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Importance Of Net Exam For Career In Higher Education And Research In India: A Study

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Abstract: National Eligibility test (NET) is the eligibility test conducted to determine a candidate's eligibility for the post of Assistant professor in colleges and universities conducted by National Testing agency. Junior research fellowships (JRF) for candidates scoring 60% and a mandatory exam to crack for the candidates who wish to pursue their Ph.D. NET is a standardised and one of the toughest Exams to crack in India, with 1st paper being general to all subject candidates and second paper being specific to their respective subjects proven to be mandatory for higher education and for securing Jobs with an added advantage of promising good salary. This article focuses mainly on how useful is NET in an individual's cognitive development, does it help in providing an individual who is taking this exam in shaping their critical thinking and building the skills like analytical abilities, critical thinking, ethical awareness etc. This article aims at discussing both pros and cons of the same with taking in consideration the survey of the audience who are qualified for the NET exam and also includes the audiences who are preparing for the exam, in the process to clear the exam. NET dates back to 1980-90. From late 90s to till date, three and a half decades and exam after exam NET is known to bring the quality students to bring changes in the quality of teachers and assistant professors who will in turn try to bring the quality students encouraging them to strive to do good research and yield quality outcomes and promote them for higher education. Few believe it to be competitive, knowledge enhancer, seen as career opportunity which opens your door straight to jobs thus fulfilling your dreams by giving academic recognition.

Key words: Critical thinking, cognitive development, analytical skills.

Introduction:

The emphasize on National eligibility tests is huge as it is seen as a gateway to higher education, job opportunities, increased salary, academic recognition. NET is not just a competitive examination, more than an exam, it is viewed as career changer which plays a crucial role in maintaining academic standards, fostering research aptitude, and shaping the intellectual backbone of the country. This article delves into the multifaceted importance of the NET exam, exploring how it influences career progression, contributes to the quality of higher education, and drives innovation in research across India. NET exam is conducted twice in a year and every time the number of candidates register to the exam is beating its previous record with recent December cycle exam in 2024 crossing 9 lakh and above students taking the exam indicating the importance and value it adds to individual growth and success.

UGC NET exam covers 85 subjects in various disciplines including Arts, Humanities, Social sciences, Sciences, Commerce etc. Post Graduate students or Students in final year of PG are eligible to take the exam provided they must secure 55% of minimum percentage in their PG.

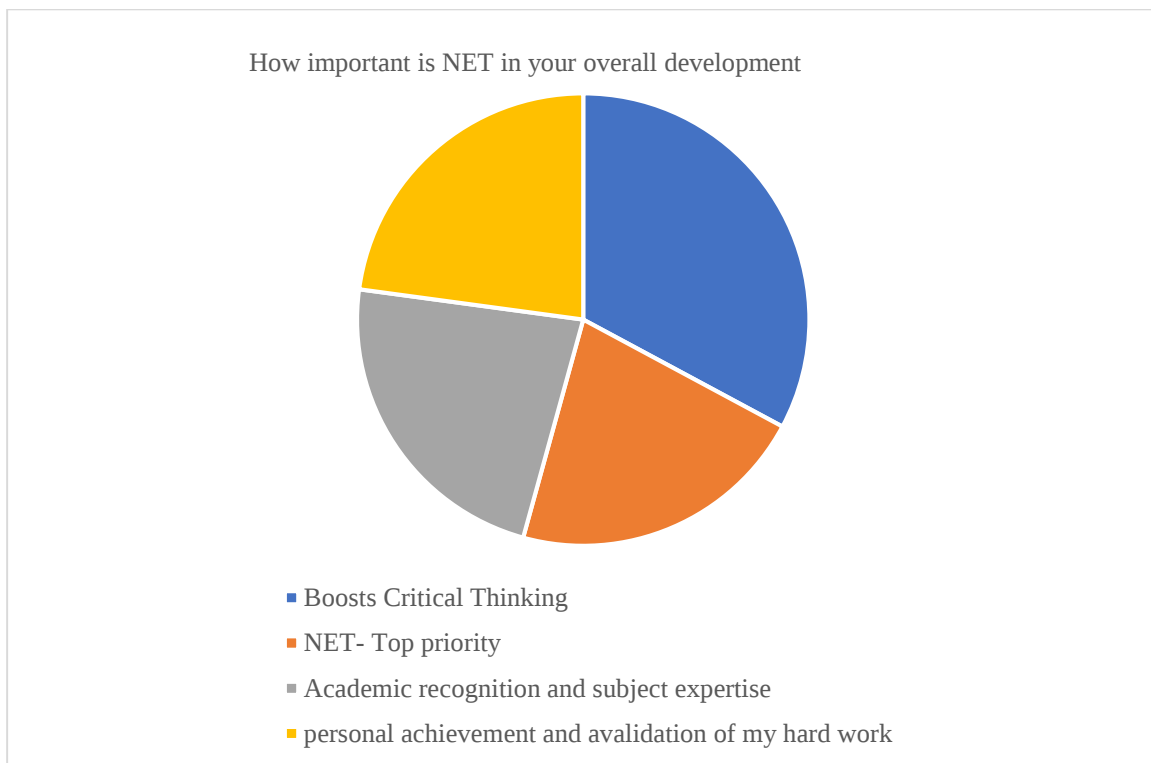
The below table shows the number of students taking NET exam every cycle:

