Influence of Academic Performance Indicators on the Quality of Education and Research

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It is recapitulated that India was known across the World for its quality of education during the ancient period. During this period, Scholars from different parts of the World used to visit India for scholarly education. But now Indians move out of India to get good quality education in foreign educational institutions. The deplorable state of affairs of Indian education system has been largely because of lack of accountability of teachers and educational institutions for promoting quality education and research.

The problem of low quality of research in India has also been acknowledged by the Apex Court in India. The Supreme Court of India in a leading case of *Frank Anthony Public School Employees' Association v. Union of India & others*[1], while conceding the deteriorating standard of research and education in higher education, and espousing the cause of maintenance of high academic standard in India, observed,

"We have to be very strict in maintaining high academic standards and maintaining academic discipline and academic rigour if our country is to progress. Democracy depends for its very life on a high standard of general, vocational and professional education. Dissemination of 'learning with search for new knowledge with discipline all round must be maintained at all costs "[2].

The low quality of research in India is also evident form the World Rankings of Universities, 2010-2016, where that none of Indian universities have figured in the first 200 Universities of the World.

It is also important to mention that there are some criteria to determine the world ranking of any university, which includes teaching-learning environment (30% of the overall ranking score), research production (30%), influence of research on others (30%), industry income-innovation (2.5%) and International outlook of staff, students and research (7.5%), have been selected. It is also evident from these factors that the research component has been allocated

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more than 60% of the overall points. It is also evident from the specified secondary data that Indian institutions have failed to meet the expectations of the quality research for the development of educational standards in India.

Some Introspection on Low Quality Teaching and Research

After critical scrutiny of the existing literature such as the Knowledge Commission of India, (2007) (Legal Research and Education), the Knowledge Commission of India, Report, (2008) on the quality of PhDs; the Tandon Committee for Review of Existing Institutions Deemed to be Universities, (2009); the Transparency International on corruption in education, (2011); the Union Grant Commission Reports on Legal Research; the University Grants Commission Reports on Higher Education; the Yashpal Committee on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education, (2009); Vision Document of Bar Council of India (2011), UGC Regulations on Revision of Pay Scales, Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers in Universities and Colleges & Other Measures for the Maintenance of Standards, (2009) and Amendments in 2010, 2013 and 2016 and Employment Benefits available to teachers and the ground realities prevailing in the majority of private and public institutions involved in imparting education, it can logically be inferred that the low quality research or no research is happening. Further, institutions engaged in imparting education and research are also not so serious about the promotion of research and education.

According to the Report of the National Knowledge Commission (2007) that "there are some contributory factors, which includes lack of quality faculty, low quality of research and pedagogical innovation, lack of accountability and incentives among teachers, system of evaluation which encourages rote learning, governance structures of universities which make innovations difficult, system of affiliated colleges, for low quality research and standard of education"[4].

It is also noticeable from the World Ranking of Universities, (2010-2016), which is also a reflection of the state of affairs of quality of education and

Nations	2010-11				2011-12				2012-13				2013-14				2014-15				2015-16[3]			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
China	3	3	N	N	2	1	3	4	2	0	4	3	2	0	4	4	2	1	3	5	2	0	4	5
Hong Kong	2	2	N	N	2	2	2	0	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	2	1
Japan	2	3	N	N	2	3	6	5	2	3	3	3	5	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	0	2	11
India	0	0	N	N	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	4	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
Republic of Korea	2	2	N	N	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	0	3	1	2	1	6
Singapore	1	1	N	N	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

Rankings: A: 1-100, B: 101-200, C: 201-300, D: 301-450

research in India, that no serious efforts are being taken by education institutions engaged in imparting higher education.

Most of the educational institutions have recognised teaching as a primary function of faculty members. Consequently, these academic organizations have deliberately abandoned research activities in their institutions. It is also pertinent that education and research cannot be compartmentalized into two separate categories. No prudent and reasonable professional can deny the fact that research is an integral part of education. Quality of education cannot be improved upon without the quality research and vice versa.

It is also important to mention that any system of teaching pedagogy is bound to fail without a competent teacher. Teacher is driving force of any education system. Teaching techniques and good infrastructure will provide a congenial and conducive ambiance to a faculty member to impart quality education and produce quality research. Quality of research and education cannot be enhanced, unless teachers employed in the higher education are made answerable for the low quality of research and teaching. Further, in order to excel and compete across the globe, both, quality of research and education are required to be embedded into the education system of India.

Implementation of Academic Performance Indicators

Due to decline in academic and research standards in India, after extensive deliberations on quality of research and education, the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2009[5] was compelled to implement, the UGC, Regulations on Revision of Pay Scales, Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers in Universities and Colleges & Other Measures for the Maintenance of Standards, (2009).

The said Regulation, wherein Academic Performance Indicators (API) system has been created, has linked promotions of faculty members in Indian universities/colleges to a quantifiable assessment of their performance. The main objective of the introduction of API is to promote quality research and education as per the prescribed parameters. API is also designed to ensure accountability of teachers in higher education for the purpose of promotion under Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) and direct appointment. UGC Regulations (2000) for the promotion or direct appointment, did not recognised the requirement of the API.

API points as per the UGC Regulations (2009), are mandatory for the recruitment as well as promotion for the teaching faculties. APIs take into account credits for various research and teaching assignments such as research paper publications, research projects, research guidance,etc, for direct appointment and CAS for internal promotion of teachers. The Latest Policy on API, to accommodate the concerns of all stakeholders, has also been amended three times in 2010, 2013 & 2016, since its implementation in 2009.

