

Scientific Research in India - The Challenges

What is the issue?

\n\n

Systemic issues that hinder research needs to be addressed.

\n\n

What are the administrative challenges?

\n\n

- \n
 - The system is also largely run by scientists-turned-bureaucrats and “nepotism, patronage culture” are prevalent.
- \n
 - Notably, Indian scientists perceive success as ‘becoming an administrative head in research institutions’, rather than advancing research.
- \n
 - Also, the prevalent incompetence across the spectrum has taken a toll on ‘peer reviewing’ where incompetent scientists get to reinforce their mediocrity.
- \n
 - There is a culture of elitism in our labs, where the manual work is done by lab assistants and scientists mostly just command orders.
- \n
 - Also, rather than contributing to social debates, Indian scientists shun public commentary, unless it is to serve as government spokespersons.
- \n
 - This has led to a situation where prominent politicians pass off popular myths as science, without attracting a backlash from the scientific fraternity.

\n\n

What are the challenges regarding funds?

\n\n

- \n
 - Currently, it has been observed that, small elite research institutions get most of the grants, while universities get very less research funds.

- \n
- Consequently, universities focus mainly on teaching, which has resulted in a clear segregation of education & research – thereby affecting both.
- \n
- Due to funding constraints, almost all the significant work from India is in the theoretical domain, as these are less burdened by money requirements.
- \n
- Poor performance in experimental sciences is attributed mainly to the lack of significant collaborative efforts and sustained long-term funding.
- \n

\n\n

What could be the way forward?

\n\n

- \n
- With globalisation, it is easier to notice the growing contrast between the designs for promoting innovation in the western world and in India.
- \n
- Having a young population and a strong Diaspora that is more affluent than any other country, India has the potential pioneering high-tech innovation.
- \n
- As a first step, it is important to acknowledge the significant contributions of Indian scientists abroad and capitalise on their learning through collaboration.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

