



Contribution Made the World Over by Pakistani-Origin Alumni of the Asian Institute of Technology Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Pakistani-origin alumni of the Asian Institute of Technology Thailand stand distinctive. A Pakistani name appears in the pioneer batch of seven enrolled in 1959 and the overall number of Pakistani-origin alumni is now touching a thousand. With the women adding to the lot 1975 onwards, the impact is enhanced – home and abroad. The objectives of this paper include studying the work portfolio spread across the globe as well as the challenges faced in addition to give an overview of the contribution of the subject. As per methodology, the paper used the data and information available on the electronic and social media in addition to contacting the stakeholders directly wherever possible. This study remained up to the doctoral, master and diploma graduates of the institute and did not include others that attended short-spanned courses – the impact could be seen much more considering that double in number than the subject graduates. The first two decade-Pakistani-origin alumni's performance has been remarkable not only in the homeland rather on the globe in both public and private sectors. Bridging the temporary slump, the last two decade-graduates are envisaged doing great that will not only bring the performance up to the standards set by the pioneers rather impact may enhance with participation of alumni in local and global political and social activism; extreme situations (like pandemics) are also touched upon in the context of COVID-19. The study is expected to boost the potential of Pakistani-origin alumni directly and the Greater Mekong Subregion as well as the overall AIT global alumni, indirectly.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has got a distinctive role and position when we discuss Asian Institute of Technology Thailand (AIT). Firstly, that amongst the only seven students enrolled to the pioneer batch in 1959 selected from the South Asian countries one had a Pakistani-origin. Secondly, Pakistanis are the eighth largest alumni population of AIT with around a thousand strength. Thirdly, Pakistan has been prominent in the financial as well as non-financial support offered to the institute for over six decades. Amongst other factors include the student initiatives like start of outstanding doctoral student speech, building units on self-help basis and so on. This paper having been written at the end of fourth phase of the pandemic COVID-19 has an added dimension as to how to handle the subject more appropriately in such rare situations.

The study questions the standard of the contribution that Pakistani-origin AIT alumni make over the globe, whether the work portfolio availed by them is alright and lastly, the challenges they face. As per objectives of the study, being the work preliminary in its nature, gives an overview of the Pakistani-origin AIT alumni; furthermore, it deliberates the

work portfolio and the challenges faced by the alumni while exercising the given powers.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper is an outcome of the author's decade-long working on the data and information available through electronic and social media as well as his direct interaction with the alumni on a voluntary role in different positions at the AIT alumni headquarters and the country chapter; it was further refined and enriched while his working at AIT President's Office in 2020. Social media incorporated in this study included LinkedIn and Facebook. This study considered only doctoral, master and diploma graduates and not the ones that attended courses of shorter durations. The later are double in number than the former; if discussed, the impact could enhance enormously but it is left for some later study due to limitations.

3. ASIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ALUMNI

Parameters of Institute and Alumni Affectivity

There are certain parameters that determine the affectivity

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of an institute as well as its personnel. These include (but not limit to) the following [1]:

- Interaction – amongst the alumni and with the alma mater and the teachers
 - Frequency of interaction
 - Extent of interaction
- How much heard
 - How and how much invited – in-person and virtually
 - How and how much visited to by the alma mater personnel
- Repute of alma mater
- Success of the alumni in the real world
- Gender aspect
- Internationalism
 - Alumni at the alma mater – at the time of studies
 - Alumni work portfolio in the real world
- Time passed after graduating

Now these parameters will be taken in detail (generally, institute-wide and specifically regarding Pakistani-origin alumni of AIT) as follows:

3.1 AIT Alumni – Global Perspective

Overview

AIT has been rendering its services since 1959 from Thailand as well as through its satellite campuses in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Around twenty-five thousand students from over a hundred countries and territories have already graduated from AIT. The institute is enriched with a 33-member board of trustees that represent 19 countries. Conferring upon post-doctorates, doctorates, executive masters, masters, diploma and certificates AIT offers over a thousand courses through 45 fields of study at three schools [2].

Table 1: AIT graduates – school-wise

School	Alumni
SET	11,989
SERD	8,141
SoM	4,267
SERD and SET	94
SERD and SoM	36
Institute-wide	72

Source: [2].

