

Promotion of Social Science Research and Training Programs in India

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Abstract

Research is very much important for expanding our knowledge and to invent new products, processes and technologies for the betterment of human being. All over the world research is being promoted and in India Government is paying very special attention on this aspect. Government of India is promoting social science research and training activities by providing funding to the Universities, research institutes and industries as well. This review highlights the efforts in promoting social science research programs in India through various funding agencies.

Introduction

The social sciences are an interesting faculty, which includes sociology, economics, political science, psychology, history and anthropology. The social science is not separated from natural and human sciences, as every human activity is multi faceted. India has a long tradition of social science research. In India the research in the field of social sciences is rapidly growing and the research as well as training institutes are coming up with the financial support from Government ministries, NGOs and private sectors. In early days two major institutes for research, teaching, training and policy formulations were established in India in 1920s. These institutes are All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai and Indian Council for Africa, New Delhi. After that departments were started in Indian Universities and institutes were established outside university system in various areas like political science, anthropology, commerce, psychology, management, demography, law, criminology, defence etc. As a result of interdisciplinary approach, most of these institutes and departments are presently working in multi-disciplinary areas. The social science research boosted in India after the establishment of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) in the year 1969 by Government of India to promote research in social sciences in the country. Some of the important objectives of this council were formulation of national social science policy, funding & monitoring of social science research in the country, arranging technical training, collaborating at international level etc.

Social science research institutes in India

The Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities, New Delhi

This institute works in the area of social sciences to understand the contemporary dynamics of development in India, in the regional and international context. The institute is involved in various research areas like Politics and Society (to study the complexities of the Indian society after liberalization), Risks and Territorial Dynamics (focus on technological, environmental and sanitary risks and their evolutions), Globalization and Regulation (focus on questioning the role and autonomy of the State in the regulating process), Economics and Development (to study economic growth)

TATA Institute of Social Sciences

This unique institute is established in 1936 and is regarded as India's first school of social work. This institute brings together high quality scholars from various backgrounds like social, economic, political, physical, habitat, engineering, health and environmental sciences to build interdisciplinary teaching and research programs. TISS has made valuable contribution to civil society and development sector through its research in the field of social work, social sciences, human resources management, health systems etc. Over the years, the research work carried out at the TISS has been increasingly used for capacity building, field action, academics and policy advocacy on a spectrum of social, economic and environmental issues.

The Institute of Social Sciences

This institute is dedicated to a systematic and scholarly study of contemporary social, political and economic issues from an inter-disciplinary perspective. The Institute makes its research findings and recommendations available to national and state governments, policy makers, UN organisations, international donor agencies, and civil society organisations and workers unions so as to help them to make their decisions based on sound evidence. The Institute seeks to integrate academic rigour with the struggle for change, hence the motto of the organisation Integrating Research with Action. Apart from research councils, universities, colleges and non-profit organisations which have traditionally carried out social science research, private consultancy firms have emerged as a new space for social science research. They are funded by the government as well as domestic and international private sources. This is also contributing to the commercialisation of research, which is now focused on areas of interest to the private sector and not necessarily the greater public good.

Local Governance, Rural and Urban Decentralization

Since its inception, democratic decentralisation has been a major area of research of the Institute. It includes the studies of the growth, development and performance of Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) and urban local bodies, which have been constitutionally designated as 'institutions of self-government.' The Institute has conducted studies on devolution of powers and finances to the elected bodies in several States. The Institute also monitors changes in State legislations following the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution as well as the conduct of Panchayat elections, and has filed public interest litigations on non-holding of PRI elections against defaulting States. At regular intervals the Institute publishes status of Panchayats in the States of India. Current research activities include evaluations of Panchayat training programmes in three States, an action research project on development and decentralisation in Madhya Pradesh, an all-India study on inclusion of socially and historically excluded groups in governance. Devolution of finance to the local bodies and decentralised planning is another.

