



Selection and Admission Procedure for Doctoral Research Programmes: Policy Prospective, Implementation and Existing Practices

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Abstract – The UGC 2009 Ph.D. regulation has set the minimum standards for admission procedure, allocation of supervisors, eligibility criteria for supervisors, course work duration and minimum number of students admitted to those programmes. The Commission has mooted a university specific entrance test along with tough checking of thesis. The present study is related to implementation of University Grants Commission (UGC) regulation [Minimum Standards and Procedure for Awards of M.Phil. /Ph.D. Degree, Regulation 2009] for doctoral (Ph.D.) programmes in various State and Central Universities of Central India in terms of selection and admission Procedure. A survey was carried out on a sample of 64 supervisors and 128 research scholars of different Universities of Central India. Results revealed that there is no uniformity in the rules for selection and admission procedure of students. No doubt that the entrance examination is conducted but different Universities follow different pattern for conducting the entrance examination. There are difficulties in implementation of rules. The findings have implications for policy makers and educationists for enhancing the quality of research work.

Key - Words – Minimum Standards and Procedure for Awards of M.Phil. /Ph.D. Degree, Regulation 2009, Doctoral (Ph.D.) programmes, Selection and Admission Procedure, Central India, Universities.

Introduction – Higher education has been of interest of several decades and this has been reflected in the reports of various commissions. Education in general and higher education in particular plays a significant role in making sustainable society. Higher education creates a knowledge based society in which teaching-learning, research and extension are the basic components. Research is an essential component of higher education. Research imparts excitement and dynamism to the educational process. There is a symbiotic relationship between the two. Research cannot be carried out without the vital support of higher education (Gopalan, 1995). Research is an academic activity of higher education institutions. Universities and colleges are primarily responsible for knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination. Therefore, in the performance of higher education institutions the value of research cannot be overemphasized (Varghese, 2013). Research and higher education are complementary to each other (Swamy, 2013). Research is the weakest link in the quality of higher education as revealed from the analysis of the accredited institutions by NAAC (Varghese, 2010). Research brings transformation and development and enhances the quality of higher education (Kalam, 2007). Selection and admission procedure is the parameter of primary importance in context of quality measures of research in higher education. To select genuine research scholars from diversified backgrounds, the Universities are required to develop standard and transparent selection procedure. In this connection, University Grants Commission (UGC) come out with its new selection and admission procedure in the year 2009, namely, Minimum Standards and Procedure for the Award of M.Phil./Ph.D. Degree Regulation. By this regulation UGC had setup the minimum standards (as a guideline) for Ph.D. to regulate the selection and admission procedure for Ph.D. programme in UGC recognised Indian Universities and Institutions. In order to explore

the prospect of Doctoral (Ph.D.) programmes offered by Central and State Universities of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, it is worthwhile to study at what extent they are following the UGC regulation with special reference to selection and admission procedure.. Pathania and Pathak (2014), Agrawal and Agrawal (2013), Tripathi and Sunder (2013), Patil and Saluke (2012), Sahu (2012), Hirwade (2011), Singh and Desai (2010), Palshikar (2010), emphasized upon research quality in higher education with special reference to UGC regulation 2009 Minimum Standards and Procedure for the Award of M.Phil./Ph.D. Degree regulation. According to them UGC has taken several steps to improve the quality of research, UGC regulation 2009 is one of them. They gave critical look on the entry of Doctoral students, supervisors, Ph.D. ordinance, evaluation and quality of research work. In this paper an attempt has been made to focus some of the policy prospective (Selection and Admission Procedure) envisaged in the UGC Ph.D Regulation 2009 and what extent is being followed by the selected Central and State Universities of Central India (Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh). Authors also present the recent scenario of research in higher education in India and also identify the key challenges that India's higher education sector is facing in the field of research.

Objective of the Study –

To study the selection and admission procedure for admission in doctoral programmes operated as per UGC 2009 Ph.D. Regulation in Central and State Universities of Central India.

Methodology – In order to carry out the study descriptive survey method was used.

Central and State universities of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh which offers the Doctoral Degree Programmes (Ph.D.) as per UGC 2009 Ph.D. regulation were considered for the present study. Universities were identified from the official website of University Grants Commission (www.ugc.ac.in). Universities concerned with the professional studies (Medical, Technical, Agriculture, Law, Music, Journalism, Special courses) and Open Universities were not included in this domain of study. Ten State Universities (seven in Madhya Pradesh and three in Chhattisgarh) and three Central Universities (two in Madhya Pradesh and one in Chhattisgarh) were enlisted in preliminary stage. Out of which four Universities were considered for this study. 128 research scholars and 64 supervisors from these Universities were selected as a sample for study. The study was carried out based on primary sources of data. List of four Universities along with their nature and locations are given in table no 1:

Table 1 -Sample-Distribution

Serial No.	Name of the University	State	Type of the University	Sample Taken		Total
				Research-Scholar	Supervisor	
1	Central University 1 (CU1)	Chhattisgarh	Central	32	16	48
2	State University (SU1)	Chhattisgarh	State	32	16	48
3	Central University 2 (CU2)	Madhya Pradesh	Central	32	16	48
4	State University 2 (SU2)	Madhya Pradesh	State	32	16	48
Total	04	04		128	64	192

The name of the Universities, Departments, Research-Scholars and Supervisors are not disclosed in order to maintain the research ethics.

