

# Social Science Research in South Asia

## An analysis of the published journal literature

Subbiah Arunachalam

### Genesis

Early in 2008, the Regional Office for South Asia and China (SARO) of IDRC, New Delhi, invited me to speak on the research environment in India at their staff retreat held at Hotel Shangri-La, New Delhi. In my talk I pointed out that overall scientific research in India was not achieving its full potential and I listed the reasons. In passing I made the remark that social sciences research in India was a poor and neglected cousin of research in science and technology and needed immediate attention.

A few months later, I was asked to carry out a scientometric analysis of social science research in five South Asian countries, viz. India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and present it to a team of experts.

I was asked to analyze data from five years of *Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)*<sup>1</sup> published by Thomson Reuters. I had used *Science Citation Index (SCI)* in the past to carry out several scientometric studies but had not used *SSCI* for such studies. I wondered if *SSCI* data alone would be adequate as the coverage of social science literature from South Asia in *SSCI* is not as comprehensive as that from North America and Western Europe. I decided to analyze data from other sources as well, such as *Scopus*,<sup>2</sup> *Sociological Abstracts*,<sup>3</sup> and *Econlit*.<sup>4</sup>

This report is in two parts. Part 1 presents analysis of data from *SSCI*. Part 2 presents data and analysis from *SCImago* database<sup>5</sup> developed by Prof. Felix de Moya Anegon of the University of Granada in Spain. *SCImago* is built from *Scopus* data. I would also like to analyze data from *Econlit* and *Sociological Abstracts*, if I can find some financial support.

A word about scientometrics. The word came from the Russian title of a book by Prof. V V Nalimov, a polymath not as well known as he should be, *Naukometriya*.<sup>6</sup> Scientometrics is based on the premise that as almost all research leads to publications (mostly in refereed journals), the journal literature can be a mirror of the research enterprise. Although early studies date back to 1917 when F J Cole and Eales<sup>7</sup> published their paper in *Science Progress*, it was not until Eugene Garfield<sup>8</sup> wrote his seminal article in *Science* in 1955 that the field picked up momentum. That is not to take away the contributions of other pioneers; Gene Garfield himself had listed the historical papers in scientometrics in his keynote address to the Eleventh International Conference of the International Society for Scientometrics and Informatics (ISSI), 2007.<sup>9</sup> The pioneers include with the year of their key paper in parentheses A J Lotka (1926),<sup>10</sup> P K Gross (1927),<sup>11</sup> S C Bradford (1934, 1948),<sup>12,13</sup> G K Zipf (1949).<sup>14</sup> Others who have made outstanding contributions to the development of scientometrics include Derek de Solla Price<sup>15,16</sup> of *Little Science, Big Science* fame, Robert Merton,<sup>17</sup> the American sociologist, and his students, and not to miss J D Bernal.<sup>18</sup> Scientometrics is used to study the structure of science, to trace the evolution of an idea or a research front and to develop quantitative indicators for formulating science policy. The National Science Foundation<sup>19</sup> in the United States and the Directorate of Research of the European Union<sup>20</sup> use scientometrics in compiling science indicators.

The bibliometric analysis has shown that the two databases used often in bibliometric analysis in the sciences, namely *Web of Science* and SCImago (based on *Scopus*) are not good enough to give us a clear picture of social science research in India and other South Asian countries. Their coverage of key journals from the region is inadequate. Clearly we need to work with other secondary sources, which, however, may not allow bibliometric analysis as readily as SSCI would.

---

## Part 1

### Social Science Research in South Asia as Reflected by SSCI

Let us begin with looking at data on the number of papers published from the five South Asian Countries and indexed in *Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)* and compare them with data on the number of papers from these countries indexed in *Science Citation Index (SCI)*.

Given below are the numbers of papers in the sciences (including technology and medicine) as indexed in *SCI* and the numbers of papers indexed in *SSCI* in the years 2000 – 2008. The data for 2008 are not for the full year, but only up to October-November.

