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GRAPHICS/DESIGNING

Mr.Sanjay Singh

PUBLICATION OFFICE

Mahatma Education Society
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Editorial

RESEARCH is not complete until it is published. PJERT gives opportunities to budding researchers to create a public record of their original contributions, to disclose knowledge and to refine writing skills by learning from the constructive feedback provided by expert reviewers. PJERT is a means to communicate the results of mentor-student collaborations. It also helps the multidisciplinary community of researchers & scholars to share with each other a common enthusiasm for learning. However, one must understand that every research study should always be of high quality in order to produce knowledge that is applicable outside the research setting. Furthermore, good research utilizes methodologies that can be replicated, produces results that are examinable by peers, and creates knowledge that can be applied to real-world situations. The results of the study must have future implications. This is where the role of expert opinions of the reviewers comes into view. They read the article critically and then suggest that it is accepted, rejected, or—most frequently—revised and improved before it is published. Also, the authors know that their work will be scrutinized and this raises the standard of a publication before it is even sent to a journal. It helps determine the quality of the journal. Every issue of PJERT undergoes this rigorous process to maintain its standards!

We invite researchers from various disciplines to share their research articles to be published in the forthcoming issues and also welcome suggestions of readers and scholars to enrich further issues of PJERT.

-Dr. Bhavna Dave

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Homi Bhabha Center for Science Education,
TIFR, Mumbai

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Ravenshaw University, Cuttack

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EDITORIAL

Higher education system of India is the third largest in the world, next to the USA and China. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (UGC), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the center and the state. However, Indian universities still lag behind and Indian higher education is in radical reforms. For decades, the UGC has been criticized for corruption and its mismanagement of the higher education system in India. Several committees, commissions, analysts and scholars have recommended ways of rethinking higher education regulation in India.

Recently, the Union government unveiled the draft of a bill to replace higher education regulator University Grants Commission (UGC) with a Higher Education Commission. Hence, on 27 June 2018, the MHRD floated the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill, 2018, which seeks to repeal UGC. "The draft Act is in accordance with the commitment of the government for reforming the regulatory systems that provide more autonomy to higher educational institutes to promote excellence and facilitate holistic growth of the education system," (HRD) minister Prakash Javadekar said in a tweet.

The draft bill aims to take away funding powers from the proposed HECI, and hold it responsible for restoring the autonomy and maintaining the academic standards of the institutions. It is one of the key functions vested in the proposed HECI is the promotion of autonomy in institutes of higher education. The new bill proposes to "specify" learning outcomes for courses of study in higher education and lay down standards for teaching as well as assessment, which includes curriculum development. This goes against the grain of the argument that the autonomy of an institution is achieved only with financial, academic and administrative independence. The present HECI Bill, like the UGC, seems to aim to micromanage the academia. However, an institute of higher education should have the freedom to innovate with its curriculum on the basis of regional diversity, build newer forms of assessment and not just theoretical examinations, and thereby, judge students based on the skills acquired.

Pratima Pradhan