

**Anupama**

Golden Research Thoughts

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Abstract:-

Young persons, who qualify for University Grants Commission-Junior Research Fellowship (UGC-JRF), find it increasingly daunting to get admission in institutions that offer seats for doing doctoral research. The number of such students as was desirous of doing Doctorate in Philosophy (PhDs) has grown in the last decade. Universities funded by the respective states of India and the central government have taken note of this fact but seems to have visibly done a little in ameliorating the situation due to which intellectual contributions and generation of new knowledge suffered. Its impact on the student community was adverse that resulted in declining interest in pursuing doctoral research. The publically funded Universities should have diligently played their role in making India a knowledge hub and acted on several reports with novel recommendations for reform. Owing to a large human resource base in India, an effective strategy needs to be put in place.



FACTORS HAMPERING DOCTORAL RESEARCH: SAVING THE INTELLECTUAL ENDEAVOUR

Keywords:

UGC-JRF, Doctoral research, Admission criteria, direct admission, Indirect admission, Public funded Institutions, Centrally funded Universities, State-funded Universities.

INTRODUCTION :-

Students who ambitiously plan a road map for a research career after acquiring higher education normally make attempts for earning an UGC-JRF/UGC-CSIR-JRF as guarantee of getting admission in doctoral research course of their choice. Owing to certain difficulties that are mentioned below in this article not all of them become successful in getting admission in a public funded institution even after qualifying for JRF. Whereas most of them remain unaware of several road blocks, they come face to face with a hoary reality of being left out of the stream and as time slip by the eventual frustration envelopes them. If the candidates who qualified for JRF fail to find a seat and do not get admission for pursuing PhD, idling becomes not only a cause of loss of intellectual capital to the nation but also drifts the person towards under employment. Data was collected online to evaluate as which University -Central or State, has the most suitable and worthy procedures for admitting candidates in PhD courses and exercised transparency. Whereas this little piece of research tried to evaluate these procedures it also proposes a few solutions for prevention of idling status to the candidates and authorities.

METHODOLOGY

This study endeavors to identify the commonly noticeable contributing factors hampering admissions in doctoral research programs in India. An analysis of the data obtained from three sources posted online on the respective websites as well as the criteria adopted by various Central and state universities for admissions in PhD programs was compared for to draw a general in addition to also making comparison of the criteria of two Central Universities viz., Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi University (DU) vis-a-vis one State controlled University viz., Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak. Geographical representation of the candidates and its numbers in the light of the actual numbers that qualified for JRF and the intake by these Universities as per the availability of seats for a particular zone. e.g., National Capital Region (NCR) was studied. Whether this pattern changed or not over time was also examined.

Level of motivation, inspiration and awareness about current and the contemporary problems amongst school and college students has been studied. Some socio-economic factors other than taken note in previous studies were also taken into account while addressing this problem.

RESULTS

It was found that large number of candidates, which qualified for JRF every year, remained vacant after expiry of the two years period during which they have to get into an institution for pursuing PhD program. This number is not static for any given year but indicated an upward trend as well as swelled in total as per arithmetic progression. The responsibility for this malice rests in the State controlled Universities, which fix and adopt defective criteria and remain prejudiced under the garb of autonomy. As the number of such Universities as this is large in comparison to the number of Central Universities, need of revising the criteria is immense to prevent the problem so that it does not assume a level of crises and we are able to manage our intellectual resources in a brilliant manner.

In JNU the criterion for admissions into PhD program says that the candidates who are enrolled for MPhil after qualifying the entrance examination and get 6.0 points on a 10-point scale are considered qualified and may continue with PhD in the same institution whereas a candidate who has scored 6.5 or more gets registered straight into the PhD program, bypassing the need to acquire Masters in Philosophy (MPhil) degree. A candidate who did MPhil from an institution other than JNU could submit MPhil dissertation for evaluation under 10 point/grade scale. Direct entry in the PhD program is possible only if a candidate has gained research experience for continuously two years and having published at least two research papers for taking to an equivalent level as that of MPhil. The research papers should have been published in peer-reviewed/refereed journal with high impact factor. Within the scope of this study, JNU was the only University that adopted not only a fair but liberal criterion for direct entry to PhD program without comprising the quality or leaving a scope of personal favor. However, there was no mention if JRF was pre-requisite. In all fairness, the JNU provided for an entrance test for admissions in MPhil. Therefore the most important factor was the quality of synopsis submitted for pursuing research. Evaluation of the synopsis is first made by the departmental committee followed by an expert group composed of external peers in which personal interview is also held for maintaining fairness and high standards.

