty members are visiting and the other half are residents. Notably, this model places a significant premium on recruiting faculty members from international backgrounds. The utilisation of visiting faculty in Indian education is accompanied by intricate attitudes and considerations (Polite, 2013). It is crucial to understand the importance of remuneration and faculty appointments to the wellness of the academic profession and its contributions to universities. If teachers are given low salaries, attracting top talent to higher education institutions will be difficult.

Additionally, faculty members may need to pursue additional employment, which may interfere with their academic work. Inadequate contracts and appointments can also jeopardise academic freedom and the likelihood of a stable and fulfilling career. It is also essential to emphasise the global impact of academic salaries, as professors may be inclined to relocate to countries with better pay and working conditions. Despite the significance of these issues, there is a dearth of exhaustive research on the topic. Therefore, salaries and faculty terms substantially affect the academic profession and its contributions to universities. Inadequate compensation can hinder talent recruitment, compromise academic freedom, and lead to faculty seeking better opportunities elsewhere, making research in this area crucial (Altbach & Pacheco, 2012).

The growth of higher education in Pakistan has led to the rise of over 177 universities and degree-granting institutions. However, this expansion has led to a shortage of qualified faculty, resulting in unhealthy competition to increase student numbers and degree programs. This competition has significantly replaced regular faculty with visiting faculty members, negatively impacting the educational system. Visiting faculty are often appointed through personal connections, leading to a lack of consideration for their teaching abilities. This practice deprives students of the benefits of connecting with faculty members outside the classroom, affecting their intellectual growth, social capital, and job opportunities. Universities should appoint visiting faculty members who excel in education and contribute to students' intellectual growth and development (Ullah, 2018).

The article's literature review focuses on Karl Marx's concept of alienation, particularly in the context of alienated labour. Marx's Manuscripts emphasise forced and

joyless labour where the worker finds no fulfilment or purpose, leading to feelings of isolation and insignificance. In alienated labour, a person satisfies their bodily needs or desires without gaining personal growth and empowerment. Marx reasoned that the conditions of alienation appeared in four aspects of the capitalist mode of production: alienated labour with relation to the products created, alienation from the labour process, alienation from the human essence, and alienation from society. From these angles, the study looked at the alienation dilemma (Mukhopadhyay, 2020).

**Theoretical Framework: Karl Marx’s Theory of Alienation in the Context of Visiting Faculty**

Alienation is one of the central themes in Karl Marx’s philosophy, as outlined in the “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.” In this work, the author investigates the causes and extent of people’s alienation in market economies. For his definition, Marx relies on analysing the nature of labour, products of labour, humanity, and other people. He argues that alienation involves all of the above, and people are alienated from life due to the diminishing intensity of life “depending on the increase of objectivity”. The source of alienation is the nature of labour that is imposed on the workers, who are forced to engage in labour that does not satisfy them. This situation leads to workers’ discontent with their lives; they feel their labour is done for others, not themselves. Marx concludes that capitalism destroys people’s humanity. In this system, labour ceases to be a source of vitality and an exciting part of people’s lives, causing misery and estrangement instead. Similarly, the author states that other people and a human being as an entity are sources of alienation also. Lastly, people’s labour is commodified under capitalism, and they are seen as valuable not for who they are but for what they can do – produce goods. The alienation of man is the fundamental evil of capitalist society. This alienation causes feelings of powerlessness and contributes to social inequalities and exploitation (Marx, 1844; Marx, 1963).

Karl Marx’s theory of alienation encompasses four dimensions: product alienation, process alienation, alienation from colleagues, and self-alienation. In the specific context of visiting faculty within higher education institutions in Pakhtunkhwa, these dimensions manifest in distinct ways.

This study employs a theoretical framework based on Karl Marx’s theory of alienation, specifically designed for educators at higher education institutions. Table 1 presents the adopted framework.

