

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56834

Title: Evaluating the Impact of Reservation on Knowledge Productivity in Indian Higher Education

Recommendation:

Accept as it is
Accept after minor revision
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	...			
Techn. Quality		...		
Clarity		...		
Significance		...		

Reviewer's ID: JPR-180

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The paper titled “Evaluating the Impact of Reservation on Knowledge Productivity in Indian Higher Education” addresses a highly relevant and sensitive issue in the Indian context. The title is clear and reflects the core objective of the study. However, the abstract suffers from grammatical inconsistencies and lacks clarity in articulation. While it outlines the debate around reservation and its perceived impact on quality, it does not sufficiently specify the research design, sample characteristics, or analytical approach. The conclusion presented in the abstract that reservation does not hamper quality is stated, but it would benefit from more precise supporting evidence and clearer phrasing. The introduction successfully establishes the importance of higher education in national development and situates reservation within the broader framework of social justice and constitutional mandates. It highlights the tension between meritocracy and equity, which is central to the debate. However, the section lacks engagement with existing literature and theoretical frameworks. There is minimal referencing of prior empirical studies or scholarly arguments, which weakens the academic grounding of the paper. Additionally, the writing contains grammatical errors and repetitive phrasing, reducing readability and scholarly tone.

The methodology section explains that the study is based on a sample of 100 faculty members from reserved categories across universities, using an interview schedule. While the sample size is mentioned, there is insufficient justification for the sampling technique (random and purposive sampling are both stated without explanation). The study excludes non-social categories (e.g., physically disabled), which should be justified more clearly. Moreover, there is no discussion of reliability, validity, or limitations of the instrument used. The absence of statistical tools or analytical frameworks limits the robustness of the study. The data analysis section is structured around multiple indicators such as academic association, publications, books, teaching experience, awards, fellowships, and research projects. The use of tables enhances clarity and organization. However, the analysis is largely descriptive and lacks inferential statistical interpretation. For instance, percentages are presented without deeper analysis or comparison with non-reserved categories. Additionally, some interpretations appear speculative for example, attributing lack of association among assistant professors to lack of awareness without empirical evidence.

The study finds that a significant proportion of faculty members are active in research publications and conferences (94%), which is a strong indicator of academic productivity. However, participation in academic bodies and teacher exchange programs is relatively low. While these findings are useful, they are not contextualized within broader academic benchmarks or compared to general faculty populations. This limits the ability to draw strong conclusions about whether reserved category faculty perform “on par” with others. The paper reports moderate engagement in book publication (56%) and lower participation in research projects (30%) and fellowships (24%). These indicators suggest variability in productivity across different academic activities. However, the study does not explore causal factors such as institutional support, funding access, or systemic barriers. Without such analysis, the findings remain surface-level and descriptive rather than explanatory.

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The discussion is limited and does not critically engage with the findings. There is a tendency to generalize results without sufficient analytical depth. For example, the conclusion that reserved category faculty are “not behind any other” is not supported by comparative data. The study also does not address potential biases in self-reported data or the limitations of the small and non-representative sample. A more critical discussion linking findings to policy implications and existing debates would strengthen the paper significantly.

The conclusion reiterates that reservation does not negatively impact academic productivity and that faculty members perform satisfactorily across parameters. While this is consistent with the findings presented, it appears somewhat overstated given the methodological limitations. The conclusion would benefit from a more cautious tone, acknowledging the sample size and lack of comparative analysis.