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Good Research Promotes
 Good Teaching

Hema V Raghavan*

The Hon'ble HRD Minister's statement making research optional for college teachers puts paid to any semblance of quality improvement in Higher Education. The only silver lining is that it is a Minister's statement and not one of the Ministry's policy decisions. Maybe his statement is merely to trigger a debate on this subject. His statement addresses two issues—one dealing with academic research by teachers in colleges and the other with grade promotion using the API (Academic Performance Indicator) score that gives weightage to research. The Minister has retained the API score for promotion but given a huge leeway for teachers to dispense with research in their disciplines. It is debatable whether college teachers will rejoice in receiving this largesse from the Minister or feel a sense of humiliation, loss of esteem and unworthiness that the universities have no value for research undertaken by them and that they are inferior to their counterparts at the university.

It is difficult to understand the rationale behind this statement especially at a time when higher education is in deep crisis today. The quality and standard of higher education is far below the standard of world top universities and the number of high standard research papers from our universities is pathetically negligible. There have been incessant discussions about the strategies needed to raise the bar to make our universities come closer to world class universities. But no visible improvement has taken place despite the innumerable recommendations given by committee after committee, set up by the HRD Ministry and UGC to improve the quality of input and output in our universities. It is ironical why now no committee has been formed to analyze why all these strategies have not yielded the desired result and why all the Ministry's men and women and all the UGC's men and women could not put universities back on its rail. But it is not a rocket science to know why our universities are on a steady and at times alarmingly steep decline.

- i. The strategies that are being mooted are not by college and university teachers. The university and the colleges get instructions from the UGC which functions as His Masters Voice of the HRD Ministry. It is only the wearer who knows where the shoe pinches. The teachers know what impedes institutional progress and what remedies are needed to overcome them. To set our house in order, we need the family members to deliberate the problems. How can members sitting in their air-conditioned rooms far away from the University and college campuses, appreciate the problems both of the teacher and the taught?
- ii. The political correctness has made our politicians and leaders promise to open the university portals to all who desire to enter these hallowed gates. But who has the daring to limit the university

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