With first of its masters’ batch graduating in 1961 (enrolled in 1959) AIT conferred up on 24,609 degrees altogether until 2019. Gender-wise 17,582 degrees are

conferred up on men while the remaining 7,027 degrees are conferred up on women.

School-wise the picture is depicted in Table 1 (SET stands for School of Engineering and Technology as well as its previous names, SERD for School of Environment, Resources and Development as well as its previous names while SoM stands for School of Management and its previous names) and degree-wise in Table 2.

Table 2: AIT graduates – degree-wise

Degree	Alumni
Master	15,600
Doctorate	1,565
Diploma	7,544

Source: [2].

A more precise work is going on recently started by the Vice-President for Knowledge Transfer of AIT to be more updated about the whereabouts as well as performance of the alumni. A picture so far, is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: AIT graduates – by field of work

Field of work	Alumni
Academia	331
Government	408
Private	387

Source: [3].

Likewise, the work whereabouts known so far are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: AIT graduates – by work whereabouts

Work whereabouts	Alumni
Organisation	3,356
Position	2,946
Location	4,002

Source: [3].

Table 5: AIT graduates – by social media presence

Social media	Alumni present
LinkedIn	2,638
Facebook	4,721

Source: [3].

Interaction

Moreover, the social media are playing the most prominent role in the interaction now-a-days; the social media presence of the alumni known so far is presented in Table 5.

Amongst alumni - Frequency and Extent of Interaction

While the governing board of the alumni meets annually in different countries across the world (an unparalleled practice by any university in the world), the country and regional chapters as well as sub-chapters meet more frequently. These meetings are blended with unprecedented formal and informal ways – reminding the alumni the student style they enjoyed at alma mater alongside discussing mutual collaborative matters formally. Moreover, the presidents of the country/regional chapters meet virtually every month where headquarters executive committee also joins them. Likewise, the headquarters executive committee meets virtually or in-person (as the case may be) monthly, in addition to afore-mentioned meeting with the chapter presidents.

With alma mater - Frequency and Extent of Interaction

The recently established AIT Gradates’ Club has initiated inviting all the alumni in-person on-campus at their convenience ensuring them boarding and lodging as per well-deserved status for their short-term stay.

With teachers - Frequency and Extent of Interaction

The alumni on the whole as well as that of Pakistani-origin are found to be in a good interaction with their teachers, especially conducting collaborative researches, exchanging students, exchange visits of the alumni and their teachers at AIT as well as the social interaction – that is the special distinctive characteristic of AIT. Some alumni even requested the teachers to serve the organisations worldwide on alumni recommendation – mostly after retirement from AIT, and the later accepted.

How much heard: How and how much Invited – In-person and Virtually

The prominent alumni are invited regularly on the graduation ceremonies in-person. Likewise, the virtual sessions are rather more common now-a-days.

How and how much Visited to by alma mater Personnel

AIT personnel – both teaching faculty and non-teaching employees – have always been traveling extensively across the world keeping social as well as professional liaison with the alumni.

Internationalism

Alumni at the alma mater – at the time of studies

Internationalism begins with the admissions; the intake exhibits the diversity. Table 6 shows a detailed picture,

country-wise, of this internationalism at the alma mater at the time of studies.

Table 6: AIT graduates – country-wise

Country	Alumni	
	N	%
Thailand	6,429	26.2
Vietnam	4,083	16.6
Sri Lanka	1,596	6.5
India	1,558	6.2
Nepal	1,446	5.8
Myanmar	1,308	5.2
Bangladesh	1,169	4.8
Pakistan	982	4.0
Philippines	958	4.0

Source: [2].

While the nine countries mentioned in Table 6 make 79.3% of the total alumni population another 93 countries and territories from Asia, Europe, North and South Americas and Africa make the remaining 20.7% lot [2].

The scene with another dimension is depicted in Table 7.

Table 7: Country-wise AIT alumni – Global overview

Number of Alumni (each country)	Countries
1	19
Below 10	37
10-100	20
101-1,000	13
Over 1,000	7

Source: [2].

Moreover, the internationalism amongst the faculty and the employees has its own impact. Table 8 shows this dimension where we see as many as 21 faculty (amongst 75) from the host country while another three countries have 13, 5 and 3 each whereas another three have six each; while four countries have two each, another seven have one each.

