

Engagement of Research Scholar in Research

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Abstract: *Doing research requires genuine interest, sufficient time, rigorous effort and high degree of engagement in it. In India research appears to be the last priority of several academicians. They take up this task only to full fill the academic requirement. This paper aims to study the attitude of research scholars, what makes them to take up the research task and how really they are engaged in the research activity. For this a sample of 317 research scholars were chosen from the PhD aspirants enrolled with Visvesvaraya Technological University Belagavi, Karnataka.*

Keywords: *Engagement, Research Scholar, Academics*

I. Introduction

Research is an intellectual activity of gathering information needed to solve a problem, which in turn contributes significantly towards innovation, technical change and nation's progress. The first academic revolution in the late 19th century, made research an important function of the universities in addition to the traditional task of teaching (Etzkowitz, 2003). At present, higher education comprises of three components, namely teaching, research and service. Universities act as centers of research activities. Research is always carried out by an individual in a social context, with various personal and practical challenges and conflicts, all of which affect the research, from the choice of a research question or topic to the reporting of the project's outcome (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998, p. 4).

A "researcher" implies someone who is doing scientific research specifically as a vocation. A "researcher" could be a scientist, or a scholar. A Biblical scholar could be a researcher at a seminary. If someone like a journalist was just doing research for an article, he wouldn't be referred to as a researcher, but rather as "A journalist researching". A chemist could be a researcher at a pharmacist. But when referring to the person, it doesn't matter if he/she is a scientist or a scholar, just use "researcher". For a research scholar doing research is all about improving oneself or at least refining one's skills as a researcher, overcoming challenges, and making discoveries. There are different contributing factors that are to be considered by the research scholar to alleviate the impression tackled by his/her occurrence, some of which are: scale of understanding, financial immovability, educational attainment, social reception, attitude and finally engagement in research work. According to Dr. Sen Gupta; scientific manipulation, respect for power of theoretical structure, persuasive skills, spoken communication skills, and honesty in admitting mistakes are some of the characteristics portrayed by a responsible researcher.

In China, research scholars account for 0.08% of the total population compared to India's 0.02%. Just 3.5% of global research output in 2010 was from India. In most disciplines, India's share in global research output was much below this overall average count. Sample this: India's share of world research output in clinical medicine was a miserable 1.9% in 2010, psychiatry 0.5%, neurosciences 1.4%, immunology 1.8%, molecular biology 2.1% and environmental research 3.5%. In mathematics, India's share of world output stood at around 2% in 2010, while it was 17% for China. In case of materials sciences, India's share of world research was at 6.4% in 2010, while China's stood at 26% — a rise from 5% in 1996. Giving this information in the Lok Sabha HRD minister Smriti Irani explained that one of the reasons for less number of research scholars in India is much lower investment on R&D as percentage of the GDP in comparison to China. At a time when India is being looked at as the next big knowledge superpower, this could come as a shocker.

Successful studying in Ph. D. education is a complex matter. Although Ph. D. students are a highly select group, some never finish. In many ways, we begin research in a state of failure, as we confront a literally infinite amount of information and whittle it down in order to address specific questions regarding the given topic at hand. Research is a process where effort truly pays off and opens up a wonderful opportunity. Being a good research scholar involves more than merely coming up with brilliant ideas and implementing them. Most researchers spend the majority of their time reading papers, discussing ideas with colleagues, writing and revising papers, staring blankly into space and, of course, having brilliant ideas and implementing them. At times, particularly in the middle years, it can be very hard to maintain a positive attitude, stay motivated and

engaged in research. The degree of engagement (commitment) in research activity varies from one scholar to another. For some, the drive for doing research is only to catch doctoral degree to full fill the academic requirement or to elevate themselves to higher positions. And only few think of doing research for the sake of research.

II. Objectives, Methodology and Data Collection

2.1 Objectives of the study

- To find the motives of research scholars for doing research work.
- To study the attitude and engagement level of research scholars towards research.
- To study the impact of research on teaching
- To study the impact of research on personal life of researchers

2.2 Methodology and Data Collection

Descriptive research approach is adapted. A Structured Questionnaire is used to collect the primary data. The questionnaire was designed using 'Google Form' application and the data is obtained through online survey. Secondary data is also collected from various sources viz., articles, and web pages.