Year	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka
2000	18140 (654)	617 (38)	389 (50)	136 (11)	204 (12)
2001	19145 (563)	620 (32)	401 (50)	151 (19)	189 (20)
2002	20659 (526)	785 (37)	444 (39)	177 (20)	231 (18)
2003	22854 (662)	922 (47)	450 (57)	174 (22)	327 (29)
2004	24778 (667)	1011 (45)	553 (53)	189 (17)	281 (25)
2005	27451 (686)	1279 (54)	595 (57)	199 (30)	337 (35)
2006	30927 (821)	1716 (50)	692 (65)	258 (25)	326 (41)
2007	35696 (877)	2529 (80)	748 (74)	250 (33)	390 (46)
2008*	32673 (524)	2555 (62)	660 (49)	205 (20)	425 (28)
<b>Total</b>	<b>232323 (5980)</b>	<b>12035 (445)</b>	<b>5064 (494)</b>	<b>1739 (197)</b>	<b>2710 (254)</b>

\* Only up to end of November (for *SCI*) and early October (for *SSCI*) when the search was made. Figures in parentheses refer to number of papers indexed in *SSCI*.

In all the five countries social science research is clearly seen to be a poor cousin of research in science and technology. Except for India, no other country has published more than 500 papers in nearly eight years in all of social sciences as seen from *SSCI*. In these countries, the number of papers published annually is increasing with years. The ratio of the number of papers indexed in *SSCI* to that indexed in *SCI* over the nearly eight year period considered varies from 2.6% in India and 3.7% in Pakistan to 9.4% in Sri Lanka, 9.8% in Bangladesh and 11.3% in Nepal.

There is hardly any research in social sciences, defined broadly to include economics, econometrics, finance, business, sociology, social work, anthropology, public policy, etc., in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, as seen from journal papers indexed in *Scopus* (and *SCImago*). India is the only South Asian country to have some significant presence. Please see Part 2 of this report.

With the region as a whole facing more than its share of problems – ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional and caste-based strife, separatism, intolerance, terrorism, violence, poverty, gender injustice – there is a great need for research in social sciences. And yet, South Asian countries have not invested enough in such research.

### **Bibliometric analysis of the SSCI data**

Table 1 presents data on the distribution of social science research papers from South Asia (meaning at least one of the authors has given an address in one of the five countries) by year along with the number of times these papers have been cited up to October 2008. Please note the data for 2008 are incomplete. [The search was made in early October, and it does take a few months for a paper to be indexed in SSCI after it appears in a journal.]

In all five countries there is a perceptible increase in the number of papers published in recent years. For example, the number of papers published from India jumped from 686 in 2005 to 821 in 2006 and 877 in 2007 and the number for Bangladesh jumped from the 50s during 2003-2005 to 65 in 2006 and 74 in 2007.

Although India accounted for a very large number of papers – 12 times its nearest rival Bangladesh – in terms of citations per paper for the entire period India recorded the lowest, viz. 2.1. The other four countries have recorded a figure higher than 3.0: Pakistan, 3.55; Bangladesh, 3.59; Sri Lanka, 3.09; and Nepal, 3.54.

Table 2 presents data on the distribution of papers from the five countries by document type. While a very large proportion of papers from these countries are, as expected, full-length articles [India, 69%; Pakistan, 78%; Bangladesh, 85%; Sri Lanka, 79%; and Nepal, 87%], a substantial proportion, 15.6%, of publications from India are book reviews.

Tables 3-7 list journals where researchers from the five countries have published their papers during 2000-2008 together with the impact factor of the journals, number of papers published and the number of times these papers were cited till October 2008. Indian social scientists have published their work in 1207 journals; Pakistani researchers have published in 240 journals; Bangladeshi researchers have published in 212 journals; Sri Lankan researchers have published in 169 journals; and researchers in Nepal have used 122 journals.

Indian researchers have published just one paper each in eight years in 564 journals and only two papers each in 212 journals. At the other end, more than 350 papers in one journal (*Contributions to Indian Sociology*), more than 200 papers in three journals, more than a hundred papers in four journals, more than 50 papers in 11 journals and more than 25 papers in 34 journals. The same kind of skewed distribution is observed in other four countries as well.

