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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF RESERVATION ON KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTIVITY IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Affirmative actions have been in debates on and off. Reservation in various governmental departments and agencies are the result of affirmative actions. It was also debated related to its impact on performance. The opinion related the impact of reservation on quality and performances have both dimensions. Few believe that quality was affected by reservation while other deny. The present study is an attempt to bring forth some imperial evidences for the arguments. This study is limited to the higher education only and covered a limited number of faculty members that may not be sufficient as proportion to the larger group. But it necessarily has a direction of the question. A methodology was used according to the need of the study. An interview schedule was prepared and executed among the sample chosen from among faculty members of universities. The data collected revealed that reservation did not hamper the quality of services rather faculty members are found active at all parameters of the study.

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Introduction:-

Reservation has been sometimes in debate regarding quality and performance. Higher education is important aspect of societal development because it is responsible for all other developmental parameters to lead further. If lack persists in higher education other developmental parameters may not be at the required pace of time. Compromising with quality higher education is not a good idea for nation. In the debate the argument which often was furthered that reservation in higher education may lead to compromise the quality. At the other hand, constitutional provisions demand to bring the oppressed of the society on equal footing with others. Of course, historical suffering created different conditions in society so it was not possible to let them compete with those who had good opportunities. Affirmative actions provided an opportunity for those who were considered eligible for special treatment to get into the systems. Higher education of the country is no exception to it. To explore and find out the evidences and patterns among reserved categories in higher education it was thought to do a small research. This paper is the outcome of that effort. This study intends to evaluate the performance of faculty members of reserved categories in higher education. Performance in higher education can be assessed on certain parameters. These parameters are related with the knowledge production, training, research output etc.

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Research Methodology:-

Methodology of research tells us about techniques to tackle the bigger universe in limited resources. Sampling technique is one of them. There are thousands universities in India and lakhs of faculty members are working in them. Of course, for any researches it is impossible to contact each of them and interview them by any method. Sampling technique is used to tackle such situations in researches. It guides the researcher how to collect representative samples from the bigger universe. In this research purposive technique to collect the sample has been used. Fifty, on random and purposive basis, faculty members were chosen as sample for the study. They are all from reserved categories. But among reserved categories it include only social category and did not include any physical one. It had scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward castes. The faculty members in higher education have three designations which are hierarchal in nature. From the bottom, it has Assistant Professor, then Associate Professor, and at the top it has Professor. In the sample 36 Assistant Professors, 10 Associate Professors and 4 Professors were included. The samples chosen are all from various universities.

An interview schedule was framed and administered among them. Questions were based on the parameters discussed above. While administering the interview schedule the consent was obtained and tried to capture the information required for the intention of the study. Face to face interview brings accuracy in response which is found in the response. The data was scrutinized, after collection, standardized and tabulated for easy understanding. Each question was analyzed separately and frequency and respective percentage have been made available for clear understanding at a glance. The objective of the study is to provide empirical insights regarding educational institution policies, support mechanisms, and inclusive academic environments in the country.

Data Analysis and Presentation:-

The present study is about the impact of reservation in higher education. The impacts have been captured based on certain indicators to assess the performance of faculty members who belong to various reserved categories. The indicators have been identified considering the core work of academicians activities related to their professional development. A schedule, based on such indicators have been developed and administered. While administering the schedule all possible measures have been taken into consideration to extract the real and original responses, though the questions were very objective in nature. From the faculty members fifty have been identified as sample. These fifty have been taken from all three faculty categories that is; Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor. The indicators which were identified, as mentioned above, are participation in academic activities, production of knowledge in the form of publication, undergoing training programs, helping the institutions by participating in administrative activities, etc.

Total numbers of samples were fifty proportionally distributed from categories and from all designations. In the paper it is tried to present the data in tabular form based on each question administered. To make the findings at a glance for reader, designation wise responses are presented. The responses are converted into percentages and made it available in the table against each category.

Association with academic bodies:-

Association with relevant academic bodies keeps the individual up to date about the new happenings of the field. It also provides input to take new areas to explore and ponder over. Association also provides opportunity to the faculty members to collaborate the interdisciplinary nature of research. Such bodies give platforms for people to represent various issues concerning the governmental policies related higher education in general and discipline in particular. Therefore, membership of professional bodies is considered as an indicator to putting efforts to the development of the discipline. The samples were posed a question on membership of professional bodies and the result was as below:

Table 4.1: Membership of academic bodies-Designation wise

Designation	Number of Respondents			% of Respondents		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Professor	2	2	4	50.0	50.0	100
Associate Professor	7	3	10	70.0	30.0	100
Assistant Professor	13	23	36	36.1	63.9	100
Total	22	28	50	44	56	100

The above table shows that 56% of the faculty members responded in negation while 44% in affirmation. The question did not enquire about the name of those bodies which are of various types. But it was made sure at the type of interview that each type of association will be included. Putting the response in subcategories the table clearly speaks that 50% from the professors have membership while the same %age did not. Among associate professors the %age for haves are more that is 70% and only 30% responded that they did not. The situation among assistant professors is reverse of associate professors. 63.9% of assistant professors did not have association with any such professional bodies and rest 36.1% replied that they have. It seems easy to conclude that at entry level awareness about such associations and related benefits in terms of career development may be less and consequently membership is also less. Among professor the reason for less membership may be because of the feeling of fully achieved in career.