- ✓ To provide opportunities to social scientists to engage themselves in full-time research on important themes of their choice or to write books about their research;
- ✓ To assist young scholars who have the potential and competence for research to work full time on their approved research themes;
- ✓ To support doctoral students to pursue and complete their research work.

Research funding:

To achieve these objectives, four categories of fellowships are offered /awarded to scholars who are at various levels in their profession: National Fellowships, Senior Fellowships, and Post-Doctoral Fellowships & Doctoral Fellowships

National Fellowships are offered to eminent social scientists, who have made outstanding contribution to research in their respective fields, to enable them to continue their academic work and research. There is no age bar for this category of fellowship.

Senior Fellowships are awarded to social scientists that have done quality research work, publications and papers in professional journals to their credit. Besides, civil servants, journalists and social workers for their academic interests are also considered. There is no age bar for this category of fellowship.

Post-Doctoral Fellowships are awarded to scholars, preferably below the age of 50 years, who have shown significant competence in research work, have completed their Ph.D. or have done equivalent research work of merit, and desire to work on approved research themes at institutions of excellence under the guidance of senior social scientists.

Doctoral Fellowships are open to doctoral students, preferably below the age of 35 years, who have a Master's degree from a recognized university with a first or second class and are registered for a doctoral degree in social sciences.

Research Methodology Course

The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) under the above programmes provides grant to the faculty members of social sciences for organizing the above programmes on social science in general or discipline specific. The broad disciplines within the domain of social sciences would be as under:

- (i) Sociology and Social Anthropology;
- (ii) Political Science/Public Administration and allied;
- (iii) Economics and allied;
- (iv) International Studies;
- (v) Social Geography and Population Studies;
- (vi) Commerce and Management;
- (vii) Social Psychology and allied;
- (viii) Education and allied;
- (ix) Social Linguistics/Socio-Cultural and allied;
- (x) Law, International Law and allied;
- (xi) National Security & Strategic Studies;
- (xii) Any other (specify)

Along with the research methodology courses, there are also following capacity building programs. The objective of the course is to develop research capabilities among young faculty in Social Sciences. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- ✓ Develop capacity for conceptualizing and writing research proposals.
Enhance skills to prepare an appropriate research design, including conducting an overview of literature, formulating research questions and hypotheses, collection of information and analysis.
- ✓ Enhance capacity for writing a research paper for publication.
- ✓ Develop capacity for planning and writing a book.
- ✓ Develop capacity for writing grant applications.

Promotion of Research in Social Sciences is one of the major activities of ICSSR. Research grants is direct financial support to research projects taken up by social scientists in addition to their normal duties in an honorary capacity. ICSSR provides grants to scholars to conduct research in various fields of social sciences which have a theoretical, conceptual, and methodological or policy orientation on the subject of their choice. The research projects may belong to any of the prescribed social science disciplines or may be interdisciplinary in nature. The specific objectives of the programme are: a) to support high quality independent programme of research; b) to provide opportunities for training of future researchers; c) to contribute to the development of elaboration of new theoretical or methodological approaches to research; d) to maintain and sustain various disciplinary research activities; e) to foster and promote collaborative, multidisciplinary research activities among researchers in the social sciences; and f) to facilitate communication of research outputs both within and beyond the academic community as well as to provide inputs to administrators and policy makers.

Two categories of Research projects: First, Major and Minor Research Projects and secondly Research Programmes, formerly known as Research Projects Responsive and Research Projects Sponsored respectively. As per the guidelines proposals are invited, scrutinized, processed and awarded every year.

At present the ERC activities are generally limited to the following schemes of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi:

1. Study Grant: The purpose of the Study Grant is to provide financial assistance to Ph.D. scholars in the field of social sciences from the region for consulting libraries/ archives/ data centres in different cities / towns in India for collecting the research materials.