**Table 1**  
**Alienation among Visiting Faculty: An Analysis through Marxist Framework**

<b>Aspect of Alienation</b>	<b>Adopted form of Alienation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Product of Labor	Students and institutions as a product	Visiting faculty find their experience difficult in academic settings as they cannot see the students’ and institutions’ complete metamorphosis and growth. Thus, their separation from the whole academic process results in feelings of inadequacy and removal. Product alienation enables people to know the alienation of visiting faculty to understand the challenges they encounter when trying to reach students and the intended course outcomes.
Process of Labour	Process of teaching	Visiting faculty often reported that they feel detached from the process while teaching. The insecurities and lack of recognition in the job give the teachers a lot of powerlessness and disillusionment. The focus and attention of visiting faculty seem to waver during the

		process of teaching primarily because they have other perpetual struggles for stable and permanent tenure, and that is the sad story of the visiting faculty.
Fellow Workers	Alienation from teachers	The temporary status of the visiting faculty makes this group particularly alienated from the academic community. It is far more challenging to develop a meaningful relationship with permanent faculty members due to differences in treatment and available opportunities, and this divide only deepens the visiting faculty's alienation from the community.
Self	Self-Alienation:	However, an even more vital source of alienation comes from the deep-seated inconveniences of visiting faculty positions. The perpetual lack of job security, monetary instability, and long-term tenure make it extremely hard for a majority of faculty members to feel not alien to themselves. As a result, psychological distress is prevalent among visiting faculty who feel they have few opportunities for self-realisation and are profoundly alienated from the academic community. The combined alienation from other faculty members and one's own self generally negatively affects job satisfaction and performance.

This theoretical framework is based on Marx's theory of alienation and provides a lens through which to comprehend the multifaceted challenges and experiences of visiting faculty within higher education institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It aids in identifying and understanding the various dimensions of alienation and their detrimental effects on the faculty, students, and the educational process as a whole as adapted from Marx's theory of alienation).

**Material and Methods**

Through the prism of Karl Marx's Alienation Theory, we aimed to gain an understanding of the particular difficulties faced by visiting faculty members from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's higher education institutions. Forty in-depth interviews were conducted as part of a qualitative approach to comprehend the phenomena of visiting teachers. They were visiting lecturers from Post Graduate Colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including The University of Agriculture Peshawar, the University of Chitral and the University of Peshawar. A careful selection was used when choosing the samples.

Based on the research objectives, we developed an interview guide with a strong emphasis on such themes as job insecurity, discrimination, psychological strain, a lack of institutional support, and the possibility of developing a sense of alienation within the academic environment, as discussed in Marx's Theory of Alienation. Our study is primarily based on the thematic analysis of the interviews. We closely identified the recurring themes from the transcribed interviews, and it allowed us to draw meaningful conclusions. This analysis was crucial for understanding the needs associated with academic alienation. Ethical considerations were entirely central. We followed all ethical guidelines, ensuring the informed consent, participant privacy, and confidentiality of all participants. No recording of interviews was made, as the participants requested. However, to assure the validity and dependability of our findings, we conducted member-checking, allowing participants to verify the accuracy of our thematic notes.

Additionally, we used peer debriefing and triangulation methods. It is crucial to admit the possible limitations of our methodology. We are well aware of the implied threat of subjectivity due to self-reporting. Moreover, the decision to proceed without recording the interviews may have hampered the quality of the data analysis. Regardless, we intended

for the research to be comprehensive and informative. In conclusion, we designed our study's methodology to tackle the challenges faced by visiting lecturers and professors at universities. Considering that we could only uncover the complex matters of psychological pressure, discrimination, job vulnerability, and the likelihood of alienation in an academic environment, the qualitative method was the most feasible approach.

## **Results and Discussion**

During the study's coding process, we used the systematic theme analysis method to investigate the visiting professor's experiences. The transcripts of the interviews provided three major preliminary codes used in the coding process: employment instability, prejudice, and psychological stress. Refining and organising these codes leads us to understand the lives of visiting faculty in an academic environment.

The data encoding procedure revealed several critical themes that shed light on the conditions of higher education institutions and their visiting faculties. These themes, which included institutional limitations, academic cultural norms, , struggle for achievements, psychological stress tasks, prejudice, and alienation, all contribute to a broader conception of the difficult existence of these faculty members. These themes help us understand the working conditions of visiting faculty in postgraduate colleges and universities.

## **Themes**

### **Identity and Perception**

The term "permanent visiting teachers" disrespects the very essence of a teacher. Similarly, students also develop the idea that those teachers who teach subjects but don't have their own dedicated departments are not as important in their academic careers. A visiting lecturer, who has no area or department to work with, feels neglected as a real subject specialist.