Delimitations of the Study –

- Central and State Universities established in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as a part of Central India.
- Research work of the concerned Universities.
- Ph.D. scholars who were enrolled as per UGC regulation from 2009 onwards in Pre Ph.D. course work.
- Selection and Admission Procedure as per UGC Ph.D. 2009 Regulation (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Awards of M.Phil. / Ph.D. Degree Regulation).

Tool - Prior to designing the tools, the Ph.D. norms prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and Quality norms set by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) were analysed. Based on the Parameters suggested by UGC and NAAC, two separate self made tools named as PPIQS and PPIQR were constructed and used for supervisors and research scholars respectively. In addition to this semi structured interview schedule had also been prepared and used for the research scholars of the concerned Universities to collect in-depth information. UGC (2009) Regulation and Research ordinances of the concerned Universities were also taken in account during the study.

Results and Discussions- There were twenty-four items for research scholars (item number 1 to 24) and two items (item number 1 and 2) for supervisors. The item wise analyses are presented in following tables:

(D = Department, CU I = Central University One, CU II = Central University Two, SU I = State University One, SU II = State University Two)

Item 3 – Provision of interview after entrance test.

Item 5- Admission in Ph.D. course based on entrance examination followed by interview (entrance examination+ interview).

Table 2
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 3 and 5

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Yes	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (128)	96 Respondents or 75% of total – Yes 32 Respondents or 25 % of total -No															

Item 2 - Provision of interview after entrance test.

Table 3
Responses of Supervisors for Item No. 2

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (04)	D2 (04)	D3 (04)	D4 (04)	D1 (04)	D2 (04)	D3 (04)	D4 (04)	D 1 (04)	D 2 (04)	D 3 (04)	D 4 (04)	D 1 (04)	D2 (04)	D3 (04)	D4 (04)
Yes	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total (64)	48 Respondents or 75 % of total – Yes 16 Respondents or 25 % of total - No															

Item 6 - Language Ph.D. entrance test question paper.

Table 4
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 6

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Only Hindi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Only English	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
Bilingual	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-
Total (128)	64 Respondents or 50% - English (Belongs to Science Stream) 64 Respondents or 50% - Hindi (Belongs to Social Science Stream)															

Item 8 – Questions asked in entrance examination.

Table 5
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 8

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Only Subjective	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Only Objective	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Subjective + Objective Both	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Total (128)	96 Respondents or 75% - Only Objective 32 Respondents or 25% - Subjective + Objective Both															

Item 10 - Declaration of Ph.D. entrance examination result.

Table 6
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 10

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
16 days to 1 Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Months	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
3 Months	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 7
Responses of Research Scholars in Percentage For Item No. 10

Parameters ↓	Number of respondents	Responses in Percentage
Within 15 days	24	18.75%
16 days to 1 month (30 days)	48	37.5%
2 months	32	25%
3 months	24	18.75%
Total	128	100%

Item 11 –Advertisement of Ph.D. programmes/courses by the University.

Table 8
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 11

University → Streams →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/Soci al Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Only through News- paper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Only through Internet	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Through both (News- paper and Internet)	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total (128)	64 Respondents or 50% - Only through internet 64 Respondents or 50% - Through both (Newspaper and internet)															

Item 12 - Call letter from University (Department) before getting admission in Ph.D. programme?

Table 09
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 12

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science e		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Yes	05	06	07	06	07	05	04	05	06	04	03	04	05	04	05	06
No	03	02	01	02	01	03	04	03	02	04	05	04	03	04	03	02
Total (128)	82 Respondents or 64.06% - Yes 46 Respondents or 35.93% -No															

14. Duration of Ph.D. entrance examination was (in hrs.).

Table 10
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 14

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Two Hours	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Three Hours	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total (128)	96 Respondents or 75% - Two Hours 32 Respondents or 25% - Three Hours															

16. Time taken by the University for counseling.

Table 11
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 16

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Soci al Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science	
Departments → Number of Respondents →	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
16 days to 1 Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Months	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
3 Months	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-

19. Fee for Ph.D. entrance examination.

Table 12
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 19

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/So cial Science		Science		Arts/Soc ial Science		Science	
Departments→ Number of Respondents→	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D 2 (08)	D 3 (08)	D 4 (08)	D 1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Amount (Rs.)	300 to 600				480 to 930				300 to 600				600 to 1000			

20. Fee after selection in Ph.D. programme.

Table 13
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 20

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science	
Departments→ Number of Respondents→	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Amount (Rs.)	7100 to 8050		9000 to 10000		4980 to 5970				5000 to 7000		7000 to 8500		10000			