On the employee side (other than the teaching faculty), the host country has 419 employees (out of 784) while another 14 countries have 68, 67, 54, 23, 20, 18, 17, 13, 11, 9, 8, 7, 5 and 4 each; 3 countries 3 each, 7 countries 2 and 18 countries have one employee each (Table 9).

Table 8: Faculty at AIT

Country	Faculty
Thailand	21
India	13
Japan, United States, Vietnam	6
Nepal	5
Sri Lanka	3
Bangladesh, Indonesia, Italy, R of Korea	2
Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Libya, Myanmar, Russia	1

Source: [2].

Table 9: Non-teaching Employees

Country	Employee
Thailand	419
Philippines	68
India	67
Nepal	54
Sri Lanka	23
Vietnam	20
Bangladesh	18
Japan	17
Pakistan	13
Myanmar	11
Indonesia	9
United States	8
France	7
PR China	5
Germany	4
Cambodia, Laos, R of Korea	3
Austria, Belgium, Canada, Malaysia, Nigeria, Switzerland, United Kingdom	2
Armenia, Australia, Bhutan, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Italy, Libya, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, R of Belarus, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Tibet	1

Source: [2].

Time Passed after Graduating

This is a very critical component for the institutions that have reached half a century of their lives like AIT. Though the institutions that crossed centuries have got still advanced level of this component, AIT also enjoys a good status due to certain factors. Such factors include its 'post-graduate only' status at its inception, equity of students from different countries (especially, the South Asian ones), the portfolio of the graduates and the special interest of the host country along side the founding member countries. Even in student life, the AIT identity card is called 'second passport' (let alone the alumni status); many alumni confirmed that while they holding passport of a less-privileged country did not let them get visa to certain countries, AIT card helped them out - even the author is a witness; while he heard a President of the institute proudly saying so [6], the author got visas to different countries just on producing AIT student card that had refused the same on his country passport.

Greater Mekong Subregion

Before proceeding further, it seems quite appropriate to mention how this paper relates with the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). As per [4]:

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) is a natural economic area bound together by the Mekong River, covering 2.6 million square kilometers and a combined population of around 326 million. The GMS countries are Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC, specifically Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. This subregion has got its distinctive position. Development of the GMS not only impacts the whole Asia, it also enhances the overall global scenario. Therefore, the studies oriented to this region have got very important place in the academics. Broadly all the six countries included in the region belong to the developing countries stratum; however, some are on the top of the stratum with their high development rate. (page 76)

This paper relates with the GMS broadly two ways: firstly, since the content discusses the graduates of the institute which is situated in GMS and secondly, due to the similarities of the developing countries of GMS with Pakistan - whose graduates' performance is studied.

3.2 AIT Alumni – Pakistani-origin Perspective

Pakistan was one of the founding members of AIT in 1959. During the past six decades, around a thousand degrees have been conferred upon the students that joined AIT with Pakistani nationalities. As per available data, out of the 613 alumni whose location is known amongst that of Pakistani-origin, 388 alumni of Pakistani-origin are located in Pakistan whereas another 225 are located in other countries [3].

Hall of Fame is the highest honour at AIT. Out of the first 13 alumni achieving this honour as the pioneer batch

inducted to the hall in 2010 one is a Pakistani. A Pakistani citizen is Vice President now at AIT. While the founding chairman of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is conferred upon an honorary doctorate by AIT another alumnus also chaired the commission (acting).

Repute of alma mater

HEC Scholars

The author conducted a study on the advice of the Vice-President AIT. Out of 81 HEC Scholars surveyed, 68 are seen serving in the academia, nine in government (Govt.) research and development offices (R&D) as well as international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and the United Nations and two in the private (Pvt.) sector; two of them were deceased at the time the survey was conducted. Job position-wise 3.70% are in basic pay scales (BPS) 21 and above or equivalent (the highest ranking in Pakistan), 34.57% in 20 while the remaining 61.73% in 19. Table 10 elaborates more.

Table 10: Work diversity of HEC Pakistan scholars to AIT

Positions (BPS & equivalent)	Sectors					Sub-total	
	Academia	Govt. /INGO	Pvt	Deceased	Sub-total		
					N	%	
21	3	0	0	0	3	3.70	
20	23	3	1	1	28	34.57	
19	42	6	1	1	50	61.63	
Sub-Total	68	9	2	2			
Total					81	100	

Source: [5].