Conferences and Knowledge production:-

Lecturing, presenting papers, speaking key notes and publishing papers and books are the main purpose of higher education. A faculty member is assessed mainly of his publications and lecturers. As mentioned above the purpose of having association with professional bodies is also to get collaboration in research and getting ideas for new areas to explore as researcher. Therefore, in other words it may be said that having association with professional bodies is to publish new ideas. In the schedule, a question was asked about publication too. The faculty members were found very active in publishing their researches in various journals and attending conferences. This question did not include the publication of books because while framing the interview schedule it was felt that publishing books takes time and mixing the book publishing with conference papers and research paper will not be justice. So a separate question has been framed.

The response of the question is as under in the form of a table:

Table 4.2 : Research Publication & Conferences attended-designation wise

Designation	Number of Respondents			% of Respondents	
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No
Professor	4	0	4	100.0	0.0
Associate Professor	10	0	10	100.0	0.0
Assistant Professor	33	3	36	91.7	8.3
Total	47	3	50	94.0	6.0

In response to the question related to research publication and conference 94% of the faculty members responded in positive. Only 6% said that they did not attempt. The subdivision of faculty members shows that only Assistant Professors did not attend conference and did not publish research paper. Of course the interpretation requires interpretative understanding of the responses as it is clubbed with the conference and seminars.

Production of Books:-

Publication of books considered important in the field of academics. Books may be written, translated or edited. Even the books may be of reference in nature or curricula related. All of them are considered contribution and appreciated. While preparing the questionnaire, a question of this nature was thought to be framed. The response of the faculty members was obtained and tabulated as below;

Table 4.3 (a): Cross-tabulation of Books produced, Designation wise

Designation		Books produced		Total
		Yes	No	
Professor	Frequency	2	2	4
	% within Designation	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Associate Professor	Frequency	10	0	10
	% within Designation	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Assistant	Frequency	16	20	36

Professor	% within Designation	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	28	22	50
	% within Designation	56%	44%	100%

The analysis of the data revealed that 56% of the faculty members have published books in any of the above mentioned category. Remaining 44% said that they did not publish any book till now. In the subcategories of the faculty members the mid category dominated in the publication of books that is associate professors. Professor category is divided into the two equal groups. Among assistant professors 44.4% said that they have produced books where as 55.6% replied that they did not have books to their credit. The data shows that midlevel faculty members are more aware and active about the publication of books.

Teaching Experience:-

Experience brings perfection. Experience in any field indicates that how effective is the person in his area. Teaching experience also shows the possible effectiveness of a teacher. Considering the importance of experience it was thought to ask a question related to it too. But the question was divided on the basis of level of teaching. There are faculty members who start career at school level and by their struggle reach at higher level whereas few start at higher level and few at middle that is college level. The responses were captured and tabulated as under:

Table 4.4: Teaching Experience (University, College, School level)

Teaching Experience (Nos. of Years)	University Level		College Level		School Level	
	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
0	6	12.0	23	46.0	42	84.0
1 to 5	23	46.0	17	34.0	6	12.0
6 to 10	11	22.0	8	16.0	2	4.0
11 to 20	6	12.0	2	4.0	0	0.0
> 20	4	8.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100

The data shows, when it is analyzed on the basis of the type of experiences, that 84% did not have experience of teaching at school level, whereas 46% did not teach even at college level. 12% of them have taught at schools but less than 5 years. Those who have less than 5 year experience at college level are 34%. There are 4% faculty members who have more than six and less than 10 years of teaching experience at schools whereas 16% have college level experience of the same length. Faculty members with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience said that their experience is only at university and college level, whereas the faculty members with more than 20 years of experience do not have college and school level reaching experience.

Awards and Distinction:-

Recognition works as a booster to the performer and encourage others to perform better too. Conferring awards is a way to recognise the services of performers. Those who receive the awards in recognition of their services try to perform better and become role model for others in the field. There are several awards exclusively for teacher in higher education. A question was also asked about the recognition of their services people offered in their respective area.

Table 4.5 (b): Distinction/awards received by designation wise

Distinction/awards received		Designation			Total
		Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	
Yes	Frequency	3	2	9	14
	% within Distinction/awards received	21.4%	14.3%	64.3%	100.0%

No	Frequency	1	8	27	36
	% within Distinction/awards received	2.8%	22.2%	75.0%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	4	10	36	50
	% within Distinction/awards received	8.0%	20.0%	72.0%	100.0%

The data shows that out of fifty respondent fourteen faculty members said that they have been awarded awards and remaining 36 were not awarded. The subdivision of the data on the basis of designation shows that 9 out of 36 among assistant professors were awarded and 2 out of 10 among associate professors got awards. Among professors, 3 out of 4 were awarded. The data is also presented in percentage of the respective category in the table.