Indian researchers have published more often in journals in the areas of sociology (including social work and anthropology) and health/ medicine, psychology and psychiatry. Of the 27 journals in which Indian researchers have published more than 30 papers, only five are Indian journals: *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (353 papers), *Man in India* (246), *Indian Journal of Social Work* (205), *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* (69), and *Indian Journal of Medical Research* (31). Other Indian journals often used are *National Medical Journal of India* (27 papers), and *Indian Pediatrics* (18). Indian researchers have also published often in *International Journal of Psychology* (131), *Development and Change* (75), *Energy Policy* (75), *British Journal of Psychiatry* (71), *Scientometrics* (63), *Medicine, Science and the Law* (60). A large number of journals often used by Indian researchers (11 out of the top 27 and 20 out of the

top 50) are in the area of medicine/ health/ psychology/ psychiatry and these include *Australian and New Zealand journal of Psychiatry* (58), *Psycho-oncology* (50), *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* (47), *Journal of ECT* (Electro Convulsive Therapy) (45), *Social Science and Medicine* (39) and *Reproductive Health Matters* (37).

Papers published in psychiatry and medicine-related journals and energy journals are cited far more often than papers published in sociology, social work and anthropology. This is expected as papers in sciences are usually cited more often than those in pure social sciences. The 353 papers in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* have been cited only 20 times; the 246 papers in *Man in India* have been cited 16 times and the 205 papers in *Indian Journal of Social Work* have been cited only 27 times. In contrast, the 71 papers published by Indian researchers in *British Journal of Psychiatry* have been cited 536 times, the 47 papers published in *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* have been cited 165 times, and the 36 papers published in *Schizophrenia Research* have been cited 256 times. The 75 Indian papers in *Energy Policy* have been cited 224 times and the 31 papers in *World Development* have been cited 165 times. Generally, papers in medicine and related areas are cited more often than papers in hard core social sciences.

Clearly, publishing in Indian journals is not very attractive; as seen from the data papers published in Indian social science journals are poorly cited. Possibly because many of them do not have a large circulation. The argument that much of what is researched and published in India is of regional interest cannot explain such deplorably small number of citations. Unfortunately, Indian social science researchers, unlike some physicists, do not make their research papers accessible through open access repositories such as inter-operable institutional open access repositories or global repositories such as *RePEc*.<sup>21</sup> Currently, the RePEc database holds over 745,000 items of interest, over 631,000 of which are available online. These include 289,000 working papers and 441,000 journal articles.

Some experts believe that the quality of research performed, with a few exceptions, is rather poor. For example, says Subramaniam:<sup>22</sup> “if doctoral theses in the social sciences are any indication of the status of research in these disciplines in India, it is in poor shape.” Vaidyanathan<sup>23</sup> agrees: “The quality of postgraduate Ph D students in social sciences, and the quality of their training have declined.” Lamenting the sorry state of social science research in India, Vaidyanathan<sup>23</sup> is concerned about the increasing commercialization of social research, the inability of even the best universities to attract high quality faculty, and laxity in refereeing proposals and peer review of research output. Balakrishnan<sup>24</sup> wonders why the considerable intellectual freedom enjoyed by Indian social scientist does not get translated into high quality research. He goes on to say that social science research in India is far too tame and parochial and is in danger of becoming irrelevant. Deshpande<sup>25</sup> feels that virtually no Indian (social science) research institution is vibrant and that most of them are weak, the research looks bad and the researchers are all below average. Indeed, he says, our universities and research institutions contain lots of dead wood. To quote one more paper from *EPW*, Bhanoji Rao<sup>26</sup> had shown that Indians working in India could hardly publish their research papers in quality economics journals.

In Pakistan also, social scientists have published a very large proportion of their work in health, medicine, psychology and psychiatry related journals. The situation is the same in all South Asian countries considered. Indeed the top few journals in terms of number of papers published from these four countries belong to this category. There could be two reasons: (1) Social science researchers in these countries are concerned about health related issues, and (2) The database (SSCI) covers, for whatever reason, only a small number of mainstream social science journals published in these countries.

Tables 7-11 provide data on the distribution of journals used by South Asian social science researchers by publishing country. Indian researchers have used 407 UK journals to publish 2176 papers (cited 5021 times) and 455 US journals to publish 1393 papers (cited 3613 times). In contrast the 1070 papers they have published in 27 Indian journals have been cited only 377 times. In all Indian researchers have published in journals from 36 countries. Pakistani social science researchers have published in 111 UK journals (230 papers, 1006 citations), 75 US journals (118 papers, 342 citations) and 30 journals from The Netherlands (47 papers and 69 citations). In all papers from Pakistan have appeared in journals from 18 countries. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal also often use journals published from the UK, USA and The Netherlands.