### **Professional Disempowerment**

One more aspect that visiting teachers experience is the absence of professional power due to critical academic issues. Indeed, the absence of participation in study tours, research supervision, and other academic groups diminishes a visiting faculty's power and ability to change the general academic environment. Despite the fact that they possess amazing teaching abilities, such people often lack respect or prestige in colleges and universities.

### **Institutional Marginalisation**

Insufficient basic amenities at the institutions risk fostering suppression of visiting faculty as well as denying full participation to guest lecturers. The lack of communal spaces, including common rooms, the inability to borrow books from the library, and insufficient parking all contributed to visiting lecturers' perceptions of their exclusion from institutions.

### **Financial and Emotional Struggles**

Moreover, visiting professors' underpayment and late payment makes an already high financial burden even more unbearable. Financial reliance takes a toll as teachers are expected to secure appropriate employment by the academic environment and educators' social circle. The requirement to address the financial dilemma while maintaining professional dignity greatly impacts educators.

### **Interpersonal Challenges**



Poor social interaction within colleges and universities is another obstacle that strains the lives of visiting faculty. Visiting faculty professors are consistently frustrated with uncooperative attitudes from support and clerical staff. Because of the demoralising nature of their task, they are unable to perform well. The hostile attitude of permanent faculty to visiting teachers intensifies frustration. Besides, heavy downsizing within institutions produces more resistance and quarrels among visiting faculty members

### **Academic System Critique**

A lot of the visiting teachers criticise the academic system due to examination processes and grading biases. From their attitudes, they seem dissatisfied with the teaching due to constant struggles with their financial stability. Visiting teachers claim that the academic system mistreats them. Such biases arise from discrimination in treating visiting teachers as different from the permanent teachers. Therefore, the academic system has no harmony in ensuring that visiting teachers fit within the educational environment accurately.

### **Validation of Marx's Alienation**

A significant portion of the visiting faculty experiences correlate strongly with Marx's concept of alienation. The visiting faculty feels alienated from the institution, the teaching process, their fellow teachers, and their own professional identity. This validation demonstrates the various forms of alienation that visiting faculty face in academic institutions. All these themes together form an all-rounded picture of what visiting faculty in colleges and universities go through, how they feel, their experiences, and what they battle with in their professions, thus providing a clear picture of the working conditions and how this affects their professional identity and their life as a whole.

### **Findings**

#### **Persistent 'Visiting' Label**

Visiting faculty are regularly referred to as 'permanent visiting lecturers,' which is a paradoxical label that highlights their long-lasting yet marginalised positions. Tahir Khan, one of the 30-year-old visiting lecturers interviewed at the University of Peshawar, explained this situation well. According to him,

We have been working for many years in universities without a proper contract or TORS, and that is why, within institutions and outside, we are labelled as permanent visiting teachers. Permanent because we have been working for several years, and visiting because we are visiting teachers without any job security or privileges.

This sentiment encapsulates the perpetual battle to gain recognition and stability in our academic positions.

#### **Teaching a Subject in the Absence of a Dedicated Department**

Teaching a subject without a dedicated department diminishes our perceived role; students view us as inconsequential, given the absence of a department. Another interviewee, *Farhan Khan*, a 28-year-old visiting lecturer from the University of Agriculture Peshawar, expressed this:

I was teaching English at a university as a compulsory subject, but that university lacked a dedicated English department, and that is why students treated us as temporary teachers who would not have any role after the semester ended.

This underscores our challenges in gaining recognition for our expertise and contributions in such academic environments.

### **Exclusion from Research Supervision**

The practice of not assigning final-semester students for research supervision is a recurring issue. When, on rare occasions, permanent faculty allocate students, they tend to give us those who are academically weaker or habitually absent from classes. Our interviewee *Jamal Shah*, aged 32, from the University of Chitral, poignantly expressed,

First of all, we are not given any research students. Nevertheless, if, for some reason, they assign us final semester students, the unfortunate trend is that the permanent faculty assigns students who exhibit a lack of dedication and weaker academic performance. Nevertheless, we guide and complete their research diligently and within stipulated time frames.

