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## Problem of Research Quality in India: An Analysis and suggestions for Sensitisation

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### Abstract

In the light of present era of global knowledge economy, author has analysed problems related to research entrepreneur in India. Paper starts with elaborating present state of affairs regarding research in higher education in India. Then author shifts its focus to pointing out various hurdles in the path of quantity and quality of research in this country. Majority of the problems are related to attitudinal problems besides role of governments, research agencies and institutional bureaucracy. Finally some suggestions have been put forward on in respect of observations made in the first half of the paper. These suggestions are not exhaustive by any mean, rather just a sensitisation and humble effort to improve the gloomy situation. Paper ends on encouraging note that Indians and Indian institutions have enough potential of doing quality research only will is needed to put things in to action. This potential needs to be channelized and utilized for making India a knowledge hub. Young students are required to be trained and guided to adopt culture of research what ever is the subject of study. Once it is done we can hope in future a generation of citizens fully embracing knowledge economy.

**Keywords:** Research, Indian higher education, knowledge society, teaching and learning.

### Introduction

As conceptualised by University Grants Commission higher education comprises of teaching, research, and extension. Teaching is taken up by our esteemed faculty members of various colleges or universities and extension of higher education is done by public and private sector institutions in phased manner. Out of three mentioned above research needs to be dealt with diligence. Parkash (2007) <sup>[3]</sup> observe research and higher education are complimentary to each other. A well developed and equitable system of higher education that promotes quality learning as a consequence of both teaching and research is central for success in the emerging knowledge economy. Research is the foundation for any education system and successful research project lies in iteration: the process of returning again and again to the research questions, methods and data, which leads to new ideas, revisions and improvements. Our education system needs to be analysed in terms of research standards in terms of deficiencies and possible solutions to the problems.

### Present state of affairs

The report of UGC 2012, no doubts, paints a dismal picture on research in higher education. The situation is almost similar across all the states. Academic Performance index (API) has made faculty members more career oriented rather being dedicated and effective research workers and teachers. No university has remained immune from this malice. The main role of higher education in modern time is to create new knowledge and thereby to produce competent professionals, thinkers, teachers, researchers and knowledge workers essential for emerging knowledge society. India's higher education system is third largest in the world, next to United States and China, but with context to research and quality of education we lag behind hugely. It is matter of ignominy that none of India's 700 universities and 35539 colleges has made it to the list of top hundred institutions surveyed by Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings.

Major tribulations afflicting the higher education, particularly the universities, in the country relate to outdated and rigid curricula, large number of vacant faculty positions, poor faculty quality in terms of both commitment and competence, poor systemic enablers for student mobility, near absence of a culture of research, minimal and poor research work, flawed and

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rigid system of examination, poor methods of teaching and learning, low levels of skill development among students causing low employability among them, presence of strong vested interests, inadequate provisions and poor management of educational services, and problem of governance. Not surprisingly, these predicaments guzzle up the quality time and efficiency of the universities and divert their main focus from knowledge creation.

### Problems

**Lack of knowledge friendly environment:** in our country, there is lack of congenial environment for the dissemination and creation of knowledge. The emphasis continues to be on teaching. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) also emphasised the creation of knowledge society making it as full fledged applied entrepreneur.

**No encouragement for research and development:** in our education system there is any encouragement for research works in colleges and universities as compared to overseas universities. World class institutions do not happen overnight whatever may be the support system. We need candid efforts as regards to research sensitization.

**Scarcity of Guides for research in universities:** our education system also facing scarcity as regards to availability of guides in our universities. In addition to this they are already overburdened with already allotted work. This hinders the process of research in our Higher Educational Institutions.

**Mandatory condition of course work for pursuing research degree:** recently introduction of six months mandatory course work also put candidates in a fix. In this regard although universities are planning to finish course work in phased manner but candidates face a lot of problem in pursuing coursework, consequently unable to attain a research degree.

**Discouraging attitudes of employers:** the research aspirants have to face the adverse attitudes of the concerned authorities of the institutions where he/she works. They face problem to get no objection certificate from employers in order to pursue their six months course work. Sanction of leave for research with salary is remote possibility an employee can expect.

**Almost no research facility for rural aspirants:** those who belong to rural and remote areas face a sea of problems in this regard. There is no facility for research in rural areas. They have to travel to long distances for this purpose. They even hesitate to enrol for research projects due to their remoteness.

**Non availability of world class libraries:** in our educational institutions there is scarcity of standard books, journals, encyclopaedia, research surveys etc. which hinders the research process. Stocks of books in institutional libraries are mostly outdated, of no use. In present competitive world of Information Technology we can't carry on with superannuated study material.

**Lack of ICT culture:** although technology has now been all around in India, mostly for entertainment where as teaching learning and evaluation is grossly traditional in nature. Same can be said about research in most of the institutions, especially so in case of humanities research. Teachers are not sent to training programs involving training of statistical

software and other such programs. In summation we can say that there is absence of attitude and culture of technology in academic institutions.

**Insufficient allocation of funds for research and development:** presently, mere 0.9% of India's GDP is being spent on research and development, whereas other countries it is 2.7% (U.S), 1.97% (China), and 3.67% (Japan). If India really wants to excel in all spheres, we need to invest handsomely on research projects.

**Absence of stern monitoring of research work:** agencies providing funds and facilities for research work to colleges affiliated to various universities need to be more vigilant. At present periodical assessment of research projects by UGC is mere a ritual, it needs to be more objective, rigorous and well defined. It has been noticed that funds for research projects are being sanctioned irrationally and so is the case of its evaluation.

