

Decline in academia

The quality of teaching has deteriorated over the past several years in our colleges and universities. Reasons for this are many. Earlier, teachers appointed in universities considered teaching as their primary duty. They were hard working and devoted. They used to lay foundation of concepts while taking theory classes and imbibe a sense of skill while doing experiments in practical classes. They also used to create new knowledge through research, but not at the cost of teaching quality. They considered teaching as a mission and not merely a profession. Such teachers were respected by students and people in our society and gained utmost respect. The aim of teaching was to transform the personality of a pupil based on sound moral values along with dissemination of knowledge. Such dedicated teachers are now very few. Some senior professors whose numbers are dwindling still take practical classes as they feel that their experience

is vital and that the same has to be passed on to their students.

A teacher now considers teaching as a profession and not a mission. His sole interest is in only 'finishing' the theory portion by any means. Some even just distribute notes. A teacher is now judged by his research activity and not by teaching skills. He therefore does not want to take practical classes as the same robs him of valuable time from other activities. I have known certain professors who have not taken practical classes for more than ten years. They do not share their experience with students but share the same with their own Research Scholars. The experts in selection committees too are interested in knowing about research activities rather than about innate teaching qualities. I am not against research as it improves teaching quality. The deterioration comes when one is involved more in research and does not want to take classes. Some others enjoy

administrative positions in our universities and they also do not like to take practical classes. They proudly state that they are busy and have to attend so many important meetings with important people. The remedy is to stop over-emphasis on research. All faculty members should be asked to take theory as well as some practical classes. The vice-chancellors should consider teaching experience and role before offering an administrative position to a faculty. If strong measures are not taken to rectify this, some senior faculty may avoid taking theory classes also in future in the name of administrative duties and research.

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Scopus™ has wider scope than Science Citation Index

The write-up, 'Research papers from non-SCI journals can be indexed in SCIT¹ makes an important point. However, any analysis based on Science Citation Index (SCI) should always mention the version used as for example 2000 CD/print edition of SCI has 10 Indian journals² and its web version called Expanded version (via Web of Science through Internet) has 51 journals

from India³ (Table 1). More importantly, the coverage of papers from India is also more (about 30% or so during 1987–2000) in the web version⁴.

Interestingly, Dash¹ concludes optimistically that Elsevier is currently developing a bibliographic database including citation called Scopus™, which includes more Indian biomedical journals for source items. In fact, this new database Scopus™ covers a total of 13,890 titles including 168 titles from India, the highest ever by any international alerting service from India⁵ (Table 1). Therefore, one needs to evaluate these titles, especially their inclusion criteria vis-a-vis peer-reviewed and punctuality aspects in particular, before arriving at any firm conclusion.

1. Science Citation Index 2000 Annual, Guide and List of Source Publications, ISI, Philadelphia, 2001, pp. 142–155.
2. Source Publications for Science Citation Index Expanded/Web with Abstracts, Sci-Search/Online with Abstracts, ISI Thomson Scientific, Philadelphia, 2001, pp. 120–141
3. Satyanarayana, K. and Jain, N. C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2004, **86**, 627–629.
4. <http://www.info.scopus.com/> as accessed on 17 December 2004.

Table 1. Coverage of source items/titles in the SCI and Scopus™

Database	Total titles	Indian titles
SCI, CD/print version ²	3745	10
SCI expanded (via Web of Science) ³	5838	51
Scopus™ ⁵	13,890	168

1. Dash, J. N., *Curr. Sci.*, 2004, **87**, 1496.

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