Office of the Controller of Examinations

Report of a Survey conducted among faculty members on online teaching

After nearly a month of conducting online classes over the Microsoft Teams platform, there was a need to assess the preparedness for conducting end semester examinations, scheduled in May 2020. A faculty survey was conducted on 16th of April, 2020 for this purpose. A total of 30 faculty members participated in the survey.

It was observed that there was a smooth transition into online teaching due to the efforts made by faculty members with able assistance of the IT team. 83.3% of the faculty members who responded to the survey indicated that their curriculum will be completed on time and the remaining needed only one additional week for the same. Nonetheless, it was reported that there were a good number of challenges in online teaching. While there were no reports of lack of access to the necessary hardware, software or internet connections, the quality of connectivity was often a hindrance in the smooth conduct of classes. There were some pedagogical challenges as well. While theory classes were held fairly smoothly, laboratory and field work based content was compromised. The diminished quality of student discussions in classes and inability of instructor to rely on non-verbal cues regarding difficulty faced by students posed a problem in some classes.

At the point in time when this survey was carried out, some faculty members had already carried out some minor assessments/tests through an online mode and every faculty member was preparing for end of semester exams. Given the different types of courses offered at TERI SAS, the challenges faced by faculty in evaluation were different. They were asked to identify the challenges they may have faced or anticipated in conducting assessments in their courses. As shown in the figure below, two-thirds of the faculty members participating in this survey expressed concern about internet connectivity, including possibility of power outages, during the examination. Inability of monitor the students during the examination was a challenge for 18 out 30 respondents. Possibility of malpractices during the examination and inability to prevent communication of students among themselves bothered 12 and 13 respondents respectively.

It was suggested that, wherever possible, faculty member shift to assessments based on term papers, take home assignments and open book examinations. Approval for changing the mode of examination through proper channel was facilitated by the Dean (A). Guidelines for managing internet connectivity and other IT issues were prepared by the Controller of Examinations.

Figure: Number of faculty members who have experienced or were anticipating challenges in conducing assessments/examinations online in April 2020