

## Responding to requests

In the course of research work, we often need to communicate with other researchers for the reprints of their publications, or for some queries and clarifications related to the research. Sometimes, opinions of experts or senior researchers are essential for the young researchers while concluding their research outcomes. During our work on plant systematics, we witnessed several instances where the expert opinion prevented publishing many 'new taxa' which were actually not 'new', but al-

ready described earlier with some other names. A similar situation can also be seen in identifying lesser known taxa, where the expert opinion plays a vital role to confirm their identity.

The response from researchers could be anywhere from immediate to never. We feel that it is a basic duty of any researcher to attend to such requests. Even if there is some problem, the researcher should inform immediately. However, from our personal experiences we can mention that responses from regional re-

searchers are proportionately much less than those working abroad. The timely response will not only increase their credibility, but will also greatly help in the overall progress of research output.

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## Research at undergraduate level

It was nice reading about the concerns and justifications on the topic of research at undergraduate level<sup>1,2</sup>.

In a state when research levels even at national research institutes/organizations, IITs, central universities and state universities are alarmingly downgrading, what to think about the research motivation, facilities and outcomes in college level UG and PG courses. Government and planners of science in the country seem to have realized the need to pick the brains at the earliest and provide them the environment for motivation to take a research career by setting up a number of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISERs) at different locations of the country. These institutes having huge grants towards research facilities and well educated, dedicated and motivated faculty can contribute a lot to strengthen the scientific base of the country. Many reputed educational institutes such as IISc, IITs and IISERs boosting a high level of research base facilities, well supported by their

intelligent, innovative and dedicated faculty have already started integrated science courses like BS/B Sc and BS-MS with students of high calibre (toppers of JEE Advanced and JEE Main). It is expected that they will strengthen the UG and PG research base in the country which will be enough instead of expecting an innovative science research revolution at each and every university and college of the country. Moreover, most of the universities and colleges in the states are struggling to survive with financial shortages and it will be difficult for the faculty members also to extract much science from the students enrolled in such establishments as these students are, of course, not that serious in research compared to their counterparts in institutes such as IISc, IITs and IISERs. In this regard, I agree with Bagchi's view that it is fairly enough to make UGs to do research projects as part of their course work with modest objectives in order to introduce the students with concepts of experimental design, replica-

tion, systematic observations, standardization of methods and gaining writing skills. At PG level these projects can be more advanced giving further opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience with the process of scientific enquiry instead of expecting publications in reputed journals or patents.

It is our duty as teachers to motivate the next generation of students to take science and science research as a career in order to strengthen the future science base of our country.

1. Virk, H. S., *Curr. Sci.*, 2017, **112**(8), 1613.
2. Bagchi, S., *Curr. Sci.*, 2017, **112**(9), 1797.

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