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EDITORIAL

University Grants Commission's notification regarding admission in Ph.D. program published in extra ordinary gazette of Government of India on 9th July 2009 is a right step taken in haste. Perhaps commission did not review its earlier decisions that deteriorated the dignity of the highest academic degree. But realistically speaking the downfall in the quality of doctorate level research began way back in 1989-90, when the commission following governments policy of delinking services from degrees conceptualized National Eligibility Test (NET) for lectureship in university and degree colleges. In the history of higher education, for the first time, commission in 1989-90 notified that with the effect from the date of notification, the eligibility criterion for lectureship of university and degree college teachers would be NET or JRF. However, scholars completing M.Phil. and Ph.D. in 1990 and 1992 respectively would be exempted from NET. Relaxation in term of Ph.D. for lectureship eligibility created high demand of Ph.D. degree in academic field. Researchers saw their careers in this degree and did their best to grab it by hook or by crook. Even the research supervisors and Ph.D. evaluators adopted lenient attitude towards those scholars helping out rightly in providing a doctorate degree to the researchers. It resulted in a flood of Ph.D. researches in every university. Commission could not resist on its stand and issued a fresh notification extending the earlier date from 1992 to December 31st 1993. They further diluted their earlier decision by stating that candidates submitting their thesis by 1993 would avail NET exemption. Furthermore, SLET was also introduced as an alternative to NET. In 2003, commission declared that M.Phil. degree holders and those who completed their Ph.Ds by 2002 would enjoy NET relaxation. This notification was again surpassed by a new one in 2007 with an addition of doctorate degree holders being made eligible for P.G teaching whereas M.Phil. and NET qualified candidates being eligible only for U.G teachings.

In 2009 the commission took a U-turn from its earlier guidelines and issued new ones making NET mandatory for lectureship. Such inconsistencies in the commissions policies created confusion amongst academicians and researchers, present Ph.D. admission policy would continue or further changes would be sought forward-by the commission.

Another important aspect in Ph.D. registration that seems relevant to discuss at this juncture is that in affiliating universities admission to doctorate degree begins with a search for a supervisor to serve as guide in research. It is an informal guide finding process. After a positive acknowledgement from the guide, under his guidance the research scholar prepares synopsis, gets registered at research center, deposits college and university registration fee followed by submitting his synopsis to universities research offices. Generally in every university for each subject, Research Degree Committee (RDC) meets twice a year in January and July to accept, reject or modify research topics of research aspirants. Commissions notification on 9th July 2009 came without taking cognizance of the Ph.D. registration process of affiliated universities resulting in chaos. To elaborate on the issue let us take into account some facts. In one university of western UP, RDC meetings were continued till September 2009, whereas another university of Uttarakhand had its RDC held till 5th October 2009. However, later on one university cancelled the RDC's decision taken between 9th July 2009 to 7th September 2009 only to honour the commissions notification through its academic council meeting. The question arises whether university authorities were ignorant of the notifications and continued with RDC meetings, why did they not issue notifications to their research centres and affiliated colleges to refrain from entertaining any research synopsis after 9th July 2009? Do they have moral right to cancel the registration of research scholars registered through duly constituted RDC and not call upon further RDC meeting for researchers who submitted their synopsis prior to the commissions' notification? Should not the commission and the universities be taking decisions in favour of its students? The right thing to do at this juncture by the universities is to take special permission from the commission to finalize research synopsis submitted prior to the commissions' notification and calling RDC meeting for the same and not to interfere with the ongoing research work of the scholars registered through RDC after 9th July 2009.

U.G.C., if, really is sincere towards quality of Doctoral level research work, it should make NET/SLET mandatory for registration in Ph.D. only then the dignity of this highest academic degree i.e. Ph.D. could be maintained. Why a university entrances test for Ph.D., when NET already exists? U.G.C. should think over it and take decision.