

Minutes of Meeting
Interaction Session with Prof. B.R. Mehta, Ex. Dean R&D, IIT Delhi
University of Petroleum and Energy Studies
Dehradun

Dated: December 14th 2021

Venue: energy House Board Room

Attendees:

Associate Dean R&D, Cluster Head SoE, and Faculty Members from across the schools.

The key point discussed:

1. How to get funds and perform sponsored research?
2. Why should an individual submit a project?
3. What is the success rate of projects in different countries?
4. How to form a research group?
5. When should one start project-based research?

Schedule:

Task	Time
Welcome Address by Associate Dean R&D	04:00-04:15
Address Prof. Mehta	04:15-05:00
Q/A by faculty members and research scholars	05:00-05:20
Vote of thanks by Cluster Head, SoE	05:20-05:30

Address by Dr. S.M Tauseef, Associate Dean R&D, UPES welcomed Prof. B.R. Mehta and introduced him to all faculty members and research scholars. He briefed the experience tenure of Prof. Mehta as Professor, Dean R&D, and as Emeritus Professor, IIT Delhi. He also introduced all the faculty members and research scholars to Prof. Mehta.

Address and Presentation by Prof. B.R. Mehta, Emeritus Professor, IIT Delhi shared his views on the importance of increasing funded and sponsored research in the universities. In his address prof. Mehta covered the following points.

- At the start of his presentation, he shared his experience as faculty and research dean in IIT Delhi. He also shared his individual and institutional perspectives.
- Prof. Mehta also showed the development of sponsored research and growth of Ph.D. students in IIT Delhi during his tenure.
- He informed that an individual should submit a project for their particular autonomy, for growing strong connections with national and international peers.
- It also provides important feedback to your research and for personal focus & initiative.
- For Ph.D. students, it gives a learning experience useful for employment and gives a focus to the Ph.D. work.
- He said that a good project is as important as a good publication.
- Later on, he discussed the success rate of projects in different countries on a percentage basis. He shows that in India during 1990-2010 the rate was 80-90% but during 2020 it gets decreased to 20-30%. Whereas the success rate in USA and Germany is about 10-20%.

- He emphasized that individual projects are important but group projects make higher impacts. Therefore, high-impact research requires collaboration.
- He provides a relation between the No. of authors and the impact factor of journals.
- The requirements for forming a research group are discussed by Prof. Mehta. There should be a careful selection of members based on their technical merits, importance should be given to younger colleagues, and successful project partners become good friends.
- He focussed that the PI should be responsible for all funding, contact points, and financial matters. He should make a clear and transparent fund utilization and distribution plan.
- Afterward, Prof. Mehta informed that for performing a project-based research one should prepare a work plan, start as soon as the project is submitted, evaluate the work in progress, 20% of work should be done before submitting the proposal, and try to formulate other projects.
- Prof. Mehta showed one project of himself submitted to PFG that do not receive the grant but it resulted in good publication.
- He informed about the faculty interdisciplinary research program (FIPR) running in IIT Delhi, in which 2 faculties from different departments propose a joint project, external review takes place every 6 months, Rs.10 lakh seed grant for 2 years are provided.
- At later on the stage, they found that the program was not a good idea. Therefore, they short-listed 3 streams such as engineering, medicine, and industry.
- They got the success story of this initiative by collaborating with IIT Delhi and AIIMS and resulted in 75 ongoing projects.
- Prof. also introduced the joint advanced technology center setup with IIT Delhi and DRDO and it resulted in 23 projects and 220 Cr. Funds. 75 faculty members, 140 Ph.D. scholars, and 50 DRDO scientists working together.

Q/A by faculty members:

1. Dr. Sarathlal KV, asked the evaluation time for a project and why it takes a lot of time, and what is the way to get major funding?

Ans- Prof. Mehta suggested preferring group projects rather than an individual ones. Therefore, the response time will be fast and you can redeem major funding from the agencies.

2. Dr. Ankush Vij, asked why the funding agencies do not provide comments on rejection so that we can make considerable changes in the proposal?

Ans- Prof. Mehta answered in a motivational way to do not lose hope and try continuously because a good project is as important as a good publication.

3. Dr. Ashish Mathur, asked how UPES could invite funding from industries?

Ans- Prof. Mehta suggested an approach that you should be good about your project and then try to promote research, interact with the industries and try to get funds from international industries.

4. Dr. SM Tauseef, asked what are the other schemes for funding other than seed in IIT Delhi?

Ans- Prof. Mehta introduced a discovery and learn program in which Rs.2 lakh funds are provided to 2-3 students to write a project.

5. Dr. Ajay Kumar, asked that whether we have to follow a descriptive or disruptive research approach, what is your approach in IIT Delhi?

Ans- Prof. Mehta suggested an approach in which you work on something and then make it as your objectives and at least find out something. He added that you should fix your objectives and it is the best approach.

The session was concluded with a vote of thanks to all present by the Cluster Head SoE.