

From Initiation to Sustenance and to Enhancement An Ongoing Research Journey

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Abstract

Every higher educational institution works with an objective of teaching, training and research to extend both existing and new knowledge providing extensive support to faculty and student community to carry out research for qualification up gradation. Knowledge up gradation and enhancement is the first step towards quality enhancement. This becomes relevant to create proficient personnel through performance of theoretical and applied research, development and other programmes. A well constituted research committee facilitates and monitors all research oriented programmes leading to quality enhancement.

The paper examines how the inculcation of research activities enhances analytical and reasoning ability, improves teaching through modern techniques, and develops perspectives of research methodology. At the same time learning resource like research data bases, journals, software packages and the like are made available. All these lead to publication and presentations and funded, and consultancy projects. Further quality is enhanced through establishment of centers of excellence in frontier domains. Industry Institution linkages are promoted through these centers, MOUS could be signed with reputed international and national institutions and laboratories. Students can be encouraged to involve in projects, e-content, student club, training beyond curriculum, technical ideas, sponsoring best projects and seminars. All these lead to increased number of publications and presentations, attendance at high-impact seminars, research projects and identification of budding researchers among students which are all quality enhancement parameters.

Keywords: Research, quality enhancement, projects, students, publications, excellence, sustenance.

Introduction

Institutions of higher education have the greatest challenge of maintaining quality and enhancing it continuously. Research activities form an integral part of quality enhancement. In the context of complex social realities it has become a necessity for all institutes of higher learning to promote, sustain and enhance research culture which is a proven parameter for quality enhancement. Of the various quality enhancement measures research can be placed at the topmost pedestal for quality enhancement.

Promotion of Research Culture

Promotion and dissemination of research should be inclusive in the vision of the institution. Through promotion of excellence in research nation building is possible. Enhancement of research activities in different disciplines is an initiative towards establishment of quality standards. To achieve this goal the institution has to choose multiple pathways. Centers of excellence have to be created in different

domain areas which carry on research activities which are cutting edge in nature. Faculty members have to be encouraged to pursue major and minor research projects and disseminate the findings of their studies through research publications. Qualifications need to be upgraded by doctoral and post doctoral degrees. Research culture needs to be entrenched in the post graduate programmes by including major and minor projects as part of the course work.

Establishment of Research Committee

A Research committee has to be established with an eminent person of the organization as the chair. This committee has to oversee the entire research activities undertaken at the institution level. The Ph D and M Phil programmes pursued by the faculty members should be monitored for relevance and outcome. A portion of the annual budget has to be set aside for promotion of research activities. The approved projects need to be scrutinized. Regular workshops and seminars need to be conducted for faculty members and students who have an aptitude for research. It is not at all out of context to say that the institution should have its own research journal. With the passage of time the journal has to be upgraded with quality articles to the status of refereed journal with ISBN Number. Faculty members have to be given access to learning resources and reduction in workload to complete their projects and publish their findings in journals of repute. Monetary benefits should be announced for worthy research activities.

Promotion of faculty participation in Research Activities

Research is one of the core activities of institutions of higher learning. The same should be emphasized and documented in the vision and mission statement of the organization. Excellence in promotion of research is seen in pursuance of cutting edge research activities through research and development, projects and consultancy involving faculty members. This could be through industry – institute relationship, technology up gradation, issues related to natural and human hazards, development of learning methodologies with focus on interactive learning, development of entrepreneurial skills, art of planning , foreseeing future, reading market pulse, incubation and the like. Faculty members have to undertake research through projects, publications and presentations. They could be self-financed , funded (both in-house funding and external agency funding) consultancy (Revenue generation or honorary) collaborative research and the like.

Budgetary Allocation

A certain percentage of total budget should be exclusively earmarked for research and development. Seed money has to be sanctioned for in-house projects proposed by faculty members. As a developmental measure for research activity learning resources and lab facilities have to be upgraded. Extensive support to research activities allocation and sanction of budget promote healthy competition among the researchers.

Student Participation in research

Student should be encouraged to involve themselves in projects which are curriculum oriented and enables them to understand the fundamentals. They

should be involved in research projects, in-house projects, E – content development, training beyond curriculum, technical videos, innovative projects. A certain budget has to be allocated to provide financial aid. A compulsory paper on research methodology will help motivate and trigger a young researcher's mind. Students should also be motivated to participate and present papers in seminars and conferences. Well equipped labs, centers of excellence, computer and internet facility, working ambience, learning resource are all the main ingredients to facilitate research. Subscription to on-line and E – journals, collaboration with research institutions encourage students to involve in research activities. Provision for scholarships incentives will be an additional motivation to the students to involve in research projects. Collaborative research activities should be encouraged to a large extent. This has to be done through MOUS and linkages. This also leads to faculty exchange programmes, student exchange programmes, joint research and twinning programmes. Introduction of skill development programmes along with curriculum enhances the employability of the students. Establishing linkages with industries, institutes of higher learning and research bodies have widened the relevance of students in the global scenario.

Promotion of research not only leads to publications and presentations but also in publication of books, research papers, abstracts, proceeding, theses and the like.

Consultancy Services

An integral part of true research is 'Consultancy' providing consultancy services either on honorary basis or for remuneration enhances the quality value of the institution. This could be through guidance for setting up labs, standardizing protocols, procuring maintenance and provision of pure culture and the like. Publicity has to be accorded to these services to make them more popular and relevant. There are possibilities of involving in consultancy projects which generate revenue.

Conclusion

The research and extension activities of any organization promote curriculum development, publications, community service, practical thinking, knowledge exchange and entrepreneurship development. Encouragement to research activities lead to well equipped labs, MOUS with national and international institutes , projects, publications and presentations, incubation for budding entrepreneurs, action research, personal and professional growth, recognition of the institution in respective platforms, sharing of knowledge and recognition, commuting development and nation building. Collaborative research leads to faculty and students exchange, information exchange and scholarships. The institution may think of starting research programmes in innovative frontiers which are multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in nature. Impact can be created on industry personnel through special programmes and activities like interns' projects and skill development which are research oriented.

Hence the above points prove that research initiation, sustenance and enhancement increase the quality value of any institution of higher education.

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