

**A Briefing on the Odisha Research Conclave-2021(ORC-2021) being
held at the Convention Hall, Utkal University during
November 13 -14, 2021**

Preamble:

The only way to structure Higher Education in a vast country like India in an equitable manner is to align it with the development process that aims at creating a better tomorrow for all of its citizens inclusively. This need renewed focus at state universities to synergise the teaching-learning process, employability-based competency development, integration of a practice based ethical value system and finally inculcating a societally relevant research – development-innovation culture amongst the faculty and students. The Government of Odisha has been trying to do just that through its recent reform processes. Some of them include capacity building in Faculty, governance changes, curriculum changes, examination reforms, infrastructure support, and above all actively facilitating research and innovation among young researchers.

Research and Innovation is at the heart of the knowledge economy, perhaps the strongest means to create livelihood and the benchmark of global excellence in the new millennium. The state of Odisha has been trying to put in place a research and innovation ecosystem through provision of sophisticated research tools at state universities, e-libraries, interdisciplinary centres of excellence, scheme for competitive seed research funding for young faculty in starting phase of career and providing bright young Ph.D. aspirants with state research fellowship. While a few of these are being addressed through the World Bank loan assisted project, Odisha Higher Education Program for Excellence and Equity (OHEPEE), the issues related to full-time research scholars and the seed research grants have been addressed through OURIIP.

In this context, OURIIP has been designed to provide about 175 state junior research fellowships (5 in each subject for 35 subjects) @ Rs. 15,000/- per month for four years (+1) or on completion of PhD, whichever is earlier. The NET qualification is kept as the minimum eligibility for the scholarship. The candidate has to complete her work as a full-time scholar at any state university of Odisha and publish quality papers in Science Citation Index (SCI) or SCOPUS journals for the continuance of the fellowship. A novel monitoring scheme through an annual scholar's conclave is designed as the platform for review, and it is expected that this will increase annual research publication of the state universities. . Keeping equity goals in mind, 40% of fellowships are reserved for women researchers. Beyond the research students, young faculty below 45 years of age play a key role in contributing to R&I footprint. The second part of the OURIIP proposal provides young faculty are encouraged to compete for a seed grant of Rs. 500,000 for a two-year period. The Scholar's Conclave will also be the common platform to monitor their progress and mentor their future research.

During the years 2019 and 2020, 80 young faculty from science, engineering, humanities and commerce streams have been provided with seed research funding. The advertisement for 2021 is published during October and applications are being received. The number of Junior research fellowships during the last two years has increased steadily (50 in numbers). These scholars also participate in teaching thereby helping the university and improving their teaching skills. The low numbers in research Scholar category is attributed to the lack of guides having vacant slots in state universities. The OSHEC has been regularly (quarterly basis) conducting online monitoring meetings with the recipients. Despite the pandemic, there have been fairly impressive achievements that include two domestic patent applications and publications in journals that are part of Scopus Database.

The scholar's colloquium is a novel concept to get researchers working in all disciplines to come together on one platform. The format has intentionally been kept to poster presentations for most effective time management and triggering interdisciplinary discussions amongst the researchers. Due to the severity of the pandemic during 2020, the event has been slightly delayed. This year the scholar's colloquium event is being organised in association with Utkal University in their convention Hall during November 13 and 14th. The first day will be devoted to the OURIIP participants; i.e. about 73 faculty and 07 research fellows totaling to 80 papers. The second day (November 14, 2021) the colloquium will show case papers received from non- OURIIP young faculty from the state universities and colleges and will have about 91 papers on display. Since the purpose of OSHEC is to create spirit of healthy competitiveness among the research scholars of the State and to increase the interdisciplinary research output, the research scholars from the projects, other than OURIIP have been invited to participate in this conclave.

Since review of progress and mentoring are major objectives, the papers have been divided in to six categories, namely, Physical sciences, Biological sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences, Language and literature, commerce and business studies. Five eminent researchers have been identified for each group to visit the posters in their section discuss with the researcher and grade each poster. Two best papers in each group and each day will be identified as best presentations. All the abstracts will be available as an Abstract Book.

In addition, the colloquium will have an inaugural session that will be graced by His Excellency Prof. Ganeshi Lal. Hon'ble Governor of Odisha. Each day will have Key note address delivered by an eminent researcher of international repute. The Key note address on 13th November is being delivered by Prof. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Director, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Member Atomic Energy Commission of India who will speak on applications of nuclear energy and research prospects. The Keynote

address on 14th November is being delivered by Prof. Chintamani Mohapatra, Rector Jawaharlal Nehru University on New directions in Social Science Research. There will be a panel discussion on each day where Eminent Vice Chancellors /professors will give their remarks on the colloquium and ways to improve interdisciplinarity in research in Odisha. There will be a valedictory function with Hon'ble Minister Higher Education, Government of Odisha will be the Chief Guest. The valedictory function will summarise the two day event and set the future path. Secretary Higher Education and Vice Chancellors of all the state universities have also been invited to be present during the conclave and interact with the young researchers