Table 12 provides data on the distribution of South Asian social science research papers by impact factor of journals in which they had appeared. By and large papers from South Asia have appeared in low-impact journals. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have a slightly larger percent of their papers in higher impact journals than the other countries.

Table 14 lists institutions in Pakistan active in social science research. Aga Khan University is way ahead of the other institutions with 140 papers cited 565 times. Seven other institutions have published at least ten papers and these include four universities, viz. University of Punjab, Lahore University of Management Science, Quaid Azam University and University of Karachi. The other three non-university institutions are Health Service Academy, Human Development Research Foundation and Institute of Strategic Studies.

In Bangladesh, the largest number of papers have come from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research (106 papers, 573 citations), followed by University of Dhaka (70 papers, 187 citations), BRAC (57 papers and 256 citations), Rajshahi University (30 papers, 27 citations) and Centre for Health and Population Research (24 papers, 143 citations). Clearly health related research overshadows mainstream social science research.

In Sri Lanka, universities are the most productive institutions for social science research. The top ten institutions include nine universities with the University of Colombo (66 papers, 267 citations) and University of Peradeniya (46 papers, 178 citations) leading the field. The International Water Management Institute occupies the third position with 25 papers and 90 citations.

While the Tribhuvan University has the largest number of papers for any institution in Nepal (56 papers and 145 citations), papers from the Centre for Victims of Torture are far better cited (8 papers, 171 citations).

Tables 17-21 list foreign institutions that have collaborated with authors in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal respectively. Pakistan has collaborated with more than 300 overseas institutions, Bangladesh with 431 institutions, Sri Lanka with 316 institutions and Nepal with 268 institutions.

Tables 22-26 provide information on the countries with which the five South Asian countries have collaborated (as seen from coauthored papers) in social science research. Indian researchers have coauthored with researchers in 120 countries, Pakistani researchers with 58 countries, Bangladeshi researchers with 78 countries, Sri Lankan researchers with 78 countries and Nepali researchers with 80 countries. In each of the five countries, we note that internationally coauthored papers receive higher number of citations on average than the country's average. This is the case even in the sciences.<sup>27</sup> International collaboration almost always leads to greater visibility and citation impact.

## Part 2

### Social Science Research in South Asia as seen from SCImago data

With a view to quantifying research in the social sciences in South Asia, we have gathered data on research publications originating in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka published during the 12-year period 1996-2007 and citations to these papers during the same period from SCImago.

SCImago is a research group from the University of Granada, Extremadura, Carlos III (Madrid) and Alcalá de Henares, dedicated to information analysis, representation and retrieval by means of visualization techniques. This group uses *Scopus* data to build a number of indicators. Although *Scopus* covers more than 13,000 journals, its coverage of social science journals from South Asia is limited to 17 and these are listed below.

<b>INDIA</b>
Asian Agri-History
China Report
Contributions to Indian Sociology
Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics
Indian Journal of Palliative Care
International Journal of Punjab Studies
International Studies
Journal of Digital Information Management
Science, Technology & Society
South Asian Survey
The Indian Journal of Social Work
BTRA Scan
Indian Journal of Labour Economics
Journal of the Textile Association
The Indian Economic and Social History Review
<b>PAKISTAN</b>
Pakistan Development Review
<b>Sri Lanka</b>
Ethnic Studies Report

This study is based only on papers in research journals and we have not considered working papers, books, book chapters, etc. which are far more important in the social sciences than in the natural sciences.

We present here a set of tables constructed from an analysis of SCImago data for the 12 years 1996-2007.



We looked at four areas, viz. economics (including econometrics and finance), social sciences (including sociology, anthropology and social work), history and business. SCImago database classifies papers under different subject categories based on journals in which those papers appear.

To see research in South Asia in perspective we have also gathered data for China, Brazil, South Africa, Japan and USA.

## **Results**

We present the results in four sections. We begin with an analysis of data on economics research, followed by social science, history and business.

### *Economics research*

In Table 1 we present data on the number of papers published from the five South Asian countries in each of the 12 years in the area of economics. To see the data in perspective we have also included data for two other Asian countries, viz. Japan and China, two developing countries from outside the region, viz. Brazil and South Africa, and the United States, the world leader.