Table 11: Level of satisfaction – HEC Scholars

Satisfaction level	Alumni	
	with experience at AIT	with AIT education
Extremely satisfied	7	5
Highly satisfied	16	10
Satisfied	6	13
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Extremely dissatisfied	0	1

Source: [5].

On a call, 29 responded. All the 29 respondents amongst Higher Education Commission scholars expressed their

overall satisfaction with AIT in the categories of extremely satisfied, highly satisfied and satisfied. Likewise, 28 ranked their level of satisfaction with AIT education in the categories of extremely satisfied, highly satisfied and satisfied. Tabulated picture can be seen in Table 11.

As per the survey the HEC scholars commented and suggested as follows:

- Great multi-cultural experience has been the unique character appreciated by the most.
- Research facilities need improvement as far as education at AIT is concerned.

Success of the alumni in the real World

Global Presence of Pakistani-origin Alumni Appreciated

Although many of around 300 alumni working now out of Pakistan have got nationalities of the host countries, their role is discussed here as at the time of their enrolment to AIT they had Pakistani nationalities.

Out of the 225 Pakistani-origin alumni found to be working and living in more than 32 countries, while as many as 49 alumni are located in a single country – the United States of America – another 10 countries are found hosting 36, 32, 26, 13, 10, 9, 7, 5, 4 and 3 each. Yet another five countries host two alumni each and 16 countries have an alumnus each; five Pakistani-origin alumni that are reported to be overseas could not be precisely located as per author’s survey in 2021 (see Table 12).

Table 12: Pakistani-origin AIT alumni working and living in other countries

Country	Alumni
United States of America	49
Thailand	36
Australia	32
Canada	26
Saudi Arabia	13
United Kingdom	10
United Arab Emirates	9
Singapore	7
China	5
Hong Kong	4
Brunei Darussalam	3

Source: [3].

Gender Dimension of Pakistani Alumni

In 1977 first Pakistani woman was conferred upon a degree at AIT (a master’s) whereas the first Pakistani-origin woman doctorate is a 2009 graduate. Pakistani women alumni

equally work in all sectors. Out of 63 Pakistani women alumni, five are working abroad remitting to Pakistan while the remaining contribute towards national development.

A Pakistani-origin lady is a professor in Australia whereas many are heading their respective academic as well as administrative departments in the universities and international bodies within Pakistan. Chronically, there was only one woman Pakistani-origin alumnus that graduated in the first two decades of AIT (1961-1980) while another 18 graduated in the middle two decades (1981-2000) and 35 graduated during the last two decades (2001-2020).

Alumni work Portfolio in the real World

While previously Pakistani alumni held more prominent positions, on a quick survey, 34 alumni are presently seen on prominent positions – eight in academia, 19 in government research and development offices as well as international non-governmental organisations and the United Nations whereas seven are in the private sector. More precisely, amongst those in the academia, three assume designations as vice-president or pro-vice-chancellor while five are principals, deans or general managers. In the United Nations, governments and international non-governmental organisations category, eight assume designation as country chief, one vice-president, three director general and managing director whereas seven general managers and equivalent. In the private sector category, two assume the designation as president and vice-president, three chief executive officer and two assume designations as managing director and general manager [3]. Table 13 gives an overview.

Table 13: Top 34 Pakistani alumni – current job position

Sector	Alumni
Academia	8
Government/INGO	19
Private	17
Total	34

Source: [3].

Furthermore, amongst the alumni working in the academia, 12 are currently ranked as professors, 23 associate professors and 56 assistant professors or lecturers.

If we consider alumni’s role in research and publications, an alumnus has recently launched an international journal. Tens of alumni appear on the editorial boards of world renowned international journals while hundreds have published thousands of papers; tens of alumni have authored books while many more have contributed chapters.

Professional Roles

AITians are seen as high as country heads in some countries;

for instance, president of Taiwan has been an AIT alumnus. princess of Thailand is also an alumnus. Ministers in different countries have been alumni. Heads of United Nations bodies have been alumni. Similarly, army chief of Thailand has also been an alumnus. Likewise, Pakistani alumni are also found serving at high positions both in public and private sectors – home and abroad.