**Lack of interest among students for research publications:** most of the students pursuing higher education have no appeal for publications. They don't know ABC of research paper, dissertations, tools and techniques of research work. Marks for the research projects are being awarded without proper evaluation, which results in poor research ethics and reinventing the wheel again and again. Actually they are not being trained for knowledge creation; rather they just consider research projects as formality. They study from a single book and don't consult reference books for deeper understanding of the concepts, then how we can expect them to write a book i.e. a dissertation or hypothesis.

### Some suggestions for improving the scenario

- Introduction of research terminology at graduate level in 1<sup>st</sup> year of degree course.
- Extension of research terminology and introduction of basic concepts in 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> year of degree course.
- Stringent training in research work at master degree level, with senior research students as their mentor.
- Apprenticeship under esteemed researchers.
- Ensuring satisfactory placement and research work as a viable entrepreneur.
- Accepting, assimilating, accommodating new ideas which may lead to generation of new concepts, theories and the like necessary in knowledge economy.
- Application of generated knowledge in applied form to benefit the institutions, organisations and state in the form of patents, and intellectual property rights etc.
- Research work need to be of applied form with collaboration of community, industry and institutions collaboration. Community gets employment and raise the social concerns, industry gets a product and student gets a degree. It should be a case of optimal use of national resources.

### Ways out

**Creation of knowledge society:** knowledge needs to be more valued and rewarded in all levels and forms. It needs to be created in totality involved from planning to execution and finally in evaluation. Even a school student and teacher must be told to create knowledge rather than just reproducing and transacting the same.

**Encouragement for research oriented activities:** it can be done by offering monetary as well as other incentives to students, researchers and teachers at both college and university level. UGC does it in a very mechanical manner, only some of the individuals and institutions are receiving funds again and again. Research programs need to be popularised to the grassroots level and distributed without any discrimination.

**Fabricate research conditions:** universities and colleges need to improve research conditions in urban as well as rural areas. Congenial atmosphere is the need of the hour to produce world class researchers. Basic infrastructure availability can definitely ensure enhancement of quality of research. It is not matter of subject, science or arts it is about creating of attitude and culture or research which comes by making provisions available.

**Promote e-library culture:** we need to revive our libraries to world class stature and augmentation of culture of e-library, use of infolibnet to meet the challenges of modern competitive economies. We won't be able to compete with the world with our stereotype and traditional methods of learning. We don't lack the skills of using e resources only priorities need be re arranged.

**Espouse online means:** for instance online registration for Ph. D aspirants, research scholars could be great encouragement for taking up research work. This will also reduce the role of employer, colleges which intentionally hinder the academic progress of teachers. Let us make procedures and rue easy, accessible and fast processing to attract people in research entrepreneur, the technology is the only possibility for rescue.

**Cognizance for ICT based teaching and learning:** expansion of ICT linked teaching learning programmes need to be enhanced in urban as well as in remote parts of the country. Teaching fraternity should be apprised of using ICT based methods and techniques to make learning content more interesting and easy to understand.

**More economic support from government:** government need to allocate more on the research & development from country's GDP to accelerate the momentum for research and development. More grants should be bestowed on educational Institutions from central and state governments to create positive atmosphere for research purpose. The rider of accountability for granted funds remains a must for productivity.

**Mandatory & stern periodical assessment:** region wise or more precisely district wise rigorous periodical assessment of research work for qualitative and quantitative improvements should be adopted. It needs to be practical and transparent rather than a paper formality as usually the case at present.

**Concerns for Publication:** our esteemed teachers should infuse concerns for publication of research papers among young researchers. They must be apprised of the fact that how this research studies could be used for the welfare of the mankind and become an asset for the country. They should be directed, guided and involved in research projects at institutional level.

**Stringent measures:** more strict measures to be adopted by agencies like University, State councils for research, NAAC, CSIR, UGC etc. for improving quality of research work. Only those institutions should be accredited and given grants generously who indulge in candid research work. Mounting pressure from these bodies will force educational institutions to go for quality research work.

**Faculty and student mobility:** culture of faculty and student exchange programme should be encouraged so that various tools and techniques of doing research can be exchanged between institutions. In this way we can create healthy competition and cooperation among institutions for Research work.

**Improve frequency and quality of Seminars & workshops:** both quality and quantity of seminars, conferences and workshops related to research methods and emerging areas in the disciplines are urgently needed. These are to be organised at all levels so as to popularise the need and importance of research in all disciplines of study. The experience of various experts from national and international universities could be tapped in these seminars and workshops to guide the movement.

**Discourage Plagiarism:** people usually plagiarise in absence of proper knowledge and training. But there are some who intentionally plagiarise to avoid hard work needed for it. Agencies monitoring the quality of research need to monitor the events of plagiarism. Beginners be trained and made aware of laws and consequences related to plagiarism. The intentional plagiarists must be given exemplary punishment to prevent the trend.

**Apprenticeship culture:** culture of apprenticeship should be encouraged by training the beginners under senior research students about research skills, procedures and resources. In this way the burden of Guides can be reduced and research tasks can be accomplished more comprehensively.

**Internal quality assurance research bodies:** all the institutions must have mandatory bodies like research boards, councils, IQAC and the like, to monitor and improve quality of research at local level. These bodies should take a hard look before approving synopsis, research paper, and projects to be sent out of the institution. When a teacher or student publishes a research work, name of the institution is also associated with it and people make perceptions regarding quality of the institution from such publications. It necessitates institutions to keep a watch on the quality of research being produced by its affiliates.

These are only some observations and suggestions made by the author on the basis of his experiences and what ever could be gathered from the available literature. But there can be many more innovative solutions for the problem suitable to the context. The million dollar question is do we have will to change? It matters the most, remaining are just designing of procedures and implementation which we are capable of doing.

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