### **Lack of Space, Access, and Library Privileges**

The visiting faculty experience enormous challenges due to a lack of space and restricted access to the academic environment to enhance their professional integration. The lack of a common room or a staff room and limited entry to permanent staff's offices impede their whole interaction and engagement in the faculty workspace. The inability to borrow books from the library exacerbates the situation, leading to significant issues for visiting faculty. The interviewee's statement reflects the agony of visiting faculty for professional integration. The visiting teaching staff members have limited access to their institution's premises during holidays or after-duty hours. Ikram Ullah, who had been teaching at Post Graduate Jahan Zeb College, Swat, for six years, expressed his frustration, saying,

They did not allow us to park our bikes or cars in the college's parking lot. There is no common room, Wi-Fi internet, or other facilities for visiting teachers, although permanent teachers enjoy these facilities. Additionally, the library does not allow us to borrow books because we are visiting teachers.

### **Exclusion from Academic Engagements and Representation**

For visiting teachers, being excluded from significant academic interactions and representation is a persistent challenge. Moreover, the marginalisation of visiting faculty is also vivid in their exclusion from significant academic engagements and representation. For instance, Saira Ali, aged 26, from Govt. Post Graduate Jahan Zeb College Swat disclosed that the college "publishes a magazine every year, but we, visiting faculty, are not lucky enough to get a picture on its colour page or get it published on websites." Furthermore, nearly all visiting teachers expressed their exclusion from study tours despite their students' desire to be present. Thus, exclusion from academic engagements and representation heightens their marginalisation from the broader academic context and requires equal opportunities and visibility.

### **Challenges to Professional Recognition: Unremunerated Duties and Unjust Accusations**

Our interviewees were deeply unhappy with the way their contributions and efforts were seen inside the academic system. First of all, they brought attention to the problem of exam invigilators working without pay during tests. This glaring absence of financial recognition highlighted the devaluation of their contributions inside the organisation. They also recounted tales of unjustly bearing the blame for grade inflation. Indeed, permanent faculty members falsely accused visiting professors of manipulating grades by purposefully awarding lower grades. These circumstances highlighted the differences in the way their work was handled and acknowledged in comparison to that of their permanent colleagues and incited unjustified jealousy.

The interviewee, *Faisal Khan*, aged 29, from Government Postgraduate College *Timergara Dir Lower*, said,

Before the start of the examination, we organise the chairs, record the roll numbers, attach the seating plan, and carry out our responsibilities the next morning. Nevertheless, we have not received any compensation for our efforts. Furthermore, our endeavours are met with mistrust as permanent teachers blame us for giving excellent grades to students without proper checking, a claim that lacks justification. It is important to note that we do not engage in any form of academic harassment towards students, whereas permanent teachers are involved in such types of discrimination.

### **Professionally Disheartening Realities and Psychological Distress:**

Our interviewee's described experiences stem from a deep-rooted sense of discontent in their work setting. They see their professional standing stay sadly constant year after year, which depresses and demoralises them. The institution's disciplinary attitude towards slight violations makes this fight for development much more difficult because even the most minor violations have excessively severe consequences. This makes the academic environment unpleasant and prevents them from developing professionally.

Furthermore, because of the glaring difference between their status and that of the regular faculty, the mental toll is enormous. The ongoing comparison and contrast behaviour caused emotional discomfort and drove some visiting faculty members to use unhealthy coping strategies, including drug addiction, which made their mental health issues worse. The respondents' stories provide a moving description of these difficulties and the psychological effects they experience. The difficulties visiting lecturers encounter go beyond the classroom and have a significant influence on their personal lives, revealing the complex relationship between problems at work and personal health.

One female interviewee, *Sumbal Kali*, aged 33, from the University of Chitral, shared,

I dedicated my life to the institution where I work. I did not get married first because I was completing my education in Peshawar, subsequently as a teacher preparing lectures, and making PowerPoint presentations for the students. However, when my institution took permanent staff, they ignored my services, making me think I had spoiled my life in the institution I served for a couple of years.

Another interviewee named *Faraz Ahmad*, aged 24, from Government Post Graduate College *Charsadda*, narrated his story,

I use drugs like Alph, Xanax, and other tranquillisers because I worked wholeheartedly in the institution for six years. However, I have been a visiting lecturer since my first day and after six years. That means I am a daily wagger. When I see the regular faculty who were selected either by luck or they were politically influential. Then I compare myself with them, and I start using drugs to relieve my depression.

These narratives vividly depict the profound psychological impact of the challenges faced by visiting faculty, underscoring the urgent need for reform and recognition.