Delhi University adopts twin procedures as criteria for admission into doctoral research. The first is 'indirect admission' and the other, 'direct admission' to PhD. The former is on the basis of entrance test but it would be wrong to assume that the quality of synopsis is ignored for it whereas for the latter the candidates

who are considered eligible are those that have cleared the UGC-JRF test, permanent or ad-hoc teaching staff from Delhi University in addition to the teachers from colleges under Delhi University having at least 2-year research experience, permanent faculty members other than DU with at least 3-year research experience or a candidate having completed MPhil degree from DU are considered eligible for direct entry into PhD program. In this instance, the necessity of synopsis and its quality has not been ignored. A weightage of 10% to academic record & a weightage of 20% is given to research proposal in case of indirect admission i.e., through entrance test.

Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU) adopted a criterion in which were candidates that have qualified for UGC-JRF were also considered eligible for inclusion in the joint merit list of the candidates who cleared the entrance test for admission in pre-PhD. This decision got mixed up both types of candidates -indirect and direct entry, to the PhD programs. MDU criterion also mentioned about weightage of academic record that would become available to all candidates at par. Entry for teachers as fellows and regular teachers was also mentioned in this criterion. No emphasis was given to the quality of synopsis and, therefore, direct entry became a mirage, which was not the case with above mentioned Central Universities. Regrettably the MDU didn't follow the procedure maintained by the DU and JNU in respect of direct entry and/or considered quality of synopsis as criterion for direct entry bypassing the entry test. The MDU allocated merely two marks- quite insignificant, for a research paper notwithstanding if it was or was not published in a journal known for its high impact-factor and citation value of its previous papers. It only mentioned 'research paper' published in a refereed journal. Whether or not the 'refereed journal' was a house journal or a non-indexed publication, hardly ever became an issue in the MDU.

Coordination for activities or interaction for sensitizing students of schools and colleges for motivating or inspiring them to pursue research was noticed.

DISCUSSION

One of the most important factors that remained out of sight in spite of contemplating various would be reasons could be one of the followings such as the PhD work might take too much time and the students did not want to spend a few years in academic institutions because they could expect to get breakthrough in a prospective job. An early entry into a job through the job marketing is preferred despite the fact that both the UGC and Department of Science and Technology/Council for Scientific and Industrial research/Indian Council of Medical research/Indian Council of Agriculture research (DST/CSIR/ICMR/ICAR) have substantially stepped up the amount stipend granted to a scholar desirous of pursuing PhD program. It is even more difficult or challenging for women to pursue a PhD program because of household chores and problems of mobility if already married or on getting into a matrimonial alliance mid-way in spite of adequate arrangements for a hostel accommodation and availability of mess. In Indian society, men get married a little later than women and, therefore, the former don't find it suitable to simultaneously run their research interest and acquiring and raising a family. It, thus, becomes conflicting and if a woman leaves the research career mid-way or prefers a job instead of a research the nation's research output languishes causing a great deal of manpower to pursue inferior tasks.

As number of seats becoming available for registration in doctoral research under respective departments of a university or an institution remain almost static due to shortage of manpower on a faculty and the physical infrastructure, the onus of salvaging seekers of a research career lies on the respective research committees and management of various state funded universities. Adoption of a uniform criterion could also bring relief to the candidates who desire to pursue a research career.

CONCLUSION

A uniform criterion for admissions to the PhD programs in the State funded universities is need of the hour. It would do much good in addition to implementation of numerous recommendations previously made by several high power committees to improve higher education in India that may attract more people to pursue research in State funded universities because the private or deemed universities focus only on preparing a person as professional and a money spinning machine and not as contributor to new knowledge.

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