**Delay in exam remuneration: A cause of resentment among examiners**

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As per norms of medical universities in India, a student needs to be assessed by different examiners out of which at least half of them need to be external examiners. A student is assessed in both theory and practical by different examiners in university examinations. The internal and external examiners are appointed by university from their panel of examiners. While it is mandatory for internal examiners to accept the examiner-ship, it is elective for external examiners. [1]

Gone are the days when medical teachers would consider it to be a matter of pride in getting appointed for university exams. Today, they take it as a burden or just a formal ritual for the sake of exam completion. What could be the cause of resentment? Is it because of delay in exam remuneration? Is it because of the mode of payment?

Those days, the examiners would be paid travelling and dearness allowance (TA and DA) in cash. Only the incoming fare was from pocket and that was also refunded at the time of completion of exam. It was a pleasure to get the amount in cash on exam completion. But today, the situation is different. The host college invites external examiners for practical examination assuring them of air-conditioned train fare /taxi fare/flight ticket as per university norms. The examiners accept the invitation and arrive for exam on the scheduled day. On completion of exam, the examiners are made to fill forms with bank account details, IFSC code etc. with an assurance that the amount would be credited in their account through NEFT or RTGS in a few days time. The poor examiners are made to purchase exorbitant return tickets also at their own expense.

Days turn into months, months into years and the examiners still keep waiting for the amount in their bank accounts. There are instances where some universities have made payments after one and half to two years. There is no additional interest paid on the financial loss incurred because of the delay. Some universities have kept examiners waiting for years on stretch and the amount was never paid. There are instances where due to exam postponement, natural calamities or other unavoidable circumstances, the examiners had to cancel flight/train tickets and had to bear the cancellation charges from their pockets.

In relation to theory exam, the teachers are invited to prepare question papers. A few examiners are appointed to assess the theory answer books of students. On completion of assessment, as in practical exam, here also, the bank account details of examiners are taken but there is no surety that they will get the remuneration, TA and DA credited to their bank accounts in the stipulated time. There have been mass resignations in various universities by examiners around the world to protest over pay offers. [2]

“A long waiting period” is all that the examiners get in return for their time, money and energy spent in travelling to a distant land. In addition, the examiners sacrifice the comfort of their homes and responsibilities of the family, solely for the purpose of exam. If this is the way examiners are treated, the time is not far off when there would be an acute shortage of external examiners in our medical education. May be, just like “Project tiger” the government will need to start “Project examiners” to get willing external examiners for medical university exams.

**What needs to be done?**

As our Indian government wants all transactions through bank, the examiners can be given at par cheques for their TA, DA and remuneration on the day of completion of exam. At least half of the amount can be given in cash to assist the examiners in their return journey. Another way could be that the host college makes travel and other needy arrangements for the invited external examiners. If the transaction is done through NEFT or RTGS, it should be done on the last day of exam i.e just before the external examiners leave for their homes. This will leave them with a positive opinion about the host college; else, they will give a second thought on accepting examiner-ship for the next exam.

**References:**

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1. University examiners stage mass resignation over pay offer. The Guardian 2016 May 26. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/may/26/professors-resign-as-external-examiners-in-support-of-university-strikes> [Last accessed on Aug 1, 2017]