GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3086
ANSWERED ON-20/08/2025

Promotion of institutional research

3086 Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal:

Will the Minister of ***Education*** be pleased to state:

(a) the measures taken to promote institutional research, interdisciplinary learning and academic innovation in universities and colleges;
(b) the role of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and other funding agencies in supporting high-impact research;
(c) the steps taken to improve international academic partnerships and collaborative programmes; and
(d) the quality benchmarks and impact assessment tools being used to evaluate progress in higher education reforms?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a) to (d): Recognising research as a core requisite for quality education, National Education Policy (NEP 2020) exhorts HEIs to focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres; technology development centres; centres in frontier areas of research; greater industry-academic linkages; and interdisciplinary research including humanities and social sciences research. Government has also taken numerous efforts to enhance the Research & Development (R&D) expenditure and create adequate opportunities for researchers.

As per 'Research and Development statistics at a glance 2022-23' published by Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology, the Gross Expenditure on Research & Development (GERD) in the country has been consistently increasing over the years and has more than doubled from Rs. 60,196.75 Crore in 2010–11 to Rs. 127,380.96 Crore in 2020–21.

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has launched a program called PAIR (Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research) to boost the research capability of those institutions where research is at a nascent stage but which have the potential to perform well. These institutions, including State Universities, are paired in a mentorship mode with well-established top-tier research institutions in a hub and spoke framework.

ANRF has also launched several other programs like Advanced Research Grant (ARG), Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG), Inclusivity Research Grant (IRG), National Post Doctoral Fellowship (NPDF), Ramanujan Fellowship, etc., to promote research and development in universities and colleges across the country.

Beside the above, the Mission for Advancement in High-impact Areas (MAHA) program of ANRF addresses priority-driven, solution-focused research in mission-mode. ANRF has launched EV-Mission as first mission mode program under MAHA. Further, the Intensification of Research in High Priority Areas (IRHPA) program of ANRF was designed to support research infrastructure and intensification. Under IRHPA, several areas were supported such as Centre for Energy Transformation and Storage, Emergent Properties of Nanoscale Matter, National Biosafety Level (BSL 3 / ABSL 3), Centres for Antibody Engineering, National facility for Cryogenic-Electron microscopy (Cryo-EM), etc.

International Travel Support (ITS) scheme of ANRF provides financial assistance to Indian researchers for presenting a research paper in an international scientific event (conference, seminar, workshop etc.) held abroad.

In alignment with the vision of NEP 2020, University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued "UGC (Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations 2023" to facilitate the establishment of branch campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEIs) in India. Under this regulation, 12 foreign universities have been issued letter of Intent (LoI) by the UGC for establishing their campuses in India till date. University of Southampton has started its Gurugram campus. University Grants Commission has also issued Regulations on Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign HEIs to offer Twinning, Joint Degree, and Dual Degree Programmes.

Moreover, the 'Study in India' program promotes Indian education globally to attract more international students. Additionally, the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) scheme has been realigned to strengthen research by fostering academic collaborations between top Indian institutions and leading universities from 28 selected countries, enhancing India's global academic presence and research capacity.

Government has taken numerous efforts to enhance the Research & Development (R&D) expenditure and create adequate opportunities for the researchers and also taken various steps to increase opportunities for research students pursuing Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral research. As the result of these concerted efforts, India has witnessed a massive jump in its Global Innovation Index (GII) ranking from 66th position in 2013 to 40th in 2023. India is at 6th position (in 2022) in number of patent applications from 8th position (in 2012) as per WIPO's World Intellectual Property Indicators. India also occupies 3rd rank in terms of number of Ph.Ds awarded in Science and Engineering (S&E) as per 'Research and Development statistics at a glance 2022-23' published by Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology. India also ranked 3rd in 2022 (from 6th in 2012) in terms of total number of Science and Engineering publications as per the National Science Foundation (NSF) database of the United States.

In the QS World University Rankings 2026, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have achieved notable positions. IIT Delhi has been placed at 123rd (150th in 2025), IIT Madras at 180th (227th in 2025), IIT Kharagpur at 215th (222nd in 2025), IIT Kanpur at 222nd (263rd in 2025), and IIT Guwahati 334th (344th in 2025).

Further, more than 400 incubators in the HEIs have resulted in more than 10,000 start-ups. India is home to more than 100 indigenous Unicorns and most of them have been associated with HEIs through alumni and faculty.

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