

fellows of science academies, the academic environment there will become highly transformed and inspiring.

Therefore, the UGC's policy of giving honorarium to fellows of the science academies is good but it should be linked to performance and not to age/superannuation, lest, it hurts the interest of scientists working in state universities who are compelled to retire/superannuate 3–5 years earlier than their counterparts in Central universities/institutes. Consequently, the fellows of the academies

working in the state universities may want to migrate to Central universities at the earliest opportunity to avail five years of extra service and also special honorarium of Rs 15,000 pm in addition to the regular salary. Honest and sincere efforts are needed to attract and retain good scientists in state universities as well as prevent their exodus to Central universities/institutions. Therefore, it is desirable that the clause 3.3 of the UGC guidelines be modified to include INSA/CSIR/DST Senior Scientists, Emeritus

Professors, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, etc., who are actively engaged in research under the incentive scheme. Superannuation per se does not affect one's creativity or performance. Ernst Mayr the renowned evolutionary biologist, published a paper in *Science* when he was 100 years old!

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Yes, scientists also need money, but. . .

I felt amused to read these words: '... The honorarium bill required an undertaking on my part that I would declare this income in my income tax return! On the one hand, the University expects the examiner to give a fair assessment of the thesis, and on the other hand, it suspects that the examiner may not be honest enough to declare the income in his tax return. Needless to say, I declined the offer mentioning the reason explicitly...'¹. Are scientists and university teachers necessarily honest? Without questioning the integrity and conscience of the said author per se, I strongly believe that people in the scientific profession are just as honest or dishonest as in other fields. Appointments in academic institutions are not based on the honesty of prospective candidates. That a person is honest is simply taken for granted, unless we encounter reasons to think otherwise. It is not guaranteed anyway.

During my professional life in a university, I had ample opportunities to see and meet all sorts of people, including those who could be said dishonest on the basis of their activities. Indeed dishonesty has its own variations and degrees. I believe that a reasonably honest man displays honesty in all activities in which he/she is involved. In a university, it is not uncommon to find teachers not attending in time their teaching duties in

a laboratory or a lecture room, and faking entries in students' attendance registers. There exist teachers who conveniently, and without informing concerned authorities, absent themselves from performing invigilation duties in examinations, and indulge in hurried and careless evaluation of answer books. Evaluation of doctoral theses is also not always fair and objective. Caste considerations, political influence, personal relations, etc. are known to play an important role in academic appointments and promotions. Perhaps no institution can boast of being free from unethical practices like plagiarism and misappropriation of research funds. One can mention similar other possibilities.

Some organizations routinely advise one to make a declaration of a remuneration for an extra work in the tax return. Perhaps such declarations do not serve a useful purpose. One could argue that tax-related issues should be left to the individuals; nevertheless each organization has its own arguments to continue with such formalities. My university had adopted the policy of explicitly showing examination remuneration paid to its teachers in the salary income certificate. Similarly, entitlement to leave travel concession required one to submit proof of train/bus travel. Honesty is not presumed in these cases. Perhaps hardly

anybody feels offended by these practices, even though they prove inconvenient.

The author also argues that academic people must be paid good remunerations commensurate with their status¹. A question that I would like to ask is whether one should accept an assignment only if it brings money or other equivalent material benefits. Is it possible for them to offer, at least sometimes, a free service to individuals and to organizations, hoping that that would be an indirect service to the society? The same issue of *Current Science*² carried an altruism-related article, bearing these words: '... there are real experts who are willing to share their knowledge and time gratis to educate others. It is this group of altruistic people (GAP)...'. Indeed there is a remarkable variation in our attitudes.

1. Dutta Roy, S. C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2009, **96**, 630.
2. Bera, R. K., *Curr. Sci.*, 2009, **96**, 627.

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