23. Frequency of fee submission during study period.

Table 14
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 23

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science	
Departments→ Number of Respondents→	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Annually	04	04	08	08	-	-	-	-	05	-	-	04	-	04	-	-
Bi-annually	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Semester wise	04	04	-	-	08	08	08	08	03	08	08	04	08	04	08	08
Total (128)	91 respondents or 71.09% - Semester wise 37 respondents or 28.9% - Annually															

24. Proportion/ratio of students called for counseling/admission.

Table 15
Responses of Research Scholars for Item No. 24

University →	CU I				CU II				SU I				SU II			
	Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science		Arts/Social Science		Science	
Departments→ Number of Respondents→	D1 1 (08)	D2 2 (08)	D3 3 (08)	D4 4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)	D1 (08)	D2 (08)	D3 (08)	D4 (08)
Proportion/Ratio of student	1:3 (4)	1:2 (2)	1:1 (3)	1:1 (2)	1:5 (1)	1:5 (4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1:3 (2)	-	1:1 (1)
No Answer	4	6	5	6	7	4	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	8	7
Percentage of Responses	109 Respondent or 85.16% did not answered 19 Respondent or 14.84% answered															

Items in which variations were not found listed in table 16.

Table 16
Responses for Different Items

Universities

S.No.	Item no.	Items	Respondents	Total no. of Respondents	CU I	CU II	SU I	SU II
1	1	Any admission policy for Ph.D. programmes in your institution	Research-Scholars	128	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	2	Conduction of Entrance test for admission in Ph.D. programmes	Research-Scholars	128	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	1	Conduction of Entrance test for admission in Ph.D. programmes	Supervisors	64	Y	Y	Y	Y
4	4	Admission in Ph.D. course based on the marks obtained in the last qualifying examination	Research-Scholars	128	N	N	N	N
5	7	Number of questions asked in Ph.D. entrance examination	Research-Scholars	128	100	100	100	100
6	9	Any provision of negative marking	Research-Scholars	128	N	N	N	N

7	13	Any criteria adopted by the University for Admission of students apart from reservation policy	Research-Scholars	128	N	N	N	N
8	15	Media for declaration of entrance examination result	Research-Scholars	128	Only through Internet	Only through Internet	Only through Internet	Only through Internet
9	17	Entrance test was conducted on Institutional (University) Level, State Level or National level	Research-Scholars	128	National Level	National Level	National Level	National Level
10	18	Centre's for entrance examination	Research-Scholars	128	Within own Uni. Campus	Within own Uni. Campus	Within own Uni. Campus	Within own Uni. Campus
11	21	Mode for submission of Ph.D. entrance examination fee	Research-Scholars	128	Challan	Challan	Challan	Challan
12	22	Mode for submission of tuition fee	Research-Scholars	128	Challan	Challan	Challan	Challan

(Y=Yes, N=No)

Selection and Admission Procedure in UGC Regulation 2009 and in University Ordinances-

Information on the selection and admission procedure was also collected from official records of departments, Research ordinances of the respective Universities and UGC Ph.D. Regulation 2009.

University Grants Commission (2009) Regulation –

- All Universities, Institutions, Deemed to be Universities and Colleges/Institutions of National Importance shall admit M.Phil./Doctoral students through an Entrance Test conducted at the level of individual University, Institution, Deemed to be university, College/Institution of National Importance. The University may decide separate terms and conditions for those students who qualify (UGC)/CSIR(JRF) Examination/SLET/GATE/Teacher fellowship holder or have passed M.Phil. Programme for Ph.D. entrance test. Similar approach may be adopted in respect of Entrance Test for M.Phil. Programme.
- It shall be followed by an interview to be organized by the School/Department/Institution/University as the case may be.
- At the time of the interview, doctoral candidates are expected to discuss their research interest/area.

- Only the predetermined number of students may be admitted to M.Phil./Ph.D. programme.
- The admission to the Ph.D. Programme would be either directly or through M.Phil. Programmes.
- While granting admission to students to M.Phil./Ph.D. the Department/Institutes/School will pay due attention to the National/State Reservation policy.

Central University One (CU I) –

As per the Central University One regulation for the admission in Doctoral of Philosophy it revealed that, eligibility for the admission to the Ph.D. programmes may be reviewed from time to time by the concerning faculty and approved by the Academic Council. University conduct entrance test for the admission which is referred as Vishwavidyalaya Research Entrance Test (VRET). As far as possible VRET candidates should be 75 % and VRET exempted category candidates 25 %. In the case VRET exempted category candidates are not available, seats may be filled by VRET category. University Ordinance is silent about the Provision of Interview, language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam), type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee. The only documented information source is Ph.D. admission brochure.

