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Date: the 25th April 2013

SUB: Express Concern regarding MCQ Format of NET Examination

Sir,

I wish to draw your kind attention to certain reforms made in the scheme of test for UGC NET:

1. One significant reform made in the scheme is that the format for Paper III has been changed from a subjective to an objective one. Recently Paper III has been made to consist of only MCQs and the answers are scored by using OMR. While this might enable faster and unbiased evaluation it raises one important concern: in its present form the candidates are able to use only the OMR and therefore the writing skill of candidates cannot be assessed from the scores. This is a matter of particularly grave concern as it completely ignores the test of writing skills which is generally important for research and teaching in almost all subjects across all disciplines.

2. In the light of the point mentioned above the concern becomes even more serious in case of language and literature subjects where part of the excellence of any candidate in a subject is generally evaluated in terms of writing skill and techniques of interpretation, which could never be examined in the current format. It is definitely posing a potential risk of dilution in the quality benchmark of candidates, especially in such subjects as literature and humanities.

The concerns expressed above are also reflected in the results of the UGC NET as obtained in case of candidates appearing at the University of Calcutta Centre. 104 out of 5581 candidates (in both JRF and LS categories) qualified in the June 2010 (before the reformed system) NET Examination. In the December 2012 Examination however a total of 1408 candidates out of a total of 21137 candidates qualified (in both JRF and LS categories) from the same centre. This means that the percentage of success has gone up from 1.86% to 6.66% within two and half years. While this may indicate an improvement in the overall reach and quality of higher education, it may also be interpreted as a dilution of the quality benchmark as a resulting of the reforms mentioned above.

I would therefore request you to consider the academic ramifications or consequences of the reforms that have been recently made and hence take all necessary initiatives in order to establish standards of excellence by adequate testing methods in the esteemed NET Examination of the UGC.

Yours sincerely

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