

PRE. Ph.D. Coursework- The Part and Parcel of Ph.D. Programme

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Abstract

Research in education, as in other field is a search for the truth; rather for better understandings of educational process. Knowledge acquired through research is of highest order. Educational research can no longer be considered to be in infancy. It has undergone nurturing during the last six decade, since the first thesis accepted in Bombay University. But in spite of this it has not been able to make strong impact on the education system.

There is a strong case for looking afresh at the programme and practices of education research. The paper throws light on the quality concern issues in educational research and the measures taken by UGC through regulation for standard and procedure for standard and procedure for the award of Ph.D programmes. The paper overhauls the UGC initiative to counter quality concern, which came into effect in gazette (11th July, 2009) but many universities and institutions are not implementing the same. They are still doing the doctoral registration through the older rules and earlier procedure. The UGC recommendation of Pre-Ph.D. coursework of one semester before the commencement of the doctoral work will certainly help to improve the quality of educational research. But UGC offer just the guideline of coursework not the whole conceptual framework, which is left on individual university. The result in Pre-Ph.D. coursework is not being carried out in the same spirit, as it was meant for.

A systematic and robust procedure for the educational research is the need of the hours. The paper suggest a frame work for making Pre-Ph.D. course work as a part and parcel of Ph.D. programme. The 11th five year plan has stated expansion, inclusion and quality as the three cornerstones of our national goal of education. In this regard UGC, initiative to counter quality issues in research is rather a laudable job, with the only condition that it should be followed in the same spirit too.

Keywords: Education, coursework, conceptual

Research is a careful search, a complex inquiry for the new knowledge through a careful systematic approach in any branch of knowledge. It is an essential component of

endeavor of human being, since their creation, to develop and grow. Knowledge acquired by the research is of highest order. Research in Education, as in other field is a search for

truth rather for better understanding of educational research process. Educational research can no longer be considered to be in infancy. It has grown over a period of above five decade, since the first thesis in education was accepted in Bombay University. It has undergone nurturing during the last five decades. But in spite of this it has not been able to make important impact on the education system. There is a strong case for looking afresh at the programme and practices of Educational Research.

Quality Concern in Educational Research

The 11th five year plan has set its goals as expansion of enrollment in higher education with inclusiveness, quality and relevant education with necessary academic reforms in the university and college system. Expansion, inclusion and quality are three cornerstones of our national goals of education. Educationalists are of common consensus that research in education lack rigor. Though the reason behind the poor condition of educational research are not so common. Mohanty (2008) stated that the rush for getting a degree at the earliest opportunity has negatively affected quality of educational research. Aiyaduri (2008) blames the bureaucratic regulation and financial crunches for the issues of mediocrity in doctoral education research. According to Nagra and Dhillon (2006) the field of teacher education is lagging far behind because of stagnation in research and developmental programmes. Lack of Cordial relationship between research scholar and supervisor, poor infrastructure, lack of commitment and inquisitiveness on the part of research scholar are also some of reasons of degrading quality of educational research (Matheswaran 2008) The UNESCO Global monitoring report 2008, indicates “to varying degree, all countries need to improve the quality of education”. While assessing the regional progress in achieving the education for all goals. Quality education for all is still a distant dream for India, which has been indentified among 25 odd countries not likely to achieve the millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. This is a high time when country really needs the quality research reform, as the country is on the verge of establishing new universities and college for creating knowledge society based on the recommendation of Yashpal committee report 2009.

Measures taken for Quality Concern in Research

The cry for quality concern of research is being acknowledged by University Grant Commission (UGC). To address this serious issue, UGC has made regulation for standard and procedure for the award of Ph.D. on 11th July 2009. All universities and institution eligible for conducting Ph.D. programmes should admit only those students who have passed entrance exam, which is to be followed by interview. At the time of interview, doctoral candidate are expected to discuss their research interest area. Selected students to be allotted a supervisor decided by the department in a formal manner depending upon the number of students per faculty member, the available specialization among the faculty supervisor. After having been admitted, each Ph.D. student to undertake course work for a minimum period of one semester. The course work shall be treated as pre-Ph.D. preparation work.

UGC initiative to counter qualify concern is rather a laudable job, with the only condition that it should be followed in the same spirit too.

Overhauling of the New Regulation of UGC

As noted by Desia and Singh (2010) The first thing about the regulation is that many universities are not implementing, the same from date it come into effect in gazette i.e. 11th July 2009, they are still doing the doctoral registration through the older rules and earlier procedures. This is not only a mockery of the regulation but also made a dilemmatic situation before the education system as a whole. The dire consequence of which is overcrowded queue of the doctoral aspirant. The number of enrollment for the M.Phil and Ph.D. degree during the year 2009 was higher than that of average.