In the 12 years, India has published 603 papers and none of the other South Asian countries have published more than 65 papers. USA has published over 31,000 papers during the same period, more than 50 times the output from India. Japan and China have also published a larger number of papers than India (Fig. 1). The numbers of papers from South Africa and Brazil are comparable to that of India.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of papers published from India in both 2006 and 2007. The same is true for China, Japan and USA as well.

Table 2 provides data on the numbers of times papers from the ten countries have been cited till the end of 2007. The 603 papers from India have been cited 2,415 times for an average of four citations per paper (the lowest among South Asian countries). The 58 papers from Pakistan have been cited 370 times for an average of 6.4 times per paper. The 63 papers from Bangladesh have been cited 607 times for an average of 9.6 citations per paper. The 17 papers from Nepal have won 182 citations for an average of almost 11 citations per paper. The 29 papers from Sri Lanka have been cited 202 times for an average of seven citations per paper. Both China (3.5) and Japan (2.78) have performed poorer than India, and South Africa (4.68) and Brazil (4.91) have fared slightly better than India. Papers from the USA have been cited on average 8.14 times (Table 3).

In Table 3 and Fig. 2, one may note that the number of citations per document is generally decreasing. This is because more recent papers have had much less time to be quoted than older papers.

Table 4 and Fig. 3 provide data on the proportion of papers that are cited at least once in the 12-year period considered. One notices that given sufficient time most papers get cited at least once. Although Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka have published far fewer papers than India, one

notices that almost all of those papers have been cited at least once. Another fact that emerges from this table is that a much higher proportion of Chinese papers published in the last four years of the 12 year period considered have been cited than Indian papers. Here again, one will see that the percent falls as one moves to later years. For example, only 9% of papers from India published in 2007 were cited before the end of 2007, compared to over 17% of papers from USA and over 16.6% of papers from South Africa and over 14.5% of papers from China.

Often researchers collaborate with authors from other institutions and even other countries. This trend is increasing in recent years thanks to globalization and access to technologies such as the Internet, World Wide Web and cloud computing. Although social scientists, except for some economists, do not use these technologies as much as say physicists and computer scientists, there has been a steady rise in international collaboration in social science research. For example, over half the number of papers published by Indian social scientists in 2007 involved international collaboration (Table 5). Between a third and a half of papers published from India in different years have had at least one author from outside India. In general, the extent of participation by international authors is higher in the other four South Asian countries, China and Brazil.

The extent of international collaboration appears to be rather high in China, the figure exceeding 65% in eight of the 12 years considered. The figures are rather low for USA. This should be expected, as USA is by far the largest performer of social science research and there are enough research happening within the USA for anyone to look outside to find collaborators. In the case of India, figures for percent of papers involving international collaboration appear to be much higher in economics than in the natural sciences.

Table 6 provides data on H index for the different countries. Of the more than 600 papers from India, only 21 have been cited at least 21 times and of the 63 papers from Bangladesh only 14 have been cited 14 times or more often. Here again we see the dominant position of USA with a H index of 130. China has a H-index of 22.

### *Social Science*

In Table 7 we present data on number of citable documents in the field of social science published from the ten countries in journals indexed in Scopus in the years 1996-2007. India has published a much larger number of papers than the other four South Asian countries. USA, China and Japan have published a larger number of papers than India. In fact USA has published 33 times the number of papers from India and China 2.3 times the number of papers from India and Japan 1.3 times that of India. South Africa has also published more papers than India. China's publication output has increased dramatically since 2004 (Fig. 4).

Table 8 provides data on the numbers of times papers from the ten countries have been cited till the end of 2007. The 2533 papers from India have been cited 2,761 times for an average of just over one citation per paper. The 529 papers from Pakistan have been cited 460 times. The 305 papers from Bangladesh have been cited 738 times for an average of 2.4 citations per paper. The 78 papers from Nepal have won 92 citations for an average of almost 1.2 citations per paper. The 120 papers from Sri Lanka have been cited 120 times for an average of one citation per paper. In Table 9 we provide the number of citations per paper for each year. The average numbers of

citations per paper for the other five countries are: Japan (1.7), China (0.54), Brazil (1.5), South Africa (2.1), and USA (5).

In Table 9, as expected the number of citations per document is decreasing with year. This is because more recent papers have had much less time to be quoted than older papers.

