



Original Article

A STUDY OF THE SCHEME OF DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH (SHODH)

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Abstract:

High-quality research plays a pivotal role in knowledge creation, innovation, and the promotion of sustainable development within the higher education sector. Recognizing the need to enhance the standard of doctoral research, the Government of Gujarat launched the Scheme of Developing High-Quality Research (SHODH) to provide structured financial and academic support to Ph.D. scholars. The present investigation explores the objectives, framework, implementation process, and perceived effectiveness of the SHODH scheme in improving research quality. A descriptive survey research method was used, and data were gathered from SHODH beneficiary doctoral scholars through a questionnaire. The collected data were analysed using statistical techniques such as percentage analysis and independent sample t-tests. The results reveal that the SHODH scheme exerts a positive impact on research continuity, scholarly motivation, and overall research quality among beneficiaries, with statistically significant differences observed across selected demographic variables. The findings of the study highlight the effectiveness of state-level research funding initiatives and their role in strengthening research ecosystems in higher education.

Keywords: SHODH Scheme, Research Funding, Doctoral Research, Research Quality, Higher Education.

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Introduction:

Research excellence is widely regarded as a critical indicator of the quality and international standing of higher education institutions. High-quality research contributes significantly to intellectual advancement, informed policymaking, and socio-economic development. Nevertheless, doctoral scholars frequently encounter challenges such as financial limitations, inadequate research infrastructure, and insufficient institutional support, which can adversely influence research quality and timely completion.

To address these challenges, governments and funding agencies have implemented structured research fellowship programmes. In India, along with to national-level fellowships, multiple state governments have initiated targeted research support initiatives. Among these, the Scheme of Developing High-Quality Research (SHODH), launched by the Government of Gujarat, seeks to encourage sustained, original, and ethically sound research by providing financial assistance to full-time doctoral scholars.

Despite the importance of the SHODH scheme, empirical investigations assessing its effectiveness and effect on research quality remain limited. This study seeks to bridge this research gap by systematically examining the role of the SHODH scheme in supporting doctoral research and promoting a research-oriented academic culture within higher education institutions.

Objectives:

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To examine the objectives and key features of the SHODH scheme.
2. To assess the perceived effectiveness of the SHODH scheme in promoting high-quality research among Ph.D. scholars.
3. To analyse the opinions of SHODH beneficiaries regarding the scheme's contribution to
4. research motivation and continuity.
5. To determine whether beneficiary's opinions differ significantly based on gender.
6. To examine differences in beneficiary's opinions based on residential background (urban and rural).

Variables:

The study considered the following variables:

Sr. No.	Variable	Type	Level
1	Gender and Area	Independent	Male / Female, Urban / Rural
2	Opinion towards SHODH Scheme	Dependent	---
3	Research Level	Controlled	Ph.D. Scholars
4	Discipline	Moderator	Arts, Commerce, Science
5	Economic Status	Intervening	---



Hypotheses:

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female SHODH beneficiaries in their opinions towards the scheme.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between urban and rural SHODH beneficiaries in their opinions towards the scheme.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference among beneficiaries from different academic disciplines in their opinions towards the SHODH scheme.

Scope:

This study is delimited to the Scheme of Developing High-Quality Research (SHODH) as implemented in the state of Gujarat, India. It focuses exclusively on Ph.D. scholars who are beneficiaries of the scheme and examines their perceptions of its effectiveness in enhancing research quality. The scope of the investigation is restricted to selected demographic and academic variables and excludes non-beneficiary scholars, research supervisors, and policymakers. The findings of the study aim to provide empirical evidence relevant to state-level research funding initiatives and may serve as a source for future policy formulation in higher education research support.

Methods:

A descriptive survey research method was used for the study. This approach was considered appropriate for

collecting systematic information from a large population of doctoral scholars regarding their experiences with the SHODH scheme.

Population and Sample:

The population of the study consisted of all Ph.D. scholars who were beneficiaries of the SHODH scheme in Gujarat. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample, ensuring adequate representation across gender, academic disciplines, and residential backgrounds.

Tool for Data Collection:

Data was collected using a self-developed structured questionnaire designed to measure beneficiary's opinions towards various aspects of the SHODH scheme, including financial support, research motivation, and academic progress. Content validity was ensured through evaluation by experts.

Statistical Techniques:

The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis and independent sample t-tests to examine differences between groups.

Results:

The analysis revealed that SHODH beneficiaries generally hold positive opinions regarding the scheme's contribution to their research work. The financial assistance provided under the scheme was reported to reduce economic stress and enable sustained engagement in



research activities. A statistically significant difference was observed between male and female beneficiaries, indicating variation in perceptions towards the scheme. Similarly, urban beneficiaries reported more favourable opinions compared to rural beneficiaries, suggesting disparities in access to research resources and academic exposure. No significant differences were found across academic disciplines, indicating the scheme's uniform relevance across fields.

Findings:

1. The SHODH scheme positively influences research continuity and motivation among doctoral scholars.
2. Significant differences exist in beneficiary's opinions based on gender.
3. Urban beneficiaries exhibit more favourable perceptions of the scheme than rural beneficiaries.
4. Academic discipline does not significantly influence beneficiaries' opinions towards the SHODH scheme.
5. The scheme aids in fostering a conducive research environment within higher education institutions.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that the Scheme of Developing High-Quality Research (SHODH) is an effective state-level initiative for promoting doctoral research quality. By providing structured financial support, the scheme enhances research motivation, continuity, and scholarly engagement among Ph.D. scholars. While the overall impact of the scheme is positive,

addressing disparities related to residential background and strengthening institutional support mechanisms may further improve its effectiveness. The findings highlighted the significance of sustained public investment in research funding to strengthen higher education research ecosystems.

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