

RESEARCH: WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE HOPE TO BE

Arunachalam Kumar, Editor, NUJHS, Mangalore - 575 018, India

One of the major thrust areas new India is pushing its way forwards is 'quality research: sadly, too long a neglected area in academia, publication and patenting have of late zoomed into the mainstream of higher education. While it is quite understandable and even perhaps conceded that hi-end research requires not just ingenious human resource but it also needs also massive infusion of capital. A miniscule of the nation's annual budget is set apart for funding laboratories, infrastructure, equipment and manpower. To belittle scientists and berate the system is merely looking for excuses. The centre has to liberally encourage inventiveness and native genius, not just by loosening its stranglehold on purse strings but also through making the process of applying and securing grants less cumbersome. The paper work process for applying for funding from central agencies (often flush with unspent corpus) is to be made simple and straightforward. A one-page application outlining the project in briefest terms is all that is required to assess merit and whittling down stuff from chaff.

The negatives also need introspection. Does every type of research require expensive imported equipment? How many in the scientific fraternity will honestly admit that they invariably inflate budgetary estimates in grant applications? In the world of medicine, even simple bedside observations or collating and analyzing epidemiological data (readily available in most hospital MRD sections) can be done without much monetary backing. Research does not always need hi-tech Clinical briefs, case reports and review articles also and make good material for quality publication. Yet, we perpetually whine groan and moan that there is nothing we can do research on or with.

The talent and tenacity of India's younger generation is titanic. It is for powers-that-be to recognize in the gen-next what is lacking in selves: drive, discipline, determination and indomitable will to relentless pursue and ultimately prevail. Brain drain is one thing, but brain waste is quite another. Let those that want to go where they want to, but let us nurture and nourish those that stay back – throwing their lot and future here, within India. Our generation cannot afford to let them down. Pat their back, the mandated push and unstinted praise. I am certain, in a decade or so, the scientific research scenario in India will open up and burgeon. We are blessed to be transiting through challenging times and be witness to the boom in technology. Let us be found wanting in will or enterprise. India cannot afford to let the knock on its door go unheard.

Join the revolution – be part of the renaissance. Use the pages of Nitte University Journal of Health Science to sound off. This nascent publication, still in its first year, is already listed in Index Copernicus and is now available on Nurses Meet, a professional health information delivery portal. The NUJHS is already receiving enquiries and scholarly contributions from many parts of India and even from abroad. I am confident in a few years we will be among the very best.