### **Financial Strain and External Pressures: Challenges Faced by Visiting Faculty"**

"Our findings shed light on the financial struggles experienced by visiting faculty, amplifying their discontent with their teaching roles. The economic precarity associated with being a visiting teacher exacerbates their dissatisfaction, especially given the meagre compensation that barely sustains them. Moreover, deliberate delays in remuneration bills, particularly during significant occasions like Eid, further aggravate their financial disadvantages. Externally, these educators face familial pressure to abandon their visiting positions and pursue alternative employment. Additionally, the recurring re-interviewing

process after each semester is described as demeaning and humiliating, highlighting the multifaceted challenges inherent in their professional experiences.

During our interview, we met Ihsan Ali, a 37 year old visiting lecturer from the University of Swat, who shared his experiences,

Eid was on in the last days of the month, and I was told, 'You will get your remuneration,' which I did not get on time. Therefore, I bought a dress and shoes for my daughter on credit from a relative shopkeeper. Similarly, at the end of every semester, we must give demonstrations and interviews again. We are under constant pressure whether we will be selected or not. When we wait for interviews with the new unemployed fellows, we feel embarrassed and start hating them, contemplating ways to make them run away from the institutions.

Similarly, female visiting lecturer *Ayesha Khan*, a 32-year-old from Govt Post Graduate Girls College Saidu Sharif, Swat, expressed her views as, "If the institution is not giving you salary on time, why are you serving them? Moreover, I am speechless that the education I get, I can only do a job for a living".

**"Strained Relations: Navigating Uncooperative Support Staff"** The clerical and support staff's lack of cooperation adds to the alienation we experience within the institution. As shared by our female participant *Naila Kareem*, in her late thirties from Govt Post Graduate Girls College Saidu Sharif, Swat, "When we ask the support staff to photocopy notes for us, they make excuses". Similarly, a male participant, *Sajid Khan*, in his early thirties from the University of Swat, told us, "clerical staff looks down upon us, and we are helpless; we just look to the sky".

#### **"Visiting Faculty: Unrecognised and Undervalued"**

"Our findings shed light on the 'Inequitable Recognition' experienced by visiting faculty. Despite teaching a heavy course load, we receive inadequate recognition, with experience certificates often disregarded in subsequent job selections. One of our female interviewees, *Zarlala*, aged 39, from the University of Peshawar, told us,

Teaching certificates for visiting faculty are just a piece of paper because no weightage is given to them when we apply for a job. Also, the certificates we are given do not use appropriate and convincing sentences; they are worse than what any private primary school teacher would give to their teachers.

The 'Status Denial of Visiting Teachers Despite Advanced Students' is a poignant concern. Our students progressing to MPhil levels compete with us, yet we remain devoid of professional elevation or status.

*Inam Ullah*, who is 27 years old from Government Postgraduate College *Mansehra*, lamented, "I feel happy when our students are admitted to MPhil or PhD or when they get permanent employment, but when I look at myself, I feel down." 'Hostility from Permanent Faculty' exacerbates our sense of alienation. Dynamics among permanent faculty hinder any chance of building relationships or rapport. Another interviewee, *Atta Ullah*, who is 28 years old from the same college, shared, "There are occasions when permanent faculty have some hostility among themselves. In that case, we cannot affiliate or even talk to either of the teachers, as doing so would make us targets of enmity." The 'Academic Perceptions' of visiting faculty globally are seen as academically weak due to growing unemployment, which hinders our prospects for securing permanent positions despite possessing requisite qualifications. One interviewee, *Shakil Ahmad* from the University of Chitral, grieved, "We have all the requisite qualifications, students are satisfied with us, but we are stigmatised as academically retarded."

## **“Alignment with Marx’s Theory of Alienation: Insights from Visiting Faculty Experiences”**

Intense competition among visiting faculty due to institutional downsizing contributes to a toxic atmosphere of rivalry and discord. Most interviewees shared that, at the end of the semester, some visiting faculty members are dropped due to downsizing. As narrated by a young visiting lecturer, *Mr Faisal Shah*, at the University of Agriculture Peshawar, “We become jealous of each other; those out start hating those who get retained.” One respondent further revealed, “Sometimes we start hating the institution we serve. Also, we love our students, but sometimes we think that they do not like us as we are visiting faculty.