Central University Two (CU II) –

As per the official records of Central University two, there is a provision of Admission through Ph.D. Written Test followed by interview (Interview shall comprise of 20 marks) of oral examination qualified candidates only. As per ordinance, admission to the Ph.D. {after referred as Research Degree, (RD)} programme shall be based on the common criteria and all applicants seeking admission to a Ph.D. programme shall be required to appear and qualify in the Entrance Test (ET) conducted by the University. Subject to the fulfillment of the minimum cut-off marks obtained in Entrance test as prescribed from time to time by the University, candidates shall be called for Personal Interview (PI) strictly on the basis of merit in Entrance Test. There shall be a relaxation of 5% of marks in the minimum cut off marks obtained in the Entrance Test for SC and ST candidate. At the time of interview, doctoral candidate are expected to discuss their research interest. Subject to the fulfillment of the minimum cut off as qualifying marks as a prescribed from time to time by the University, final selection for admission shall be made on the basis of the merit of the composite score (marks of ET & PI). The candidates who qualify UGC/CSIR JRF/NET Examination/ Teacher fellowship holder shall be exempted from entrance test. The number of candidates to be admitted through the Entrance Test and those Exempted from Entrance Test for each academic session shall be decided by the concerned Board of Studies well in advance and notified in the Admission Brochure for Ph.D. Only the predetermined number of students may be admitted to Ph.D. programme. A candidate who has been awarded a Ph.D. degree of this University, in a subject, shall not be permitted for admission in the same subject again. However, such a candidate may apply for admission in any other or interdisciplinary subject.

Admission through interview only for candidates exempted from Written Test. The NET-LS and non-fellowship holders shall be admitted through written test followed by an interview of eligible candidates. Written test shall comprise of 200 marks (100 MCQ questions) and an interview of 20 marks. Candidates securing 100 and above 100 marks (in case of General candidates) and 90 marks and above 90 marks (in case of SC / ST candidates) shall only be considered qualified and called for the interview of 20 marks. There are separate criteria for exempted category. In

University Ordinance, no such details regarding the language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam), type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee are available.

State University One (SU I) –

As per the ordinance of Ph.D. programme of State University one stated that the candidates will be admitted to the Ph.D. programme through an entrance test which to be conducted once in a year, preferably in October by the university. The modalities of the test shall be decided by the university. Candidates provisionally admitted to the programme through an entrance test will be awarded with university fellowship depending their availability. Candidates, who qualify (UGC)-CSIR(JRF) examination, including NET lectureship /SLET/GATE/or any other JRF examination conducted by national agencies, such ICMR,ICSSR etc. or candidates possessing M.Phil. Degree from a recognized university or teacher fellowship holder and university/college teacher holding a regular position (regular appointment) and having completed two years of service as teacher in a department or affiliated colleges of the university are exempted from appearing at the entrance test. An eligible candidate must apply for registration for Ph.D. degree of his/her subject on the prescribed fee. The application shall be considered by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) of the concerned schools/departments/affiliated colleges. Ordinance also reveal that while granting provisional admission to candidates to Ph.D. programme the Departmental Research Committee will pay due attention to the National/State reservation policy. University Ordinance is silent about language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam), type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee. The only documented information source is Ph.D. admission brochure.

State University Two (SU II) –

According to State University Two Ordinance Candidates shall be generally admitted through an entrance test followed by an interview. The candidates who qualify (UGC)/CSIR(JRF) Examination/SLET/GATE/Teacher fellowship holder shall be exempted from entrance test. However they have to appear in the interview. Provided that 20% seats of each subject shall be reserved for the above categories, however, other students may be considered if sufficient number of students belonging to above categories is not available. Candidate shall be admitted through the Entrance Test, which shall be conducted for each subject separately at the University ordinarily in the Month of August. University Ordinances mentioned nothing about type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee. University Ordinance is silent about language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam). The only documented information source for this is Ph.D. admission brochure.

Objective of the study is – “To study the selection and admission procedure for admission in doctoral programmes operated as per UGC 2009 Ph.D. Regulation in Central and State Universities of Central India.”

In this regard, **Uniformity** was seen in following parameters –

- All Universities have their own admission policy.
- In this policy there is a provision of entrance test for admission in Ph.D. programmes and all Central and State Universities included in the study, irrespective of their type conducted entrance test for admission in Ph.D. programmes.
- All Universities conducted a national level test within own University campus (centres for entrance examination are available only in concerned university).

- There is no variation in number of questions asked in entrance examination. The number of questions asked in Ph.D. entrance examination is 100 in different universities.
- None of the University admits research scholars on the basis of marks obtained in the last qualifying examination (Post Graduation). Official records of the departments revealed that in all Universities the marks of post-graduation taken into consideration only when two students get same marks in Ph.D. entrance examination.
- It is confirmed from the research scholars responses and official records of academic division of Universities that all department/institutes/school pay due attention to the National/State Reservation policy.
- The mode of submission of entrance examination fee and tuition fee is in form of Challan only.
- There is no negative marking in making the question wrong in Universities during the entrance test. None of the University follows the provision of negative marking.
- Entrance examination result is declared / published only through the Internet (University Website).