2) Support to Seminars/ Workshops/ Training Programmes, etc: As per the policy of the ICSSR, Eastern Regional Centre provides partial financial assistance to the research institutions/ colleges/ university departments and other academic bodies in the region for organising conferences, workshops and seminars on themes of contemporary relevance in different disciplines of social sciences

3) Research Project Grants: The ERC, with its limited financial capacity, supports scholars from the region with partial financial assistance for conducting their research projects, field activities, data collection, etc.

4) Publication Grant: Publication in local languages is encouraged and partial financial assistance for such publication is provided to suitable manuscripts from scholars in the region. Scholars willing to apply for such assistance are required to write to Hony. Director, ERC with full details of the publications, with a copy of the manuscripts.

International collaborative funding

Since 1961, American knowledge of India has been shaped by the American Institute of Indian Studies. The American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) was formed to further the knowledge of India in the United States by supporting American scholarship on India. The programs of AIIS promote and advance mutual understanding between the citizens of the U. S. and of India. With offices and research centers in the United States and India, research centers at its campus in Gurgaon, and a centrally located office in Delhi, the Institute:

- Provides research fellowship support for scholars, Ph.D. candidates and artists
- Offers training in Indian languages where they are spoken
- Extends knowledge of Indian culture through its two research centers, the Center for Art & Archaeology and the Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology
- Supports book publications and articles about India
- Facilitates service learning programs and internships for American students with Indian NGOs and provides a range of services to U.S. study abroad programs in India
- Organizes conferences, workshops and special programs to advance the understanding of India and to foster exchange and collaboration between scholars in India, the U.S. and other countries in South Asia

More than 6,000 scholars and creative artists have received AIIS support, with their work spanning the humanities, social sciences, social policy and natural sciences. The Institute has been directly responsible for fostering several generations of new scholars, and its senior fellows have returned to classrooms where they have taught tens of thousands of American college students. Recognized as an educational institution in India in its own right, AIIS can directly recommend issuance of student visas for language study and for programs that bring students to India. AIIS is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). Founded in 1981, CAORC is a private not-for-profit federation of 22 independent overseas research centers that promote advanced research, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, with focus on the conservation and recording of cultural heritage and the understanding and interpretation of modern societies. CAORC fosters research projects across national boundaries, encourages collaborative research and programmatic and administrative coherence among member centers, and works to expand their resource base and service capacity. CAORC member centers maintain a permanent presence in the host countries where they operate—in Europe, Latin America, the near and Middle East, West Africa, and Central, South, and Southeast Asia.

The centers are the primary vehicle through which American scholars carry out research vital to our understanding of and intersection with other cultures. Nearly 400 American universities, colleges, and museums hold more than 1,000 memberships in the centers, which serve their institutional members, individual fellows and members, as well as affiliated scholars through a broad range of services. CAORC and the centers are supported by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Smithsonian Institution, as well as foundations, businesses, and individuals. CAORC and the centers promote international scholarly exchange, primarily through sponsoring fellowship programs, foreign language study, and collaborative research projects. The centers facilitate access to research resources, provide a forum for contact and exchange, offer library and technical support and accommodation, and disseminate information to the scholarly and general public through conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and publications. Because of the centers' contributions to the generation of knowledge, the creation of area expertise and cordial relations between the United States and the host countries, scholars often seek CAORC's help in establishing similar centers in other parts of the world.

Shastri Research Grant (SRG) 2016-17 (OPEN)

The Shastri Indo Canadian Institute is pleased to announce a Call for Applications for Shastri Research Grant (SRG) 2016-17 for its Canadian and Indian Member Institutions in good standing. Objective of SRG is to support collaborative research projects between Indian and Canadian institutions entailing scholars' mobility and capacity building of scholars/researchers between India-Canada. SRG is a bi-national research initiative to support research collaborations. The research theme will build on issues concerning all domains of studies: social Sciences subjects (i.e., anthropology, communications studies, economics, education, human geography, history, law, linguistics, political science, public administration, management, psychology, sociology, humanities, cultural studies), STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) including food security and sustainable development; water resource management; gender and health, bi-lateral trade and investment; energy and environment; securing future of children and youth and higher education-mobility.

