

village inhabited by the Chakma tribes. Herds of cattle were seen grazing on this river bank and some people were seen fishing in the area. Such disturbances add pressure on this critically endangered bird in Namdapha. Hunting of this bird is not recorded in this area. But if that happens, it would definitely affect the species to a large extent.

Protection and conservation of the species is now important due to declining global populations. Therefore, the Forest Department has to conduct additional awareness programmes every year. A campaign to conserve the critically endangered *A. insignis* has to be started

involving local people by educating them about the importance of the bird species and how it can promote ecotourism as well. Also, care should be taken by the Forest Department in preventing grazing and fishing in the areas where the Heron is sighted in NNP.

1. BirdLife International 2011, *Ardea insignis*. In IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Version 2011.2; www.iucnred-list.org, downloaded on 6 February 2012.
2. *Threatened Birds of Asia: The BirdLife International Red Data Book*, BirdLife International, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 137–145.

3. Srinivasan, U., Dalvi, S., Rohit, N., Anand, M. O. and Datta, A., *Forktail*, 2010, **26**, 108–132.

C. MURALI KRISHNA
PARIMAL C. RAY
KULADIP SARMA
AWADHESH KUMAR*

*Wildlife Resource and Conservation Lab,
Department of Forestry,
North Eastern Regional Institute of
Science and Technology,
Nirjuli 791 109, India
e-mail: tpileatus@gmail.com

Research-friendly doctoral registration

Prior to the guidelines issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi in 2009, each university followed its independent set of rules and regulations to register a research scholar after evaluation and approval by the Research Degree Committee (RDC). The candidate is also required to qualify subject-related courses besides learning research methodology and laboratory work, followed by a presentation. Some universities even had provision for one-year MPhil degree programme – a prerequisite of doctoral research. During the MPhil programme, a candidate reviews the literature, and submits a dissertation.

However, according to the UGC norms, a candidate now requires to qualify an entrance exam to be conducted by the universities, pass theory papers, submit a synopsis and thereafter undergo an evaluation by RDC to get an approval for enrolment. For most efficient of the

universities, the process can take a year. The next step would require completion of the thesis, which may take three years and an unspecified time for evaluation and award of the Ph D degree.

Though UGC's present scheme has enabled elimination of less competent candidates, a considerable reduction in doctoral registrations has been observed across India. This can be seen as a major reason for bright students not opting for a career in research. Also, uncertainty prevails about getting a lucrative job after a doctoral degree. The present guidelines may also discourage working professionals from pursuing their research interests on a part-time basis. The new rules demand qualifying in a written entrance and pass theory papers, which becomes impossible without support from their parent organizations.

The current change also fails to provide assurance about quality intake. The

paper-setters will be the ones who supervise and evaluate doctoral work, and not the specialists. To assure quality output from research scholars, participation in seminars, undertaking specialized courses, teaching and supervision, and publications must be made mandatory.

I believe, there is a need to introduce one pan-India evaluation system to replace multiple examinations like GATE, SLET, NET, and entrance exams for MPhil, Ph D, universities' internal research fellowship examination and other fellowships, both to save time and judge the competence of a candidate. The present NET examination pattern can be modified to address the problem.

A. K. BIYANI

*Department of Geology,
D.B.S. (PG) College
Dehradun 248 001, India
e-mail: biyani_ajay@yahoo.com*