Variations found in following parameters –

- Although all Universities conducted a national level test within own University campus but there is differences in terms of;
 - Language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper
 - Duration of test (exam); duration of entrance examination varies from 2 hours to 3 hours
 - Type of questions (objective, subjective or both)
 - Weightage of each question
 - Fee charged for Ph.D. entrance examination
 - Fee charged after selection in Ph.D. programmes
- Provision of interview after entrance test
- Time to prepare results of Ph.D. entrance examination
- Media for advertisement of Ph.D. programmes/courses
- Receiving of call letters before getting admission in Ph.D. programme
- Media for declaration of entrance examination results
- Time to organise counselling/interview
- Frequency of fee submission during study period
- Proportion/Ratio of students called for counselling

Admission Policy - In this study all Universities (100%) showed that they have their own admission policy. This policy is not uniform. Noticeable difference is found between State and Central universities in terms of admission policy. It is mandatory for Universities to follow UGC regulation and additional terms and conditions to be decided by the University that is why there is no uniformity and different patterns are followed in different Universities. Similar finding was reported by **Pani (2009)**, aimed to compare the Operation Aspects of Institutions of Higher Education for Determining Quality Measures.

Provision of Entrance test – According to UGC regulation 2009 “All Universities, Institutions, Deemed to be Universities and Colleges/Institutions of National Importance shall admit M.Phil./ Doctoral students through an entrance test conducted at the level of individual University, Institution, Deemed to be university, College/Institution of National Importance. The University

may decide separate terms and conditions for those students who qualify (UGC)/CSIR(JRF) Examination/SLET/GATE/Teacher fellowship holder or have passed M.Phil. Programme for Ph.D. entrance test. Similar approach may be adopted in respect of Entrance Test for M.Phil. Programme. “

Data obtained from questionnaire and from University ordinances revealed that Central and State Universities, irrespective of their type conducted entrance test for admission in Ph.D. programmes. These Universities of Central India followed the provision of entrance test according to UGC Regulation 2009 and conducted Entrance Examination for admission in doctoral programmes. Separate terms and conditions found in different Universities of Central India for UGC/NET/CSIR/JRF qualified candidates.

A study conducted by **Pani (2009)** aimed to examine the operational aspects of Institutions of Higher Education found that in the year 2009 when the UGC regulation came into the action there were no uniformity in the selection and admission procedure in the institutions. According to him there was less number of Universities/institution at that time where provision of entrance test was followed. This finding contradicted the finding of present study. Finding of this parameter is also contradicted by **Pathania and Pathak (2014)**, **Patil and Saluke (2012)**, **Singh and Desai (2010)**. According to them only few Universities conducted Entrance test in a proper manner for admission in Ph.D. programme.

National Level Test within own University Campus – According to UGC Regulation 2009 “Entrance test conducted at the level of individual University”. Data obtained from questionnaire and from University ordinances revealed that all Universities of Central India included in this study conducted entrance test at Individual University level according to UGC regulation 2009. National level test was conducted at own University campus.

It is evident from the official records of the State Universities that “Within own University campus” such type of limitation mostly attracts the local students. Many deserving candidates do not apply for the exam due to the limitation of time and place. In the era of technological advancement, it is again advisable to introduce online examination pattern to increase student reach and save their time.

Although all Universities conducted a National level test within own University campus (centres for entrance examination are available only in concerned university) but the pattern of entrance examination is found to be varying from department to department within a university. There is differences in terms of language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam) , type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee. Similar findings were reported by **Padhi (2015)**, **Pathania and Pathak (2014)**, **Patil and Saluke (2012)**, **Singh and Desai (2010)**, **Pani (2009)**.

Similarities exist in terms of no preference of negative marking, number of questions asked, no preference of marks obtained in the last qualifying examination (Post Graduation), and pay due attention to the National/State Reservation policy, mode of submission of entrance examination fee and tuition fee. Similar findings were reported by **Pani (2009)** with reference to attention to the National/State Reservation policy and contradicted with reference to marks obtained in the last qualifying examination (Post Graduation).

UGC regulation 2009 is silent about the pattern of entrance examination. Even in University Ordinances nothing mentioned about this regard. Pattern of exam varies in terms of language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam), type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee. Only State University

Two (SU II, Madhya Pradesh) mentioned about the duration of test (exam), type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question. No other University Ordinances mentioned about the language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper and entrance examination fee. The only documented information source is Ph.D. admission brochure.