The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), through its International Collaboration Programme, invests significant time and energy in developing collaborative links with social scientists, social science organizations and academic institutions in India and overseas. Over the years, the Council has built strong international links established through research collaborations and professional leadership with scholars working in other countries. The focus has been on developing close and continuing relationships with social scientists and social science organizations, and other professional communities across the globe. These valued relationships greatly enhance the relevance and performance of teaching and research. The Council maintains an international focus and global presence that broadens the international opportunities available to social scientists in India.

Collaborations with Multilateral Organizations

The ICSSR is also a member of the International Social Science Council (ISSC), Paris, Association of Asian Social Science Research Council (AASSREC), Science Council of Asia, Japan and International Federation of Social Sciences Organisation (IFSSO). The Council participates in the activities of UNESCO's programme called Management of Social Transformation (MOST).

The Brown-India Initiative offers summer funding for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty through its Fellowship. In addition, many fellowships are available to students through Brown that support research or internships in India. There are also a wide range of fellowships available for scholars and students to conduct research in India.

The Swearer Center for Public Service

The Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown has several opportunities for undergraduates to pursue research.

- ✓ **Social Innovation Fellowship**: Overseen by the Center's Social Innovation Initiative, the SI Fellowship is the overarching program for both the C.V. Starr and the Leslie Altman Social Entrepreneurship Fellowships, as well as for opportunities for RISD students and Taubman Center Masters in Public Affairs students. Students receive year-long skills-training and support as well as financing (up to \$4000) to grow a social venture over the summer. Housed at Brown, students' work can go towards developing programs related to India.
- ✓ **Royce Fellowship**: Each year, up to twenty students are awarded Royce Fellowships to conduct research, curricular development, or public service project of their own design. Projects may include international travel.

Watson Institute Fellows

- ✓ Watson Senior Thesis Travel Grants: Rising seniors concentrating in Development Studies or International Relations may apply for funding (up to \$2000) to cover the costs of travelling to conduct research for an approved senior thesis.
- ✓ The Marla Ruzicka International Public Service Fellowship: This fellowship provides \$4000 to support the summer plans of a Brown University student who embodies the characteristics of compassion, determination, and selflessness in the pursuit of international human rights, post-conflict rehabilitation, or international public service.

Office of the Dean of the College

- ✓ International Affairs Undergraduate Student Fund: Undergraduate students wishing to conduct research or other projects directly relating to their studies, including international travel, can apply to this fund which awards grants on a rolling basis.
- ✓ IR Program Michael Bhatia Fund for Peace-Keeping and Conflict Studies: Students concentrating in International Relations can apply to this fund for work that will deepen their understanding of a region or culture by traveling and studying there, with the ultimate goal of helping to promote cross-cultural understanding that might end or avert violence or military conflict.

Students can also apply for Karen T. Romer Undergraduate Teaching and Research Awards (UTRAs) for projects that involve collaborating with a faculty member on teaching or research, during the summer or school year, and Research at Brown (RAB) grants for any student-initiated research projects in the sciences, humanities or the fine arts.

Fox International Fellowship of Yale University - Annually awarded to one or two students of M.Phil./Ph.D. programme in any of the following fields: economics, finance, political science, international relations, law and contemporary history. They should therefore have completed 3 semesters of M.Phil./Ph.D./Direct Ph.D. programme but should not have completed more than 6 semesters of the said programme.

Concluding remarks

After going through various funding schemes for social science research, it appears that presently there is ample scope for research in this import field of science. Government of India is through its various efforts at national as well as international level; promote social science education and research.

References

This review article is prepared by referring website of Indian Council of Social Science Research as well as websites of various other institutes from India as well as abroad.