The Pre-Ph.D. Coursework of six month before the commencement of the doctoral work will certainly help to improve quality of educational researches. But UGC offer just a guidelines of coursework. The whole conceptual framework is ought to be decided by individual universities. The universities where such courses are running, the content being taught in Pre-Ph.D. coursework is already covered under the post graduation classes in education. The same course is being repeated at NET/JRF exams and will be repetitively asked in the entrance exam on Ph.D. and further again to be taught at the six month Pre doctoral course.

A Systematic and robust procedure is the need of the hour, but the very first step of implementation of the regulation on the part of universities are in fumbles.

Suggested Framework for pre-ph.D Coursework in Education

Pre- Ph.D. coursework comes with promising hope for the quality assurance in educational research. The coursework should provides all those opportunities and challenges needed to keep the researcher abreast of the new development in Educational Following are some of the suggestion to make Pre Ph.D. coursework a part and parcel of Ph.D. programme in education.

Skill developing and Training Course

As researcher in educations has already had knowledge of research methodology the Pre-Ph.D. Coursework should focus on skill aspect. Training in objective framing , hypothesis making, research question framing should be part of curriculum.

Understanding of Approach of educational research-

Both Quantative and Qualitative approach to be included in coursework. Researcher should be made well versed of the merit and demerit of both. As qualitative approach is a quite contemporary approach it different methods and analysis should be taught.

Preparing Research Proposal-

Drafting of research proposal is the most important step towards good research. These six month should provide ample scope for indentifying research problem and review of literature. So a sincere effort should be made in preparing research proposal.

Innovative Teaching Methods-

Pre-Ph.D classes should not be held in traditional manner rather an innovative techniques like Team teaching. Peer teaching, presentation, dialogue and discussion method to be used. As Pre-Ph.D coursework is a part of doctorate coursework, research scholar should be treated differently then M.A. or M.Ed. Students, otherwise, research scholar will start losing interest and output will not be fruitful.

Library based skills-

Library is the best place for keeping oneself abreast of new development in knowledge. Training should be given to scholars on how to make maximum utilization of available resources. Library should be well equipped with all latest facilities like internet. Xerox machines, national and international journal, style manual, magazine etc. (Matherswaran 2008). These six month course should give immense opportunities for enhancing both intensive and extensive reading skill.

Research Paper Writing-

Pre Ph.D. Coursework should also include in its curriculum writing of research paper workshop should be conducted on the techniques of writing research paper.

Test Construction-

The task of test construction could be given to a group of research scholars. Planning, Preliminary draft, the tryout, item analysis. Final draft all steps can be divided among research scholar. This exercise will be very fruitful, as student will get to know most complex part of the research in practical way.

Expert Lectures-

Lectures on latest areas of educational research should be given by expert educationalist. Expert should be called upon more often for their view on gaps in research and potential areas of research etc.

Good infrastructure-

According to Sekar (2008) the administration of the research institution should take necessary steps to provide congenial environment to encourage research work. Psychological Lab, conference room and reference section should be maintained properly.

Allocation of supervisor-

Supervisor should be allotted formally or informally within this six month. As the whole research process largely depends on these two main dimension namely, supervisor and researcher. The six month will prove to be a ground on which strong relationship between the researcher and supervision can be maintained. This will also safe student from up productive labour of futile work, prior to research work.

❑ Motivational talk-

To instill in researcher the quality of scholastic attitude, skepticism and scientific temper, motivational lectures should be given. They should be shown ideal work to aspire for.

❑ Flexibility-

Flexibility in the coursework should be maintained so that this six month prior to research should not be seen as burden: otherwise dropout rate at Ph.D level will increase.

❑ Seminars and workshop-

Workshop on computer based assignment on SPSS, ATLAS ti package should be held for research scholars. Their participation in seminar should be made obligatory.

❑ Evaluation-

UGC has also made clear that university shall decide the minimum qualifying requirement for allowing a scholar to proceed further. So their evaluation should be continuous and comprehensive on the basis of assignments presentation, Viva-Voce, and written examination.

Conclusion

The Yash Pal committee believes that “A University is a place where new ideas germinates, strike roots and grow tall and sturdy it is a unique space, which covers the entire universe of knowledge. It is a place where creative mind converge, interact with each other and construct visions of new relatives. Established notion of truth are challenged in the pursuit of knowledge”. So to make University a vibrant place, research and development activities should be carried in a more rigorous ways. No Policy implement on its own, it need systematic effort and systematic planning to implement the same. In this regard UGC, Pre-Ph.D course work should

be taken as part and parcel of Ph.D programme, not a separate part of it. Universities should chalk out a complete comprehensive Pre-Ph.D coursework. As remarked by Desai and Singh (2010) “A good start is the half done’. Pre-Ph.D. coursework has potential to make research, which often seen as a complex, laborious and lengthy process, more productive, qualitative, at the same time will make researcher more vibrant and well equipped to be an inquisitive learner throughout educational life.

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