Furthermore, we hate teaching, although we have not learned other skills for our living.” Another interviewee, *Tariq Khan*, who is in his early forties and a visiting lecturer at the University of Swat, expressed frustration towards certain colleagues, stating,

We hate some of our visiting faculty fellows because they came just for fun to the institutions. Sometimes, they make friendships with female students and sometimes marry them. Such fellows are wealthy; they do not care for remuneration. On the contrary, they spend a significant amount on unnecessary gifts for the administrative officials who hire them in the next semester, despite all the evils within them. Therefore, we hate such fellows.

This perpetual struggle for stability fuels self-hatred and depressive tendencies rooted in the inability to secure dignified employment for our families. Interviewees who were using drugs lamented, “We know that drugs are killing us, but we hate ourselves too. Why are we so unlucky? Are we not creatures of God?”

Karl Marx’s Theory of Alienation is profoundly validated within the context of visiting faculty, encapsulating our estrangement from the institution, the teaching process, fellow educators, and, ultimately, from our very selves. Visiting faculty often become alienated from the product that is educational institutions and sometimes from the students. They also experience alienation from the teaching process as their passion for teaching wanes. Additionally, they get alienated from their fellow teachers and even from themselves, as evidenced by their reliance on drugs. Karl Marx’s Theory of Alienation remains relevant for visiting faculty in the twenty-first century. A potential solution, echoing Marx’s words, might be, “Workers of the world, unite; you have nothing to lose but chains.”

### **Discussion**

The “visiting” lecturer role within academia is seemingly temporary. However, many scholars find themselves in this position for extended periods, prompting critical inquiries into the rationale behind its creation and its implications for academic careers (Woolf, 2011). As we explore the experiences of visiting faculty, it becomes evident that the term “visiting” belies the persistent and enduring nature of their roles within educational institutions, as one respondent vividly articulated, stating, “We have been working for many years in universities without a proper contract or TORS, and that is why, within institutions and outside, we are labelled as permanent visiting teachers. Permanent because we have been working for several years and visiting because we are visiting”. This paradoxical label reflects these academics’ perpetual struggle for recognition and stability (Henshaw, 2014). Their journey is beset with challenges, leading to a profound sense of professional uncertainty (Woolf, 2011).

Teaching a subject without a dedicated department is a common predicament for visiting faculty, which diminishes their perceived role. This often results in students viewing them as temporary and inconsequential, as expressed by one respondent, “I was teaching English at a university as a compulsory subject, but that university lacked a dedicated English department, and that is why students treated us as temporary teachers who will not

have any role after the semester ends." Additionally, exclusion from research supervision, coupled with the allocation of academically weaker students, further compounds the challenges faced by visiting faculty (Adan & Naz, 2022).

The struggles of visiting faculty extend beyond teaching responsibilities into the very fabric of academic life (The Nation, 2023). Insufficient spaces, restricted access to facilities, and denial of essential privileges underscore their integration barriers within the academic workspace. As visiting faculty often lament, "They cannot borrow a book from the library because their status is visiting." This lack of integration permeates various aspects of academic engagement and representation, with visiting faculty often excluded from institutional publications and study tours. One respondent poignantly said, "Every year, our institution publishes a magazine, but we, the visiting faculty, are not fortunate enough to have a picture in it or our picture be included on websites."

Financial strain is a pressing concern among visiting faculty (Adan & Naz, 2022). The meagre compensation and delayed remuneration exacerbate their discontent and financial precarity. As one respondent shared, "Eid was on in the last days of the month, and I was told, 'You will get your remuneration,' which I did not get on time. Therefore, I bought a dress and shoes for my daughter on credit from a relative shopkeeper." Furthermore, the recurring process of re-interviews at the end of each semester amplifies their professional and financial challenges, perpetuating a cycle of insecurity. Another respondent said, "At the end of every semester, we are compelled to give demonstrations and interview again. We are under constant pressure that we will be selected or not."

In alignment with Karl Marx's Theory of Alienation, the experiences of visiting faculty vividly manifest estrangement from the institution, the teaching process, fellow educators, and, ultimately, from themselves (Mukhopadhyay, 2020). The intense competition among visiting faculty due to institutional downsizing engenders a toxic atmosphere of rivalry and self-loathing. One respondent said, "Sometimes we start hating the institution we serve. Also, we love our students, but sometimes we think that they do not like us as we are visiting faculty." The non-stop duel for stability feeds them self-hatred and depressive destruction. The major cause is that visiting faculty cannot secure jobs for themselves. Interviewees who were using different kinds of drugs said, "All of us understand that drugs will kill us, but we hate ourselves too. Why are we so unfortunate? Are we not Allah's creatures?"