Currently, while a Pakistani alumnus is vice-president at AIT, two are pro-vice-chancellors in public and private universities home; on top of it, a senior-most alumnus chairs National Technology Council (the same alumnus also chaired the Higher Education Commission, in the recent past in addition to be vice-chancellor of the largest university in north Pakistan). Previously, around 10 served as secretaries (highest public position in a ministry). While one headed the largest engineering body in the country and another a counsel until the recent past, many have been vice-chancellors in the universities [3].

While three alumni each have previously been vice-chancellors and registrars of the universities home many are leading academia abroad as well.

Many alumni run their enterprises home and abroad; an alumnus runs even his own university.

Informal and Voluntary Roles

Social Contribution by the Alumni

AIT Alumni Association

Socially, Pakistani citizens have also been very active in the AIT Alumni Association at the headquarters in addition to the Pakistan Chapter. A Pakistani alumnus has the honour to be part of the formation of another country chapter.

Headquarters

While Pakistan Chapter has actively been participating in almost all the governing board meetings of the association held across the world, the chapter hosted the governing board meetings twice. Currently, a Pakistani alumnus co-chairs the membership committee.

Country Chapter and Sub-chapters

Working on supply chain, an alumnus has recently started supplying edible goods directly from the producer to the consumer at an unprecedented minimum profit; the initiative was taken after the COVID-19 pandemic break through. Some individuals have offered compact premises to the fellow alumni for short stay in different cities of Pakistan free of cost.

Financial Support

At times, the Government of Pakistan has been the largest donor to the institute offering huge number of scholarships - post-doctoral, doctoral and master levels [6].

Case studies

In order to elaborate the picture five comprehensive case studies are given as follows (identity of all is kept

confidential as per research ethics – even the names mentioned are fictitious). Due to limitations of the paper, a very concise picture is given. One is a woman to ensure gender balance (63 being women out of 982 alumni), two are the most progressive on the whole while two are the mid-career:

Prof. Rahila

Professor at the University of Queensland in Australia, Prof. Rahila, earned her master's from AIT in 1993. Her spouse, an entrepreneur, earned his master's from AIT, too.

Prof. Liaqat

Pride of Pakistan, Hall of Fame 2010 Prof. Liaqat, earned his master's from AIT in 1965. While he served as secretary in four ministries, Prof. Liaqat also established a university in interior Sindh at Jamshoro where he was appointed the founding vice-chancellor. He passed away in early 2019. Throughout his life as alumni, Prof. Liaqat has been very active in the chapter – he has been influential in hosting the general body meeting twice patronising the community at Pakistan.

Dr. Tariq

Vice-president for Knowledge Transfer (VPKT) at the alma mater, Dr. Tariq, earned both his doctorate and master's from AIT in 2004 and 1988, respectively. He assumed VPKT in 2018. Previously, he has been executive director at AIT Solutions. He mentored a lot of students at AIT; especially, the ones with Pakistani-origin.

Dr. Farman

Principal at a public university in the federal capital, Dr. Farman, earned his doctorate from AIT in 2011. He holds his masters from Germany after his bachelor's in mechanical engineering from the University of Engineering and Technology Lahore. He was a Higher Education Commission scholar sent from Pakistan with distinction.

Prof. Tauseef

Pro-vice-chancellor of a public university in the northern Pakistan, Prof. Tauseef, earned both his doctorate and master's from AIT in 2010 and 2007, respectively. On top of his academic professionalism he has also been politically influential upgrading the city campus of an existing university to an independent university.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

While under- as well as post-graduates of Pakistani origin are found performing well – some rather outperforming [4] those of AIT are seen distinctive like their peers from other countries; one reason being most of them enrolling at AIT after a thorough screening at various levels.

Academia

As per memorandum of understanding signed between AIT and various Pakistani universities, masters' students may earn dual degrees proceeding to AIT completing their 24-credit course work at Pakistani universities. Doing some course work at AIT, they would complete just one thesis and earn a master's from the institute as well as their parent university. Likewise, the faculty may spend time on exchange [7].

For a country like Pakistan where the government and the society on the whole managed to send students to AIT incurring huge finances out of scarce resources or even other countries gave scholarships, it is foremost important that the graduates impart education to other countrymen so that the impact multiplies fast. This study agrees with [4] that states as follows:

Those holding a doctoral degree ought to supervise five doctoral students each.... For those that have got less than five doctoral students working under their supervision, it is suggested to enroll more. For those doctorates that are not supervising any, it is recommended to enroll five students each that is an international standard. (page 83)

[8] expresses his knowledge and experience that mostly what alumni may contribute is in terms of developing linkages, not financially. He further adds that while alma maters would strive for getting financial contribution from the alumni, the alumni just contribute in terms of social capital; the former being beyond the capacity as well as priority of theirs.