Language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper – Data obtained from questionnaire revealed that question paper for Ph.D. entrance test is in both hindi and english language in arts/social Science streams in contrast to science stream where it is in english only. Very less number of research scholars from science streams reported that they were not familiar with english face problem in adjusting to english medium of instruction in question paper. They also had difficulty in understanding the exact nature of question asked in entrance examination. In interview, one of the science stream research scholars said that “the language of question paper was english, it is difficult for hindi medium students to attempt questions in language which one have no commands.” Another problem that not much study material is available in hindi especially in science stream. In other words, hindi medium school and college students found it difficult to switch to english language. According to them even there is no logic in expecting hindi medium students to write thesis in english. It is advisable to provide question paper in both hindi and english to increase the understanding and efficiency of a hard working student.

Duration of test (examination) – Data obtained through questionnaire revealed that duration of entrance examination for admission in Ph.D. courses is two hours except one state university where the duration is of three hours. In other words, Out of 128 research scholars approximately 75 percent have the duration of 2 hours and remaining 25 percent have the duration of 3 hours in entrance examination. No student mentions any discomfort regarding duration of entrance examination. UGC has given freedom to University to decide the duration of examination.

Type of questions (objective, subjective or both) – Data obtained through questionnaire showed that only objective questions were asked in three out of four Universities. However both the type of questions, i.e. subjective as well as objective questions were asked in only one State University for Ph.D. entrance examination. In Central Universities including one of the State Universities, objective type questions are asked with multiple choice options but in one of the State University thirty objective type and eight subjective type questions are asked.

One Ph.D. scholar needs to understand, analyze and infer the information appropriately. One needs to manage multiple tasks while perusing Ph.D. that is why it is better to have both objective and subjective question paper to access their knowledge. Research Scholar also needs to recognize research problems, critical thinking, knows current work in field, critical reviewing, documenting and reporting. For effective management of their knowledge, it is better to have subjective and objective questions both. Subjective questions are more challenging, it evaluate the research scholar’s ability to form an opinion and capacity to express themselves in their own words. To attempt subjective questions one need to dwell deep into the subject. In contrast objective questions are pin pointed and judge their focused response to one correct answer. It is better to include both subjective and objective questions for more appropriate preparation for Ph.D. they have to pursue.

Fee prescribed for Entrance examination and Fee prescribed after selection in Ph.D. programmes – It is observed that the entrance examination fee is higher in Madhya Pradesh (CU II and SU II) as compared to Chhattisgarh (CU I and SU I). Comparison of Central Universities only showed that fee structure is higher in Madhya Pradesh compared to Chhattisgarh and similar observation is also seen in case of State Universities. It is also observed that there is significant

variation in different Universities in terms of fee charged after selection. Even inter departmental variation exist within one University and the range is Rs. 4980/- to Rs. 10,000/-. In all Universities the Only accepted mode of submission of entrance examination fee and tuition fee was via Challan. Similar finding was reported by **Patthania and Pathak (2014)** in their article entitled “Reforms in Ph.D. Research Work: The New Dimensions in Higher Education.” According to them “Commercialization by way of entrance test fee was yet another serious drawback of conducting entrance examination. The entrance test fee varies from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 1000/-. The fee is obviously non- refundable. Hundreds of students appear for the examination. This has become a good source of income for Universities. “Similar finding was also reported by **Pani (2009)**. That is why one standard guideline in Regulation is must to get uniformity in this regard. Tuition fee is different in different Universities. Adequate fee structure is compulsory to maintain quality education but invariableness or equal tuition fee is not possible because need of one subject differs from other. Only possible option is uniformity or constant fee structure for one particular subject in different universities.

Pattern of examination is also needs to be uniform for uniformity in fees. Only objective question cost more in terms of printing compared to subjective and it is also evident in this study. In State University One (SU I) thirty objective type and eight subjective type questions were asked and the entrance examination fee was Rs. 300/- to Rs. 600/- as compared to the Universities in which only objective questions were asked and the entrance examination fee was Rs. 850/- to Rs. 1000/-.

Provision of interview after entrance test – According to the UGC regulation 2009 “ Entrance test shall be followed by an interview to be organized by the School/Department/Institution/University as the case may be. At the time of the interview, doctoral candidates are expected to discuss their research interest/area. ”

There is difference in responses for provision of interview after entrance test. In case of Central University Two (CU II) and State University Two (SU II), all the departments of all streams conducted interview after entrance examination but in case of Central University One (CU I) and State University One (SU I), only the science streams conducted the interview but none of the Arts/Social science streams follow the provision of interview after entrance test. In terms of percentage out of 128 research scholars approximately 75 percent reported that they have provision of interview after entrance test and remaining 25percent reported that they not have provision of interview after entrance test. Supervisors and research scholars reported that interview is conducted for admission in science stream of all Universities of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. However no such interview is conducted in Arts/Social science streams of all Universities of Chhattisgarh.

Although the University ordinances reported that there was provision of interview after entrance test. Science streams conducted interview after entrance test but Art/Social Science streams of some Universities follow only the provision of entrance test and allot seat to the students based on entrance examination/test marks. This pattern varies from departments to department within one University.

