



SPARK: SKILL BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & RESEARCH BASED KNOWLEDGE- APPROACH FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT There has to be an immediate adjustment in the process used to evaluate students at higher education institutions. In the majority of institutions, evaluation of students is still done at the conclusion of the academic year using a single standardised exam. Students are evaluated on the basis of this single test for their subject knowledge and conceptual clarity, and they are then given a mark sheet and certificate to use when applying for jobs. The Ratta method was given more weight in the Indian examination system, which is a fundamental flaw that requires immediate remedy. Since complete educational objectives like comprehension, critical and independent thinking, creativity, problem-solving ability, reflective thinking, skill development, and application of information in real life are overlooked, the memorising of content takes precedence. Numerous educational committees have drawn attention to this flaw. Examinees' anxiety and fear are further exacerbated by the "Ratta system," and occasionally this anxiety results in the usage of unfair test practises. Cramming is encouraged as a way to gain better grades across the Indian examination system, which leads to a pressured environment. This paper focuses on the application of such an assessment approach of student which is free from rote memorization and emphasises conceptual understanding, skill development and knowledge gained through search and analysis.

KEYWORDS : SPARK, Approach, Quality, Higher Education

Introduction: India, the second-most populated nation in the world, has a large proportion of young people. Through an idealistic educational system, this young population may be used to advance the general welfare and wealth of the country. The overall goal of education is to develop in people the capacity to be more responsible, productive, and to have a critical awareness of social, economic, and political issues. Students develop their ability to assess their experiences, critically evaluate numerous facets of life, and develop their independence of thought via the educational process. In the proper path of education, people's knowledge, abilities, and attitudes should be changed. The present higher education curriculum needs to be enriched by adding skill based activities and research oriented knowledge. And to evaluate this alteration, thorough assessment and examination techniques should be used.

NEP 2020 suggestions – Research oriented and skill development based curriculum

World has observing a rapid scientific and technological advancement including big data, machine learning, AI etc., many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines. Diversified skilled workforce with multidisciplinary abilities will be in greater demand.

Growing emergence of epidemics and pandemics, call for collaborative research and knowledge sharing at global level. Thus, research skills to be developed in the students of higher education institutes. Most importantly a balanced professional attitude to be developed which will be helpful in maintaining a balanced life and an appropriate professional attitude. Appropriate professional attitude is needed for developing and maintaining healthy relationship with colleagues, superiors and thus developing a healthy working environment. In the nutshell quality of higher education can be enhanced by working more on holistic development of student.

For a holistic development of a student, curriculum should be enriched with life skill and professional attitude components. Professional skill development includes:



Fig 1: Major Professional Skill development areas

Developing critical life skills include - financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and education and family welfare. (NEP_Final_English-Pdf)

Importance of assessment of professional skills of students

Students will become job- or future-ready through skill-based assessment in college or after graduation. Essential life skills like imaginative thinking and excellent communication may provide people a path to be productive even if they are dropouts. Additionally, a teacher's review or the student's own assessment might aid in the student's self-evaluation. Skill-based assessment data is used to provide instructors and parents with comprehensive feedback on a student's general strengths and weaknesses.

Defects in present Higher education examination system in India

The college's evaluation has thus far been based on the grades received on written tests. The true potential of a pupil can also reside in the skill set that person possesses. The identification of a student's natural ability can be aided by a gradual transition toward skill-based examinations. (Nagra, 2020)

College exams can be changed by updating the curriculum or syllabi to include knowledge that might aid freshmen in making the best choices for themselves. This may be accomplished by incorporating skill-based learning into college curricula, such as effective oral and written communication, presenting skills, digital marketing, designing, critical thinking and problem-solving, learning new languages, etc. All of this can be accomplished while maintaining the core curriculum and giving students the choice of studying or learning practical skills.

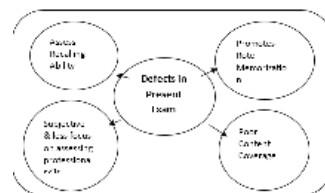


Fig. 2: Major drawbacks of present higher education examination system

SPARK: An effective assessment approach for assessing skills of students

The higher education examination system needs to be redesign to assess the holistic development of an individual. The blue print suggested by the researcher is based on SPARK model. Skill based Performance Assessment and Research based Knowledge is the suggested based on the need of NEP 2020 curriculum and Skill force required for country's development – economical and social.