2.3 Sampling Design

About 1800 research scholars are enrolled to Ph.D Programme at Visvesvaraya Technological University during 2011 and 2012. Among them 317 research scholars are preferred as sample for this study. Krejcie & Morgan table is used in determining the required sample size for the given population. Systematic Random sampling technique is adopted while picking the required respondents. A structured questionnaire has been mailed to all those sampled research scholars. After rigorous persuasion, 168 have responded to this survey. Hence, the responses of 168 research scholars are taken into consideration for further analysis.

III. Results and Discussion

Time of research

Research is time consuming activity. Out of 317 respondents, 66 % of the respondents are engaged in research for more than 2 years. A fraction of (10%) the respondents are held in research for more than 4 years.

Role of current workload

Among the respondents most of the research scholars are academicians. 58% of research scholars are reacted that, their current academic workload act as an impediment to their research work.

Attraction for Ph.D

Pursuing Ph.D is a passion for some scholars and for some it is just a degree. There are many other factors which may attract for Ph.D. 54% of respondents portrayed as urge for getting knowledge is major attraction for them. Academic requirement is another attraction for 32% of the research scholars. Salary/perks and promotion are other factors which attracted 5% of the respondents respectively.

Intent of Research Scholars

Research in academics is generally pursued with an eye on building careers. 56% of the respondents have been very candid enough in admitting that research degrees help them in making a lucrative career. The recent UGC/AICTE norms also make a Ph.D qualification mandatory for promotions, hence there is no escape from pursuing the Ph.D. such compulsions make the research outcomes irrelevant in most of the cases. There are several instances where the aspirants have literally given up research efforts after the award of the degree. They do not contribute any paper/articles after the award of their Ph.D.

Research in any area must produce reasonable and logical outcomes thus taking the entire operations of that area to the next level. Some research scholars appear to be relatively serious of the work that they are doing in our research we have found about 20-25% of the scholars who are very focused and anxious of the research task on hand. They also feel that research enhances their capabilities and efficacy.

Constraints for research work/Ph.D degree

Research appears to be a complex task. To secure Ph.D degree, a scholar may confront various constraints for successful completion of his research work. 21% of the scholars experience lab requirements as the major concern for their research work. 21% of the scholars experience University regulations, Fee, Research Guide, Lab requirement and availability of relevant books, journals in research centre all these as constraints for their research work. 16% scholars whimpered about the lack of availability of relevant books, journals in their respective centre. And another major chunk of respondents (25%) could not figure out other constraints.

Research work & Personal Life

Research requires sufficient time and high degree of involvement in it. Striking a balance between personal life and research work is a challenging task. 56% scholars intensified that, they are focusing the on Ph.D work at the cost their personal life.

Ph.D as a qualification of growth indicator

Ph.D is considered as one of the requirements for a career as an academician. 68% of the research scholars claim tagging Ph.D degree with the Job growth of Faculty/Professor. And 53% of the respondents emphasized that; promotion to higher positions in education field should be based on Qualification/Research achievements. 81% of scholars propagated that most the Ph.D pursuant are doing Ph.D only for the sake of higher salary & promotion.

Implications of Research

The basic and foremost intent of any research activity should result in creation of new knowledge which contributes for the betterment of the society. Whereas 54% of research scholars felt that the current researchers are not contributing for the welfare of the society. And 68% of the respondents fingered on the focus of the faculties towards Ph. D is not affecting the student's comprehension.

IV. Conclusion

We have sincerely attempted to make a humble effort through this paper to analyze and reason out the research efforts and intents. It appears that the regulatory bodies have been successful in planting an appetite especially in the teaching fraternity to pursue research. However, majority of the researchers tend to engage in Ph.D for the sake of law, promotions and status. We ought to produce relevant research output so as to benefit the society from it. We also need to create research ambience for the scholars where creativity and innovations assume priority over all other issues.

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