In Table 10, we present data on the percent of papers from different countries which are cited at least once in the 12-year period considered. Here again, one will see that the percent falls as one moves to later years. For example, only 5.5% of papers from India published in 2007 were cited before the end of 2007, compared to over 9.3% of papers from USA and over 8% of papers from South Africa and over 2% of papers from China.

There is a wide variation in the extent of international collaboration in social science research among South Asian countries. For example, between 2004 and 2007, only about 20-24% of Indian papers are internationally co-authored, whereas more than 40% of Bangladesh papers involve international collaboration (Table 11). The extent of international collaboration appears to be rather low in China, the figure not exceeding 10% in the last three years. USA and Brazil have recorded international collaboration in the range of 20 and 27% respectively and Brazil has even touched 35% in the last four years.

Table 12 provides data on H index for the different countries. Of the more than 2,500 papers from India, only 15 have been cited at least 15 times and of the 305 papers from Bangladesh only 13 have been cited 13 times or more often. Here again we see the dominant position of USA with a H index of 134.

### *History*

Unlike economics and social science, history is not a strong suite in South Asia. In all of 12 years only India has published more than 100 papers (as seen from SCImago and Scopus); the other four countries put together have accounted for just nine papers. One reason could be the very poor coverage of history journals from South Asia in Scopus and SCImago. Even India's presence in recent years is almost negligible - less than 10 papers in each year since 1998. In contrast China has a much better presence in the last two years with more than 100 papers each in 2006 and 2007. South Africa accounted for a reasonable number of papers since 2002.

In Table 4 we present data on the percent of papers cited and in Table 5 the extent of international collaboration in history research. The H index in history research is lower for all countries than the H index for economics and social science research.

### *Business*

India had published 4,390 papers in the area of business in the 12 years, during which period none of the other four South Asian countries had published more than 50 papers (Table 19). One reason for India's strong showing is the large number of management training institutions led by the Indian Institutes of Management. China has done really well with 13,153 papers, far more than the papers from Japan (4512 papers). Brazil and South Africa had published more than 400

papers each. Both in China and India the growth has been steady. India's papers were cited on average once in the 12 year period, whereas papers from China had been cited less than 0.5 times on average. Researchers from addresses in USA have published more than 45,000 papers in the 12 years and these have been cited more than eight times on average (Table 20). Papers from the USA, Brazil and Japan have generally been better cited than papers from India and China (Table 21). Also, a much larger percent of papers from USA, Brazil and Japan have been cited at least once than papers from India (Table 22).

Only in four of the 12 years the extent of international collaboration has topped 10% in the case of India, whereas well over 20% of Japanese papers published in the last five years involve international collaboration, and virtually throughout the period Brazil has engaged in international collaboration in a large proportion of its publications (Table 23).

In the field of business, India has a H index of 15, compared to 24 for China, 30 for Japan and 152 for USA (Table 24).

### **Conclusion**

There is hardly any research in social sciences, defined broadly to include economics, business, sociology and even history, in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, as seen from journal papers indexed in Scopus (and SCImago). India is the only South Asian country to have some significant presence.

Among the subfields, India publishes the largest number of papers in business, followed by social science and economics. The dominance of business research can be traced to the large number of management schools.

With the region as a whole facing more than its share of problems – ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional and caste-based strife, separatism, intolerance, terrorism, violence, poverty, gender injustice – there is a great need for research in social sciences. And yet, South Asian countries have not invested enough in such research.

## **Epilogue**

The size of the social science research enterprise in South Asia, with the exception of India, is rather small, even allowing for the fact that both *SSCI* and *Scopus* cover a very small number of journals from this region. Within the region India stands out.

One reason for the sorry state of affairs is the lack of proper institutional support and funding. Take, for example, life sciences. Quality research centres such as the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, and the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore, provide a conducive ambience and world class laboratory facility for their researchers. Where are equivalent centres of excellence in the social sciences? Funding available for social science research in India is meager. In contrast, the different agencies promoting the physical and biological sciences and engineering are flush with funds.

A better strategy to assess social science research in South Asia will be to look at papers published by South Asian researchers in important social science journals published from the region and books published by leading social science publishers as was done by Partha Chatterjee.<sup>28</sup>

Social science research in this region is of interest to the rest of the world as well. It is bound to be in a globalized and interdependent world. That is why the Social Science Research Council, New York, commissioned in the early years of this decade a survey of social science research capacity in South Asia. It is heartening to note that the International Development Research Centre has supported the current study on Policy Research Organizations and Policy Research Environment in India.