Year of examination	Number of students registered	Number of students appeared	Number of students qualified for Assistant Professor	Number of students qualified for JRF	Number of students qualified for Ph.D
DEC 2018	956837	681930	44001	3883	-
June 2019	942419	681718	50945	4756	-
Dec 2019	1034872	793813	60147	5092	-
June 2020	860976	526707	47157	6171	-
Dec 2021 & June 2022 (merged cycle)	1266509	671288	43730	9127	-
June 2023	639069	462144	32304	4937	-
Dec 2023	945872	695928	53762	5032	-
June 2024	1121225	684224	53694	4970	112070
Dec 2024	849166	649490	48161	5158	114445

The above table shows the number of students who understand the importance of the exam and the outcome is the number of students clearing NET and JRF over the years taking in to consideration of data of past five consecutive years. The data above shows that every exam 40000-50000 students emerge as NET qualified and JRF qualified who will strive to bring the positive change in the education field by giving quality education to students and will contribute immensely to the field of research in their areas.

An online survey was conducted to know the insights about the importance of NET exam and the following pie chart shows the responses given by students, teachers and research scholars of various disciplines. A total of 100 responses were collected, out of which, 85% respondents believe that writing or preparing for NET helps in improving Critical Thinking, 55.6% respondents top priority, while pursuing PG or Ph.D is NET. While 59.3% strongly believe qualifying NET will ensure them Academic recognition as well as Subject Expertise, whereas, for 74.1% respondents, qualifying NET means personal achievement and a validation for their hard work.

With Ph.D only category, being added from past two cycles, the competition and scope of improvement and quality assurance of researchers and Assistant professors has increased and a promising future for all the aspirants and thus the future of students will be in the hands of good teachers



A survey was conducted online through questionnaire in google forms, based on the responses received; about approximately 66.7% population included for my study believe that the most convenient mode of writing the exam is pen and paper(OMR) format , this traditional way of writing is more helpful in terms of saving time and comfortable to re-check the unanswered question especially helpful in solving the answers of questions on Data interpretation and comprehension passages and the chronology questions where reading questions 2-3 times to understand is required. About 63.3% population think that NET syllabus covers too many topics which is one among many reasons why NET is one of the toughest exams to take.

Conclusion:

In the study undertaken to assess the real picture of what the audience think about the importance of NET exams in the current competitive world is huge and aspiring NET students are taking this exam seriously in order to be in the race, clearing exam as well as of gaining knowledge and for the subject expertise in their respective areas. It is found that 67.7% of population included for the study find, computer based exam as convenient mode of taking exam, whereas 32.3% population still vouch for traditional mode of writing. 64.5% of population included for my study when asked about the syllabus of NET, believe that the syllabus is vast and covers too many topics whereas the rest with the opinion that the syllabus needs time and dedication and the amount of syllabus is of right proportion. This shows the mixed opinions of the population about pros and cons of NET exam in general. Hence, with the survey and the data extracted from the survey I conclude that NET exam as a career builder and pathway to higher education is must as it keep the aspirers intact with the goal they want to achieve and helpful in building their career by giving academic recognition and good salary for their hard work and talent which they deserve.

Acknowledgement:

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