Types of Giving back

Monetary

An alumnus offered a master level scholarship in his personal capacity. Many alumni donated; especially, during the campus rehabilitation after the 2011 devastating floods when the AIT campus remained inundated under over a meter deep water for weeks. Even the students during the study astonishingly contributed to build some necessary building units on self-help basis as well as motivated other Pakistanis (alumni and others) living and working in Thailand.

Advocacy

While many alumni recommended their students as well as junior colleagues in the organisations they served for joining AIT, another interesting aspect seen is presence of multiple family members being AIT alumni amongst Pakistanis. Here couples have the lead being over 10; it is followed by siblings, parents and children as well as cousins or even nephews/nice and uncles/aunts. This shows that the alumni have even been motivating family members to avail AIT education.

Teaching – full-time and part-time

Pakistani alumni are seen rare in part-time teaching at the institute, let alone full-time. However, the part-time trend is now seen improving with some faculty from Pakistani universities to be on exchange under some memoranda of understanding whereas some individuals invited by the institute (rather some contacts at the institute) [3].

Alumni Affairs

The alumni headquarters suggest that larger chapters like Pakistan ought to have sub-chapters to better cater for the needs of the members. The Pakistan chapter is envisaged thinking on re-shaping itself on these lines; better utilisation of the AIT graduates is very much expected to appear soon.

As stated earlier, the strong grooming of the alumni in the unique environment at the institute convinces the employers to place this extraordinary lot at distinctive positions. Such positions are associated with a busy schedule as per the portfolio. Here, it becomes next to impossible to keep in closer touch with the fellow alumni; especially, in the case of the alumni number touching a thousand. Previously, when the number was up to several hundreds, the situation was not this immense. On the advice of the headquarters to make sub-chapters, this problem is expected to solve as with that initiative, the interaction will smoothen.

Postgraduates; especially, the ones with doctoral qualification are expected to assume controller positions in diversified strata of public and private bodies including the international ones; while the Pakistani alumni are found working remarkably, [9]’s work is recommended to be referred to for more effective utilisation of the potential of the subject.

Table 14: Alumni location – in provinces

Location	Alumni
Islamabad	49
Azad Jammu and Kashmir	6
Lahore	116
Rest of Punjab	65
Karachi	31
Rest of Sindh	22
Peshawar	6
Rest of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	10
Quetta	50
Rest of Balochistan	6

Source: [3].

One aspect observed is that those that are located in the federal capital or even one of the four provincial capitals (situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir is equal throughout) are relatively more connected than rest of the province. One

obvious reason is a large number of alumni in the single large city that too privileged with more resources than rest of the province (or even the country, obviously). Table 14 shows details of the 388 alumni whose location (within Pakistan) is known (28 are reported to be located within Pakistan but their precise location is unknown), so far.

One solution could be to separately take care of the alumni located beyond federal of provincial capitals.

Regarding those that are located in other countries, the situation is bit more complex; firstly, that the headquarters allows them to be considered members of the country chapter where they are located (and the author agrees to it); secondly, it is experienced to be very difficult keeping contact with the alumni that are located across the World – especially, a little number in a single country. So this study supports that the Pakistani-origin alumni located in other countries may preferably be left to be contacted mainly by the host country alumni chapter. However, if Pakistan chapter can afford, it will be highly appreciable and more effective, if Pakistan chapter also keeps in touch with them directly as well as developing liaison through their host country chapter.

Participation in Country Politics

Through corner meetings with some distinguished alumni, it came forward that the chapter should consider bringing forward the potential members in country politics to serve the nation as well as humanity on the whole in yet better ways.