## **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to my friends and former colleagues Mr Subbiah Gunasekaran, Mr Muthu Madhan, Ms K Thulasi, Mr Ramesh Chander and Mr G Chandrasekhar for their help in data collection and preparation of the tables. I am grateful to Prof. B Viswanathan, Director, National Centre for Catalysis Research, IIT Madras, Chennai, who has been a long-time supporter of my research activities.

I am grateful to both IDRC-SARO (in particular Ms Katherine Hay) and ISST (in particular Ms Ratna Sudarshan) for inviting me to join this exciting project.

## References

1. A part of *Web of Science* ([www.isiknowledge.com](http://www.isiknowledge.com)).
2. *Scopus* <[www.scopus.com](http://www.scopus.com)>.
3. *Sociological Abstracts* ([www.csa.com](http://www.csa.com)).
4. *EconLit* <<http://www.aeaweb.org/>>
5. [SCImago Journal Rank \(SJR\) indicator](http://www.scimagojr.com) <[www.scimagojr.com](http://www.scimagojr.com)>.
6. Nalimov V V and Mul'chenko Z M ( I 969). *Naukometriya. Izuchenie nauki kak informatsionnogo protsessa (Scientometrics. Study of science as an information process.)* Moscow: Nauka. (Available in English on microfilm: *Measurement of science. Study of the development of science as an information process.* Washington, DC: Foreign Technology Division, U.S. Air Force Systems Command, 13 October 1971). Retrieved from: <<http://www.garfield.library.upenn.edu/nalimov/nalimovmeasurementofscience/book.pdf>>.
7. Cole F J and Eales N B (1917). 'The history of comparative anatomy: A statistical analysis of the literature,' *Science Progress*, **11**: 578–96
8. Garfield E, (1955). 'Citation indexes for science: A new dimension in documentation through association of ideas.' *Science* 122(3159):108-11.
9. Garfield E (2007). 'From the science of science to scientometrics. Visualizing the history of science with HistCite software.' *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of ISSI, Vol. 1*, pp. 21-26.
10. Lotka A J (1926). 'The frequency distribution of scientific productivity', *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, 16(12):317-323.
11. Gross P K and Gross E M (1927), 'College libraries and chemical education,' *Science*, **66**: 1229 - 1234.
12. Bradford S C (1934). 'Sources of information on specific subjects.' *Engineering*, **137** :85-86.
13. Bradford. S C (1948). *Documentation*. London: Crosby Lockwood.
14. Zipf G K (1949). *Human behavior and the principle of least effort*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
15. Derek J de Solla (1961). *Science since Babylon*, New Haven: [Yale University Press](http://www.yale.edu).

16. Derek J de Solla Price (1963). *Little science, big science*, New York:Columbia University Press. Reprinted as *Little science, big science -- and beyond* in 1986.
17. Merton R K (1973). *The sociology of science: Theoretical and empirical investigations*, Chicago University Press.
18. Bernal J D (1939). *Social function of science*, London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd.
19. *Science and Engineering Indicators*, a biennial report series published by the National Science Board, Washington DC, USA.
20. *European Report on Science & Technology Indicators*, a series published by the Official Publications of the European Communities. Brussels, Belgium.
21. <<http://repec.org/>>.
22. Subramaniam V (1999). 'Doctoral work in social sciences. Some reflections,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct 16-23, 2986-2987.
23. Vaidyanathan A (2008). 'Fourth review of ICCSR: An overview,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 2, 21-24.
24. Balakrishnan P (2008). 'Social science research in India: Concerns and proposals,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Feb 2, 28-33.
25. Deshpande S (2008). 'Declining simplistic narratives,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Feb 2, 25-28.
26. Bhanoji Rao (2008). 'Standards of teaching and research in economics,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 25, 1980.
27. Arunachalam S (2000 ). 'International Collaboration in Science: The Case of India and China,' in *The Web of Knowledge: A Festschrift in honor of Eugene Garfield*, edited by Blaise Cronin and Helen Barsky Atkins, 215-232.
28. Chatterjee P (2002). 'Institutional context of social science research in South Asia,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Aug 31, 3604-3612.