API has been demarcated into three divisions[6] dealing with different aspects of teaching assignments, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and research assignments. The basic objective of such a scheme is to punish non-performers and reward performers in education and research assignments. If some teacher does not do research, then there is no scope of promotion or appointment to higher post. However, API scheme is not free from pitfalls, nevertheless, fundamentally such a scheme will certainly yield rich harvest in the long term.

It is seen that as per UGC Mandate, research papers in case of CAS must be sent to the experts for quality evaluation of of the research papers, but in

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practice the same is hardly done by the majority of educational institutions. Appointments or promotions under CAS, are being made solely on the basis of number of publications and not on the quality of the publications. It is well established fact that quantity of publication is subservient to the quality of publications. Effective and efficient implementation, with quality monitoring, of the scheme is the need of the hour.

Criticism of API System

API has been criticized by some teachers and association of teachers, who does not want to fulfil the mandate of the teaching profession, for various relevant and irreverent considerations. One of the main condemnations of API system, is that UGC, Higher Education Division of the Ministry of HRD have failed to take stock of the infrastructural inadequacies such as quality IT facilities, books, journals, space for teachers in staff rooms, printers, especially in rural areas, before the introduction of such an important scheme on API.

API system is also blamed for adversely impacting the promotion prospects of thousands of teachers across the country. It is also reported that teachers employed in educational institutions located in urban area, are far better placed as compared to educational organisation in rural areas for the purpose of meeting the mandate of API policy.

API Policy has also been criticized on the ground that the existing API system is not favourable to teachers who only do teaching. Further, it is also argued that in order to attain the API target, teachers by and large, are ignoring their academic assignments. Consequently, discouraging the performance of teaching assignments and also compromising with the interests of students in the highly competitive phase of the global economic development.

API Policy has also been censured on the ground that due to the number game has come in to play. API has also generated a business of paid publications without any research quality. Publishers by and large are concerned with the number of publications and not quality of publications. Further, it is also seen that a large number of teachers and researchers across India's academic institutions, including many at prestigious universities, have been choosing to publish in fake and/or substandard journals to secure promotions under CAS or direct appointment. APIs have also been disapproved for generating the low quality or substandard research due to lack of proper monitoring and standards of publications of research in India.

But fact of the matter is that, after the mandate of the API, some amount of research is at least happening in social sciences, which would not have possible without the implementation of such policy under UGC Regulations (2009). Because there was no such requirements under the previous UGC Regulations, 2000 for the appointment and promotion of teachers.

Positive Facts on API Policy

Author is of the view that now a days, teachers employed at higher educational institutions are being compelled to do research for the promotion and appointments, whereas no research or very low quality research was being produced before the initiation of the API system. Due to such a policy, some beginning have been made in the positive direction and some amount of research is happening. Further, such a policy have also sensitized teachers on the significance of quality of doctrinal and empirical research for the promotion of quality education and research in India.

The said policy has also been designed to seek accountability of teachers for promoting quality education and research. There was no such specific tool before 2009 to make teachers engaged in higher education, responsible for teaching and research assignments. It is recapitulated and reiterated that the API policy will have long term repercussion on the quality research and education in India.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of accountability of teachers for quality research and education, the whole system of education and research have been made to suffer, which has also resulted in lack of appreciation of Indian education and research at the International level and migration of students at a large-scale to foreign universities for quality education and research.

It is seen that now at least some amount of research though low quality is happening. For empowering the endeavours of quality research and education, it is also endorsed that educational institutions are required to ensure accountability for the low quality of research and education for the purpose of direct appointment and CAS.

Empirical Research to Evaluate the Impact of API on the Quality of Research and Education

Author is of the opinion that in order to assimilate the practical difficulties and to evaluate the effectiveness of such policy, we need to conduct empirical research for the understanding of the ramification of the API on research and education.

The proposed empirical research should also be designed to inquire, explain and explore the constraints of APIs and its impact on quality of research and education. For the purpose of collection of primary data from the stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, and regulators of education and research in the universities should also be involved.

After in-depth scrutiny of the existing literature on the subject, the following research questions are proposed for the purpose of conducting empirical research. Such a research will certainly cause expansion of the horizons of the quality research and education in India.

i)   What is the nature and scope of APIs under UGC Regulations (2009), for the promotion of quality of education and research?

ii) Whether APIs under UGC Regulations (2009), for the promotion and recruitment of teachers in Universities/Colleges, have promoted the quality of research?

iii) Whether the APIs as per UGC Regulations (2009), for the promotion and recruitment of teachers in Universities/Colleges, has promoted quality of education?

iv) How far the introduction of APIs for the teachers, have influenced the quality of research and teaching of teachers employed in Universities/Colleges.

v)   Is there any need to expand the horizon of the existing scheme of the API?

vi) What are the hindrances in the compliance of API for the promotion and recruitment of teachers in India?

vii) How to revive the research culture to promote quality research and education in academic institutions?

It is also important to mention that the Author has submitted two proposals to UGC, New Delhi and Department of Higher Education Ministry of HRD, for conducting an Empirical Research on the Impact of API on the quality of research in the National Capital Region (NCR). This proposed research will certainly facilitate all the interested stakeholders such as the policy makers, regulators, administrators and teachers in promoting education and research.

Despite the fact that several months have lapsed, there is no response from any of these Apex authorities of higher education in India. Is there a wide gap between preaching and practicing for the promotion of quality education and research by the Policy makers on higher education in India?

Creating a tradition of research in schools and universities is an imperative if India has to transform itself from being only a consumer of available knowledge to being a leading producer in the world of new knowledge and ideas. Education and research in India requires some initiatives that can help the country build up educational institutions of the future.

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