Interview is very important tool to access communication skill of a research scholar but the research scholar reported that entrance test followed by interview was just for formal sake. No proper team of expert was formed and no specified duration for interview was exercised and mostly internal candidate (candidate from same University) or the candidate of supervisor’s choice (as informed by the research scholar) was preferred. Similar finding was reported by **Patthania and Pathak (2014)** in their article entitled “Reforms in Ph.D. Research Work: The

New Dimensions in Higher Education.” Similar finding was also reported by **Patil and Saluke (2012), Singh and Desai (2010), Pani (2009), Agrawal and Agrawal (2013).**

Terms and conditions for interview need to be reframed and exact interview guidelines to be incorporated in UGC regulation. So that the student will be better prepared, less stressed and free to decide further move in his/her career.

Total Number of Questions and weightage of each question- Total number of question asked in all departments of different Universities are same or in other words no variation observed with respect to number of questions asked for Ph.D. entrance examination but there is variation exist in terms of weightage of each question. Central University One (CU I) gives the weightage of two marks for each question. Central University Two (CU II), State University One (SU I) and State University Two (SU II) give the weightage of one mark for each question.

Time to prepare results of Ph.D. entrance examination and Time to organize counseling/interview - UGC regulation 2009 and University ordinances are again silent about time to prepare results of Ph.D. entrance examination and time to organize counseling/interview. Even in admission brochure nothing mentioned in this regard.

There was a wide variation in number of days taken to declare the results of Ph.D. entrance examination. Number of days varies from department to department within one University. The range varies from 15 days to 3 months. The earliest Fifteen days was taken by only one department of Central University One (CU I) and two departments of State University Two (SU II). The longest duration (three months) was taken by three different departments of different State and Central Universities. In the University system approximately 37.5percent research scholars reported that the University declared the result within sixteen days to one month. 25 percent research scholars reported that the University declared the result within two months and 18.75 percent research scholars reported that the University declared the results within fifteen days and within three months. Time to organize counseling/interview was also showed University wise variation, even inter stream variation is seen in one State University of Chhattisgarh. Number of days varies from sixteen days to three months.

In interview one of the research scholars said that “this type of time taking and delayed procedure increases the frustration.” Even in the University Ordinances there is no provision of definite time duration for declaring result. There is need of strict rule of producing results within 15 days for all departments of all Universities and there is also a need of provision of this in University Ordinances. This type of uncommonness keeps students in the state of dilemma. No guidelines are available in UGC regulation (2009) and in University ordinances about time to prepare results and then counseling. Different Universities took different time to prepare results and then organizing counseling.

Media for advertisement of Ph.D. programmes/courses and Media for declaration of entrance examination results–Data revealed that only internet is used as advertising media in two Universities out of which one is Central and other one is State. The remaining two Universities used both newspaper and internet as advertising media. One Central University gives advertisement in the employment news. Approximately 50 percent research scholars reported that the main media for advertising Ph.D. programme was Newspaper and remaining 50 percent reported that the main media for advertising Ph.D. programme was both Newspaper and Internet. Entrance examination result is declared / published only through the Internet (Concerned University Website) in different Universities of Central India.

University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines cleared that all Universities advertise the Ph.D. programmes as much as possible. Mostly the Universities advertise their Ph.D. programmes through both the sources i.e. Newspaper and University Website (Internet). But there are number of Universities which use only internet as a medium of advertisement. India is a country where maximum population concentrated in the villages and inaccessible areas. So, it is essential that all universities advertise their Ph.D. programmes as much as possible via all possible media like Local Newspaper, Internet, Radio and Television etc. Universities in which medium of advertisement is only university website, in these universities mainly the local students or the students who continuously access the university website apply for the Ph.D. programmes. Similar issues are related with the media for declaration of entrance examination result. Similar findings were reported by **Pani (2009)** with reference to Medium for advertisement of Ph.D. programmes/courses.

Receiving of call letters before getting admission in Ph.D. programme - Total 128 research scholars participated in this study. Out of which 64.09% had received call letter and remaining 35.93% had not received the call letter from their departments before getting admission in Ph.D. Programme. Even department wise variation exists in different Universities. Most of the students received call letter from their departments before getting admitted in Ph.D. programme. Some of the students did not get the call letter for admission, but the cause of this is postal delay or remote area location of students because it is evident from the official records of the departments that the departments issued the call letter for all selected students.

Frequency of fee submission during study period - Data obtained from questionnaire showed inter departmental and University wise variation in frequency of fee submission during study period. Approximately 71.09 percent research scholars reported that they submitted fee semester wise whereas 28.9 percent reported that they submitted fee annually. Department wise variation exists in different Universities. UGC 2009 regulation, University Ordinances, Ph.D. Admission Brochure all are quiet in this regard. The only available documented information was official records of the departments.

Proportion/Ratio of students called for counseling - Data obtained from questionnaire showed that only 14.84percent answered about the proportion/ratio of students called for counseling/admission rest 85.16 percent scholars didn't answer. For one seat usually 1 to 5 students were called. Information about the state university one was unavailable.

