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Contact us

www.theasianthinker.com

Email- asianthinkerjournal@gmail.com

Head and Publishing Office: Dr. Ramshankar, Haidargarh Road, Bhitariya, Ram Sanehi
Ghat, Barabanki, Pin-225409 (UP)

Branch Office: 91, Aadarsh Colony, Biharipura, Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad-201009 (UP)

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Preface...

Social science research in India boasts a rich history, marked by both continuity and change. While the roots of social inquiry in India stretch back centuries, the modern era of social science research has witnessed significant growth, fueled by institutional support and a growing recognition of its importance for national development.

Early social science research in India was heavily influenced by colonial interests. The establishment of research societies during the colonial period laid the groundwork for future endeavors. However, post-independence India saw a surge in indigenous research efforts. The Planning Commission, established in 1950, played a crucial role by promoting social science research (SSR) to address social, economic, and administrative challenges. The Kothari Commission (1964) further emphasized the significance of social sciences for social development.

A pivotal moment arrived in 1969 with the creation of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). The ICSSR's role in funding research projects, establishing research institutions, and promoting collaboration has been instrumental in propelling the growth of SSR in India. Universities, with over 400 housing social science departments, and government research institutes have also become key players in the research landscape.

There has been a notable expansion in the number of students pursuing social science research. This is reflected in the rising enrolment figures for M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs. This growth in human capital is crucial for sustained research productivity. However, the growth of SSR in India is not without its challenges. A persistent issue is the disparity in funding between social sciences and natural sciences. The allocation of research grants often leans towards STEM fields, potentially hindering the potential of social science research to contribute meaningfully to national development.

Another challenge lies in the need to further strengthen the quality and reach of research. Encouraging interdisciplinary research and promoting the dissemination of research findings through accessible mediums like publications and public outreach programs can significantly enhance the impact of SSR. Despite the challenges, the future of social science research in India appears promising. The increasing focus on social issues like poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation necessitates robust social science research to inform policy decisions and guide interventions. Additionally, the rise of digital technologies opens new avenues for data collection, analysis, and dissemination, potentially revolutionizing the way social science research is conducted in India.

In conclusion, the growth of social science research in India has been a journey of remarkable progress. From its colonial roots to its current institutionalized form, social science research has emerged as a critical tool for understanding and addressing the complexities of Indian society. By overcoming funding disparities and fostering a more robust research environment, India can leverage the power of social science research to navigate the challenges of the 21st century and chart a course for a more equitable and sustainable future.

(Editor in Chief)