

# Chapter 17

## Institutional Mechanism for Promoting Social Science Research in India

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Research in the social sciences is essential to advancing society comprehension of human behaviour and growth. Over the last twenty years, social science research has expanded outside the conventional academic boundaries to include topics relevant to the nation's current socio - economic and political landscape. In developing nations like India, social research is at a turning point. The absence of adequate institutional support and financing is one of the main issues with social science research in India. The Government of India and its institutions, including the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), provide the majority of funding for social science research in India. The number of non-state actors in social research in India has significantly increased since the mid-1990s. This chapter examines the contribution made by the various institutions to the advancement of social science research in India against this backdrop.*

### **17.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the intricate dynamics of human civilization, Social Sciences provide profound insights into the swift changes that are shaping our world. They offer a gateway to understand the sophistications of human societies, cultures, and behaviors, presenting unique opportunities to meaningfully contribute to humanitarian progress. Social sciences encompass a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, political science, public administration, policy studies and more. Every discipline here is significant to societal development as they offer a lens to explore and address pressing societal issues, ensure proper public governance and draft sustainable policies for the planet.

Social Sciences cultivate critical thinking skills, research skills, and a better comprehension of human interactions and societal structures. A social scientist today can analyze economic trends, understand

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cultural diversity, advocate for social justice, or shape public policy, in order to make a tangible impact on communities and organizations.

Through empirical research and theoretical frameworks, social scientists at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UNESCO unravel the intricacies of human relationships, societal institutions, and the broader forces that influence human lives. The reports emphasize the critical role of Social Sciences in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlights the need for interdisciplinary approaches to address complex global challenges. Both studies confirm that Social Sciences form the foundation for policy formulation and informed decision-making across various sectors such as governance, public policy, healthcare, education, and business. The reports also reveal that the Social Sciences and Humanities account for about 26% of all research and development spending worldwide. The All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21 gives an account that over 12 million students were enrolled in social science programs across higher learning institutions in India.

Furthermore, Social Sciences also promote understanding of human behavior within diverse social contexts, and thereby assure conflict resolution, foster empathy and harmonious relationships within communities. It also plays a pivotal role in upholding the values of social justice by identifying the barriers to equality and proposing egalitarian solutions that would uplift marginalized populations of the community.

## **17.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

The humanitarian approach of social sciences is the need of the hour in a rapidly changing world that is characterized by globalization and technological advancements. It contributes significantly to economic development and sustainability by providing insights into economic systems, consumer research, and resource management. The knowledge system conceives sustainable development strategies, confronts environmental challenges, and ensures fair distribution of resources across different groups of the society. Careers in Social Sciences are also equally influenced by the critical aspects of human life. Social scientists are the backbone of organizations like the United Nations and World Bank as they design and implement development projects. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has come up with an estimate that, in barely 5 years, occupations based on social science will grow by 10-20% worldwide. A deeper study by the Pew Research Center has revealed that a majority of 45% graduates work in education and 19% of them work for the government and in public administration offices. As the world grows more inclusive and dynamic in nature, social science professionals in governance are coming up with equitable policies that impact children's education, labor laws in workplace, wage policies, and even tax reforms. Additionally, they act as voices of the social welfare in order to bring down systemic injustices, discrimination, and human rights violations.

Social scientists take their jobs to an international level as they collaborate with governments, NGOs, and international organizations in order to formulate and execute programmes whose onus lies in economic development, strengthening of communal governance, and improve living conditions in under-served regions. Social Sciences cut across geographical boundaries in order to address challenges such as migration, climate change, and geopolitical tensions. The social scientists who back such international collaborations and exchange programmes can enrich the global perspective and cross-cultural experience.

Moreover, they design and evaluate educational programmes, carry out research on teaching methodologies, and assist lifelong learning initiatives. Their contributions in the corporate field include valuable

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