The post graduate programs running in the universities have research as one of the course either in the form of the project or in the form of dissertation or both. But at graduate level many universities are lagging behind as far as the research oriented content is concerned. Simply speaking, research element is missing at the graduation level. Even if it is present in few curriculum then also the assessment approach is not appropriate to enhance the research ability.

It is strongly advised that the Indian exam system be immediately updated. The National Education Strategy, a recent policy, has recommended some examination system reform, however India needs to reorganise its testing system to achieve flexibility and to lower exam-related stress among students. The goal of examination system improvements should be to reduce the stress of exams on students and their parents. The test process has to be more all-encompassing, humane, and real so that students may learn from them. (Jain, 2020)

At graduation level the curriculum should be enriched with the components of critical life skills, professional skills and understanding of research basics. The focus should be on assessing these skills in the form of more activity and less paper pen based exam system. And to improve quality of higher education institutions in term of the productive individual, there must be a balanced blue print of assessment (Ismail et al., 2020). Thus, an effective blue print for assessing these skills can be categorized as:

- Content Based
- Skill Based
- Research Based

Content based assessment: It can be done through examination

question paper which is based on

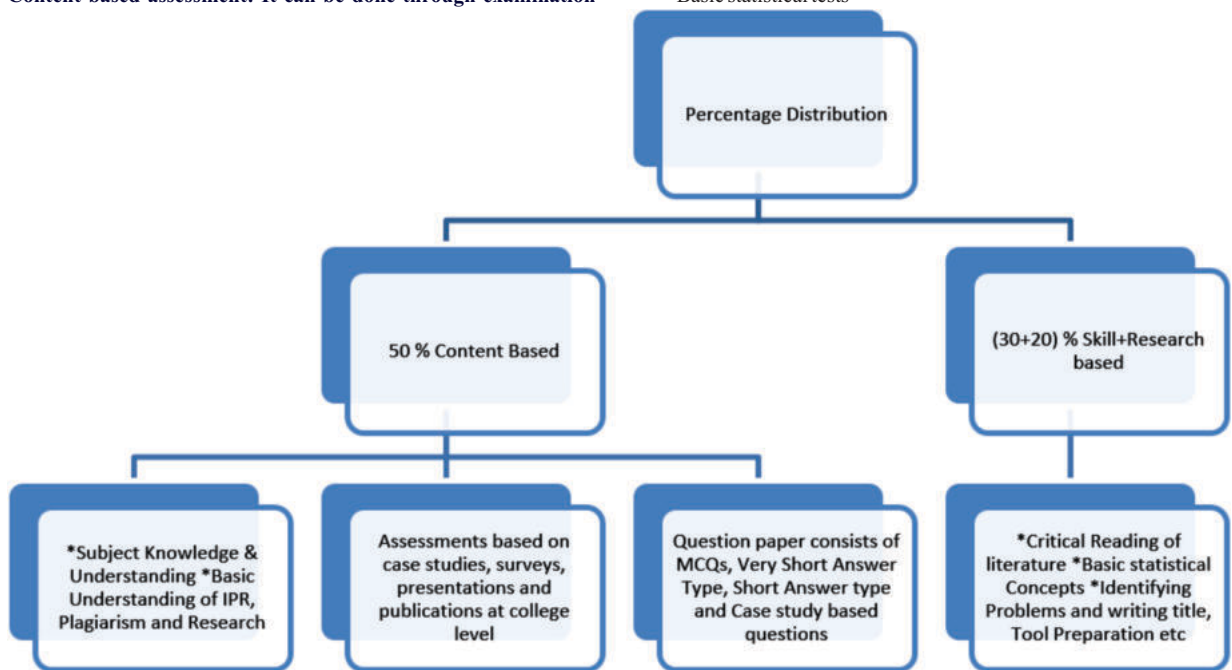
- Understanding of the content
- Application based
- Case study based
- Understanding of IPR
- Fundamentals of Research

Skill based assessment: Skill based assessment comprise of assessment through activities such as

- Field work
- Team work management
- Community work
- Presentations on current topic
- Leadership games

Research based assessment: Research based assessment to be based on

- Searching ability
- Critical reading of the literature
- Problem identification
- Writing research objectives and research questions
- Basic statistical tests



CONCLUSION:

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020) has brought in a new era of skill-based assessment and research-oriented knowledge. This means that students will now be assessed based on their skills and abilities rather than just the traditional rote learning methods. The focus is now on developing critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation and research capabilities among students. With this shift in emphasis, it is expected that there will be an increased emphasis on research-based activities such as field trips, internships and projects. These activities will help students to gain practical knowledge and develop their skills which can be applied in their future endeavors.

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