Observations reveal that visiting professors encounter a multitude of challenges, including their status, the controversial nature of their roles, the absence of dedicated departments for their discipline, their exclusion from various academic affairs, financial concerns, and their alienation from the academic environment. On these grounds, it is clear that the problems require immediate attention, and the visiting professors should be treated equally. This also correlates with Marx's concept of alienation (Mukhopadhyay, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Our research reveals the hidden and harsh realities of these positions as "visiting professors," including feelings of loneliness, a loss of hope in teaching, and financial difficulties. For an extended period, the visiting faculty offers their teaching services, often on a temporary basis. Some of these teachers even lack their own departments, leading to the term "permanent visiting teachers." Also, limited library rights, restricted access to academic facilities, and the exclusion of research supervision worsened their problems integrating into the professional world.

Serving as visiting faculty is complicated and multidimensionally challenging, mainly because it is temporary employment without any job security. According to the literature review, junior researchers frequently took on the temporary job of 'visiting professors' because of the high inflation rate and unemployment. Some of the uncertainties associated

with visiting professors include the transition from temporary to permanent faculty members. Such uncertainties lead to professional jealousy, anxiety, and depression.

Our study has shed light on what a visiting professor's experiences are like: loneliness, loss of faith in the professionalism they dedicated their life to, and financial hardship. Although they serve for extended periods, the nature of their jobs is temporary, leading to their designation as "permanent visiting teachers." Libraries prohibit them from borrowing books, restrict their access to academic facilities, and prevent them from supervising research students. Under these circumstances, the lives of the visiting faculty become worse in higher education institutions.

The study clearly shows that visiting faculty members play a risky role in colleges and universities due to their instability, lack of recognition for their services, and limited opportunities for career development. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of these people to higher education, although other things often eclipse and ignore their achievements. The need for change must be emphasised, and it must be made sure that it is implemented justly.

When one considers the challenges and obstacles visiting scholars face, Karl Marx's well-known statement, "Proletarians of all countries unite," comes to mind. At the moment, visiting faculty members can get together to acknowledge their everyday struggles and work to get over the feeling of isolation that impedes their professional development. The portrayal of visiting instructors encourages academics to critically assess their treatment and take steps to enhance their quality of life.

Thus, we encourage a change in rules in defense of the visiting faculty and changes across campus as well. Specifically, these rules protect visiting professors from traps and persecutions. Our nation's future is reliant on giving our teachers honor at all levels.

### **Recommendations**

- Universities should strongly support the legal reforms that introduce specific regulations concerning visiting faculties' duties and responsibilities regarding teaching, research, and other professional activities. Such a measure will eradicate any confusion and outline a rational approach to the goal of learning. Moreover, academic facilities must provide visiting faculty members with fair and equal compensation in recognition of their outstanding academic efforts. Institutions have control over minimising financial exploitation and increasing employees' morale by providing adequate remuneration and incentives.
- Moreover, colleges and universities should create clear and systematic patterns for the seamless conversion of visiting faculty into tenure-track or permanent jobs. The patterns would integrate performance, research contribution, and accomplishments in terms of student productivity and teaching efficiency. Furthermore, professional organisations and unions can also play an active role in ensuring the job security of visiting faculty by pushing for long-length contracts and protecting the employees from an immediate discontinuance of contracts.
- Academic institutions must ensure that all visiting faculty have access to critical resources, including classrooms, printers, photocopiers, Wi-Fi, and libraries. Consequently, their ability to teach and conduct research will increase together. Furthermore, institutions should include visitor lecturers in academic resources, websites, and publications. Listing on these platforms enhances one's reputation and fosters a more robust sense of community.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

One limitation of this study is the limited geographical focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which reduces its potential for wider application. The lack of quantitative data and response bias are also limitations. Future studies should examine the experiences of permanent faculty members and students, evaluate institutional policies for visiting professors, and compare performance across Pakistan's various regions. Combining qualitative and quantitative research on mental health concerns may have additional developmental possibilities.



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