Reservation Policy –According to UGC regulation 2009 “While granting admission to students to M.Phil./Ph.D. the Department/Institutes/School will pay due attention to the National/State Reservation policy.”

Data revealed that all the University follows reservation policy as per government policy. None of the University follows any other criteria for Admission of students apart from reservation policy. It is confirmed from the research scholars responses and official records of academic division of Universities that all department/institutes/school pay due attention to the National/State Reservation policy. ROSTER is being followed for the admission in the Central Universities. Similar finding was also reported by **Pani (2009)**.

Marks obtained in the last qualifying examination -None of the University admits research scholars on the basis of marks obtained in the last qualifying examination (Post Graduation). Official records of the departments revealed that in all Universities the marks of post-graduation taken on consideration only when two students get equal marks in Ph.D. entrance examination. This finding is contradicted with the finding of **Pani (2009)**. According to him there were number

of Universities/ Institutions which followed the provision of marks obtained in the last qualifying examination for admission in Ph.D. programmes in the year 2009.

Palshikar (2010) in his article “**Quality of Higher Education: Complex Issues, Superficial Solutions**” reported that “new rules on admission to doctoral programmes in Indian Universities will produce a new bureaucratic maze, but are unlikely to ensure production of better quality research.” **Sahu (2012)** highlighted that “As per the regulation, entrance examination is mandatory for Ph.D. aspirant researchers. The entrance test will be followed by an interview where aspirants will discuss their research area. The entrance test followed by interview will definitely help the concerned institutions to understand the level of research aptitude and interest of the candidates. One of the essential elements of improving the quality of research programme is filtering the students through entrance test. Only those candidates, having research aptitude, should be allowed to enroll in Ph.D. “

Patil and Saluke (2012) in their article raised the question that “if the students already passed UGC NET/ JRF exam then why again there is a need for entrance examination? According to him the important question was “will this type of entrance examinations really yield true research scholars or will entrance test improve research quality?” University ordinances revealed the answer of this question that the motive of this exam is actually for those candidates who wish to join Ph.D. without getting selected in UGC NET/JRF. This exam is a good opportunity for such candidates and that’s why there is no provision of entrance test for NET/GATE/SLET/JRF selected candidates. Actually there is need of entrance examination but with uniformity.

Conclusion –

UGC brings new Ph.D. regulation time to time for strengthening the quality of research. Higher education will consist of research, extension and teaching. More quantitative expansion of research centre by setting of new higher education institution without concern for research quality will not lead to achievement of the objective. There is no homogeneity in the rules for selection and admission procedure of students. No doubt that the entrance examination is accomplished but different Universities follow different guidelines for conducting the entrance examination. Although the purpose of UGC in designing this regulation is to making selection and admission procedure more clear, however there are complexities in execution of rules. UGC gives guidelines in regulation for selection and admission procedure in some one or two paragraph. Now, there is total confusion about how to conduct admission test (entrance examination), which steps to follow for selection and admission, how many to select and a variety of questions regarding practical set up and follow up. Pattern of exam varies in terms of language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam), type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee. UGC just given the directions to follow the rules but not provided stepwise process and left the implementation to the Universities. This has caused awaiting questions and problematical procedure. UGC provides authorities to the Universities to change rules at some extent but this “some extent” creates wide gap among University Grants Commission (UGC) regulation, University ordinances and their follow-up by the departments. Moreover, the quality of research suffers.

Implications and Suggestions-

Providing abstract idea or guidelines and leaving many points to the institutions will just like day dream/distance dream to think of regarding the quality research. Policy implication and suggestions may assist to certain extent in this direction for grounded solutions.

- It is very essential that UGC makes stepwise uniform directives for selection and admission procedure in which UGC clarifies everything related to the selection and admission procedure such as how to conduct admission test (entrance examination), which steps to follow for selection and admission, how many to select, language of Ph.D. entrance test question paper, duration of test (exam) , number of questions asked, type of questions (objective, subjective or both), weightage of each question, entrance examination fee etc. Subject wise common entrance test for Ph.D. programmes may be considered as a good decision.
- It is advisable to provide question paper in both Hindi and English to increase the understanding and efficiency of a hard working student.
- It is better to include both subjective and objective questions for more appropriate preparation of Ph.D. they have to pursue.
- Pattern of examination is also needs to be uniform for uniformity in fees. Adequate fee structure is compulsory to maintain quality education but invariableness or equal tuition fee is not possible because need of one subject differs from other. Only possible option is uniformity or constant fee structure for one particular subject in different universities.
- Terms and conditions for interview need to be reframed and exact interview guidelines are needed. So that the student will be better prepared, less stressed and free to decide further move in his/her career.
- There is need of strict rule of producing results within 15 days for all departments of all universities and there is also a need of provision of this in University Ordinances.
- It is essential that all universities advertise their Ph.D. programmes as much as possible via all possible media like Local Newspaper, Internet, and Radio etc.

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