Fellowship:-

Award of fellowship is also one of the indicators for performance. Fellowships are given to the people with potential as a support to enhance the capability in order to perform better. People who have achieved the fellowship are considered laborious, dedicated and bright. The faculty members were found who were given fellowships at various levels. The responses are tabulated below:

Table 4.6(b) :Cross-tabulation of Fellowship received, Designation wise

Fellowship received		Designation			Total
		Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	
Yes	Frequency	1	3	8	12
	% within fellowship received	8.3%	25.0%	66.7%	100.0%
No	Frequency	3	7	28	38
	% within fellowship received	7.9%	18.4%	73.7%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	4	10	36	50
	% within fellowship received	8.0%	20.0%	72.0%	100.0%

The data shows that out of fifty 12 were given fellowships. The subdivision of responses revealed that 8 out of thirty six from among assistant professors got fellowships whereas 3 among 10 associate professors got and 1 from 4 professors. The analysis says that faculty members of the reserved categories are not behind any other in bagging the opportunities for fellowship.

Deputation, Lien, Sabbatical and Related leaves:-

A good performer is always in demand. He may get opportunity to serve various institutions nationally and internationally. From going from one to another institution in higher education government made a provision of extra ordinary leave and deputation. Even one may take sabbatical to enhance the ability in the field. Those who get opportunity to move from one to another institution avail such facilities. Therefore, it was also considered as an indicator for active involvement in the process of academic and institutional development. The question was framed and administered among the faculty members who were chosen as sample for the study. Responses are being tabulated as under:

Table 4.7 :Leave for deputation/lien etc, Designation wise

Designation		Leave for deputation/lien etc		Total
		Yes	No	
Professor	Frequency	2	2	4
	% within Designation	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Associate Professor	Frequency	6	4	10
	% within Designation	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%

Assistant Professor	Frequency	3	33	36
	% within Designation	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	11	39	50
	% within Designation	22.0%	78.0%	100.0%

The faculty member who availed the deputation, lien or other such leaves are only 22%. 78% of them did not avail. This may be justified as the 50% among the professors have availed and most of the non-availleurs are from the sub category of assistant professors that is 91.7%. The assistant professors are relatively at the beginning of their career so having longer time to avail such provisions. Among associate professors, which is the midlevel are at good ratio of availing that is 60% and only 40% of them did not avail.

Teacher Exchange Programs:-

Teacher exchange programs enhance the opportunity for faculty members to explore new avenues of knowledge, learn new techniques and new methods for imparting and research. This also provides a collaborative opportunity with the faculty members of other countries. Therefore, it was thought to explore that how many faculty members have got opportunity to avail the benefit of exchange programme.

Table 4.8 :Teacher Exchange programme, Designation wise

Designation		Teacher Exchange programme		Total
		Yes	No	
Professor	Frequency	2	2	4
	% within Designation	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Associate Professor	Frequency	0	10	10
	% within Designation	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Assistant Professor	Frequency	1	35	36
	% within Designation	2.8%	97.2%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	3	47	50
	% within Designation	6.0%	94.0%	100.0%

The data shows that only 6% among the sample faculty members could get opportunity of teacher exchange programme. The ratio among professors is more that is 50%. Associate professors reported zero whereas among assistant professors one faculty member got the opportunity for this programme. Since the scheme for exchange of teachers is very limited therefore, the ratio of beneficiary is also less. This may be same for other categories in the higher education.

Research Projects:-

Carrying out research is considered the primary work of teachers in higher education. Various ministries and organizations of national and international level offer funding for carrying out research in various areas. Faculty members are considered well-paced with the academic research who can bag the funding for research projects. Research output contributes enhancing existing knowledge and adding new. The responses from the faculty members are tabulated below:

Table 4.9(a):Research projects, Designation wise

Designation		Research Projects		Total
		Yes	No	
Professor	Frequency	4	0	4
	% within Designation	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Associate Professor	Frequency	0	10	10
	% within Designation	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Assistant Professor	Frequency	11	25	36
	% within Designation	30.6%	69.4%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	15	35	50
	% within Designation	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%

The analysis revealed that 70% of the faculty members did not take research projects. The subcategory of the faculty members shows an interesting result. Among associate professors no one has taken any research projects whereas among assistant professors 11 have taken. All professors reported that they have undertaken the research projects. The data did not cover number of projects. There may be faculty member who have carried out more research projects.

Conclusion:-

The study finds that the faculty members of reserved category are found on par with other category in the field of higher education on all parameters. They are working satisfactorily in the field of research, publication, presenting paper in seminars and conferences, getting opportunity in exchange of teachers etc. They are found well even in undertaking research projects from various agencies.

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