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## Qualitative Research: Issues and Recommendations for Indian Academic Colleges

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### Abstract

Academic research in India is expanding rapidly, but its quality is not increasing. Many educational professionals have highlighted concerns about the quality of research, particularly in social science. Data sciences is a rising discipline in which accurate predictions may be generated via data analysis. Qualitative data, like quantitative data, is extremely significant and falls primarily under the purview of social science. By conducting a focused group discussion, the researcher attempted to identify the issues encountered by college lecturers when doing a qualitative research. The report will also provide steps to improve the quality of qualitative data and its analysis.

**Key words:** Qualitative research, Social Sciences, Data Collection, Data Analysis

### Introduction and Brief background:

#### a) Growth of research in India:

Data from the research analytics platform SciVal were used in a study by the British higher education analyst Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), according to the report.

The report claims that India's research output has grown at a rate that is significantly larger than both the world average and that of its more prestigious western competitors.

However, the nation lags behind its neighboring China, which had growth of just over 60% between 2017 and 22. The difference between the two nations, however, seems to be narrowing as between 2019 and 2022, China's and India's research production both increased by 24%.

#### b) India Compared to Other Countries:

In terms of the overall number of research papers published during a five-year period, China continues to top the world, followed by the United States (4.4 million) as well as the UK (1.4 million). Due to its faster growth rate, India is expected to overtake the UK in the near future, according to the report. India is ranked ninth internationally in terms of research-related citations, nevertheless. This suggests, according to QS, that the nation should concentrate on high-quality, pertinent research and make sure that this information is shared across the academic community. India faces difficulties in producing high-impact research, as seen by the low percentage of its research publications that are cited in prestigious international journals.

#### c) Good performance in Engineering and Science Research Papers in comparison to Social Science:

India saw 15% of its papers cited in prestigious journals between 2017 and 2021. The United Kingdom and Germany, which are its nearest rivals in terms of research output volume, have the highest journal citation percentages, more than twice as much, or 38% and 33%, respectively," the research states. Engineering and technology make up the majority (52.6%) of all research output in India. Petroleum Engineering and Computer Sciences account for 24% of the field's total research output, respectively, within the larger faculty. Natural sciences (36%) and life sciences & medicine (35%) are the next two most popular research areas in the nation. According to the survey, India produces 19% of its research output with international partners, which is in line with the world average of 21% and with that of its main rivals. This is one of the important factors that QS takes into account when ranking colleges and programs every year. If we look at the share of Social Science Research its very poor in comparison with the sciences, it's hardly 3%.

**d) Relationship between Social Science and Quantitative Research:**

We now have more people than all of China combined, making us the world's most populous country. There is huge scope for social science study in India under this context. A subset of social science study known as qualitative research gathers, uses, and attempts to understand non-numerical data. The goal of qualitative research is to illuminate the significance that underlies the behavior or results that quantitative research normally measures. As a result, qualitative researchers look at the significance, interpretation, and symbolism of social life as well as its processes and relationships. Many social and behavioral scientists view qualitative modes of inquiry as much a perspective on how to approach examining a research topic as it is a method. Because there is a strong relationship between qualitative research and social science, enhancing qualitative research's contributions will advance social science research. Ex. UGC Chairman Dr. Sukhdeo Thorat & Samar Varma in his book "*Social Science Research in India: Status, Issues, and Policies*" points out that addressing issues like lack of funding, availability of data, infrastructure, and quality of research output, it will serve as a national benchmark and reference database for social sciences in India."

**Methodology:**

For a group discussion, 8 professors from different social science departments were invited. The individuals chosen for the group were all employed at SNDT Women's University, Mumbai. Each group member had at least six years of experience in the academic sector and had earned their Ph.D. The researcher himself directed the dialogue. For the sake of the debate, both audio and written notes were gathered. Each participant in a classroom had to locate a comfortable seat with their backs to the other. The researcher took great care to explain the main concepts and the purpose of the study to each participant in order to avoid participant misunderstanding. The basic concepts and issues were understood by all attendees.

**Following are the main points of the discussion:**

- 1) What are the primary issues that the qualitative research identified?
- 2) Infrastructure and finance concerns.
- 3) The suggestions on how to solve the issues and raise the standard of the research.

**Main Findings and Conclusions:****a) Following were the main problems of qualitative research were brought to notice:**

- 1) Insufficient experience in research; frequently, the analysis portion of the study is disregarded
- 2) The question of whether to include a hypothesis in qualitative research is seldom clear-cut. How to support a hypothesis, if one exists.
- 3) The problem of data validation is always present. Large samples could not be obtained, and it is difficult to draw the proper conclusions because there are fewer individuals.
- 6) It is exceedingly challenging to maintain objectivity in research. Secondary data is difficult to obtain at one place, one needs to travel to get the data. Traveling becomes inevitable and expensive.
- 7) Since diverse subjective interpretations of the facts are possible, genuine research cannot be produced.
- 8) Faculty members are overworked with regard to their administrative and instructional duties. Hence cannot undertake field visit or interviews. They look for easy ways of research.

**b) Following are the main highlights of the discussion regarding availability of infrastructure and funding:**

- 1) Most workplaces lack adequate infrastructure.
- 2) There is no access to the internet, computers, or programs like NVIVO or ALTAS.
- 3) Software training is not offered. There are inadequate training programmes for qualitative research available on even internet sites like Swayam.
- 4) There are no research facilities with the capability of recording audio and video.
- 5) There are just a few financing organizations which we are aware of, UGC and ICSSR.

6) Funding received for the social science is less as compare to science. This results in low research motivation.

**c) Following are the few suggestions discussed:**

1) The administrative staff should manage the college's administrative duties rather than the teachers. If enough teacher and non-teaching staff is hired in accordance with the need and are assigned courses linked to their areas of specialization, this will allow faculty to devote more time to research. They should also be paid in accordance with government standards.

2) Software and qualitative research techniques should be regularly taught.(Training)

3) The ICSSR and UGC should annually invite the research proposals and carefully adhere to the deadline.

4) More faculty exchanges and interactions across institutions are needed. So that could be more knowledge sharing

5) Given that leaving a city like Mumbai is incredibly expensive, housing options have to be available on campus. The majority of instructors spend 2 to 4 hours traveling. This leaves no time for research.

6) Each institute should have a special research cell, which should help teachers to draft there research proposals and help/cooperate them to conduct the research.

By producing scientific information that offers insights—even enlightenment—into the dynamics of human behaviour and development, qualitative research, also known as social science research (SSR), plays a crucial role in enhancing societies. It is essential that the research ecosystem is active and energetic, that the institutions overseeing it are strong and effective, and that those doing high-quality research be powerful and well-governed if social sciences are to fully realize their potential in influencing public policy. This volume goes into detail on several aspects of SSR in India and makes a compelling argument for creating a complete national social science strategy that may significantly support and foster a research ecosystem for better public policymaking in the nation.

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