Prior to windingup this discussion, some interesting aspects are deemed inevitable to mention as follows:

Internationalism

While [10] mentioned limitations of international non-governmental organisations in implementing developed countries’ solutions in the less-educated people of the developing ones (that too the rural areas) this study also found the alumni in the smaller towns lethargic towards maintaining the AIT learnings than their peers in the larger cities. [10] elaborates the situation as follows:

In many cases [international non-governmental organisations] have made the mistake of not valuing the local culture. They wither the local norms and values, creating problems for themselves. (page 21)

He further refers [11] suggesting:

[international non-governmental organisations] better be considerate that the most success is attained when an adaptive attitude is practiced regarding cultural elements.

Though the afore-mentioned works pertain to international non-governmental organisations in relation with their operations spread over diversified geographical areas practicing diversified cultures, these are referred to here due to a similarity of AIT with international non-governmental organisations (internationalism) and the

diversified geographical areas and cultures (those are similar in the case of alumni).

This study would emphasise that the attitude of the subject ought not to be taken in negative connotation. While at high levels the individuals have some good aspirations, the ones working at lower levels may also have some other good aspirations along with their personal, family or community issues; [10] also debates this aspect. Without going into detail (that is not the context here) this study urges looking into the resource utilisation (that too in a manner that does not embarrass the stakeholders) if there can be given some input to that (especially, time management and reviewing prioritisation).

In relation with COVID-19

This paper having been written at the end of fourth phase of the pandemic COVID-19 has an added dimension as to how to handle the subject more appropriately in such rare situations. For instance, the counsel at the Royal Thai Embassy in Islamabad told the author that he had already conducted get-togethers in Islamabad and Karachi for the graduates of some other universities of Thailand and that he urged to hold one for the AITians [12]. Subsequently, an event was already planned but due to the COVID-19 it is pending until the time of writing this paper. Similarly, at AIT it was decided to start holding AIT mini days at the organisations where AIT alumni number was 10 or more. The vice-president for knowledge transfer decided to hold the very first at the largest university of Balochistan with an active alumnus who visited AIT. The plan was made as the author was so instructed but that too is pending. The vice-president for knowledge transfer AIT suggests going for virtual sessions in such situations [13]; [14]. However, the limitations of virtual sessions are observed; this is elaborated in the next section on headquarters.

Alumni Headquarters Activities and the Chapter

AIT alumni headquarters has mostly been very active. The president had a meeting with an active alumnus when both visited the alma mater coincidentally at the same time. Both furthered the plans for collaboration. The headquarters is also holding virtual meetings with the chapter presidents that are found to be effective in keeping the community in touch on a higher frequency. Even the 49th governing board meeting was conducted online in 2020 that proved to be a good experience; 50th meeting is also scheduled to be held on the same lines in the end of 2021 [15]. However, this study argues that due to certain factors – including problems of internet connection (especially, in many developing countries), flexibility on the part of the participants that they may attend incompletely and so on, we may not replace the in-person option to the virtual.

Note on Pakistani-origin Alumni's Overall Performance

Out of 982, there appear 168 alumni that graduated in the first two decades of the alma mater (1961-1980) while another 443 in the middle (1981-2000) and the remaining 321 graduated in the last two decades (2001-2020). Table 15 elaborates the point along with gender dimension:

Table 15: Phase-wise alumni – with gender dimension

Duration	Alumni	Men	Women
1961-1980	168	167	1
1981-2000	443	425	18
2001-2019	321	286	35
Total	982	919	63

Source: Adapted from [2]

In addition to the aspects discussed throughout the paper, one prominent thing is that the graduates during the middle two decades are the largest in number than the other two. Obviously, it becomes difficult to keep in touch with larger number. Since the first two-decade-alumni were almost half than the last and one-third of the middle slots, it was relatively easy for them to remain in touch. Furthermore, that was the pioneer lot and trained by the pioneer faculty under the pioneer administration with the best resources so its high performance is quite understandable.

Here appears a challenge for the last slot. Their strength is their maximum number of doctoral degrees than the seniors that will give them edge. However, if they can develop good liaison and organise themselves in addition to getting good advice then this networking may boost their potential; through this study, this appears to be very likely.

5. CONCLUSION

While performance of the Pakistani-origin AIT alumni has been above average as far as the batches in the first two decades of the institute are concerned, it has not been up to that level in the following two decades. However, the last two decade graduates are seen performing better and incorporating AIT alumni headquarters advice the outcome is expected to not only meet the standards set by the pioneers rather may excel with participation in the local as well as global politics; an additional dimension of professionalism demanded here is in relation with COVID-19.

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