

**Shri Dhirubhai Mehta Memorial Scheme for the
Promotion of Research at MGIMS Sewagram**



1. Background

Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sewagram (MGIMS), is a multi-disciplinary health institution and has been India's first rural medical college. MGIMS is committed to the pursuit of professional excellence by evolving an integrated pattern of medical education, and it seeks to provide accessible and affordable health care primarily to underprivileged rural communities. MGIMS is known for its innovations in community-based medical education and has consistently received funding from the Indian Council of Medical Research, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, WHO, UNICEF, USAID, Fogarty AIDS Research and Training Program, USA, Canadian Institute of Health Research, National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Heart Lung Blood Institute (NHLBI) and other such organizations.

Therefore, a scheme is proposed to develop research capacity further and incentivize faculty members to conduct quality research. It would be appropriate if this scheme is named after the late President of KHS, Shri Dhirubhai Mehta, as '*Shri Dhirubhai Mehta Memorial Scheme for the Promotion of Research.*'

2. Objectives

The objectives of this scheme are to-

- a) Provide seed money grant to support, promote, and motivate the faculty members of MGIMS to work on their original ideas and carry out proof-of-concept studies, pilot studies, or feasibility studies. These could form the basis for further expanding their research through larger grants from extramural sources from external funding agencies like ICMR, DST & DBT etc.
- b) Provide seed money grant to researchers in a competitive setting. The studies carried out through the research grants could serve as background work for projects submitted to external funding agencies, ensuring the sustainability and growth of research at MGIMS.
- c) Recognize and appreciate the research contributions of the faculty members.

3. Guiding principles

- a) The scheme will uphold the ethical values and principles of Good Clinical Practice (GCP) as per the Declaration of Helsinki for biomedical research. It will maintain the quality and rigor of the research.

- b) The faculty members should raise extramural research grants from government funding agencies, UN developmental agencies, or other reputed national and international organizations.
- c) Prior permission from the Kasturba Health Society (KHS) should be obtained before accepting any private funding, funding from NGOs, pharmaceutical drug trials, or funding from any other agencies.
- d) The project & source of fund shall not be claimed as a matter of right since KHS shall have unqualified discretion in this respect.
- e) This scheme is proposed to be an aspirational, participant-centric, open, competitive and inclusive program that would evolve with every passing year. The learning from the preceding years will feed into refining the program for the subsequent years. This guiding document has been prepared after a brainstorming discussion with some of the faculty members. The scheme will be reviewed and revised (if needed) every year or as per the KHS managing committee's decision.

4. Operationalization

A committee, the **Research Promotional Committee (RPC)**, will be nominated by the KHS which would coordinate this scheme as per these guidelines. The committee shall have early, mid-level, and senior faculty members with preference to faculty with high h-index, i-index, citation numbers, first-author publications, and experience of research projects as PI. However, suitable representation will also be ensured to faculty members from pre, para & clinical subjects as well as from the rank of Professor and Associate/Assistant Professor. The Dean & MS will act as advisors to the committee.

5. Selection of the research proposals:

- a) A research seed money grant for projects to be conducted by the faculty of MGIMS in MGIMS as principal investigators will be initiated through an email notification to all faculty members. The email will mention a specified format and necessary instructions, along with a submission deadline.
- b) The Collaborative research proposals involving multi-disciplinary & inter-departmental collaboration at MGIMS will be preferred and will be given due weightage.
- c) The applications will be opened once every year and must be submitted in the prescribed format by the deadline.

- d) Five research proposals every year with original ideas that have the potential to be further developed as more extensive proposals for raising larger grants from external funding agencies would be selected following a competitive selection process.
- e) The selected projects would be eligible for a maximum grant of Rs. 3,00,000 (per individual grant). The grant amount will be sanctioned for the five highest-scored research projects.
- f) Three independent members of the Research Promotion Committee would initially scrutinize anonymized copies of the proposals internally (using the same scoring criteria as those for the external reviewers). The top ten proposals would be sent for anonymized review and scoring by external reviewers.
- g) The proposal would be forwarded to three external subject experts, with academic-standing, for review and evaluation. They may include the faculty members with academic credentials either in active service or retired. The reviewers will be selected based on their research background and contributions to the respective fields. The assessment would be based on an objective score of 100 divided equally in the following subsections: (a) proposal's originality, (b) translational potential for benefitting the patient or population or society, (c) comprehensive review of the existing literature, (d) identification of the evidence gap for which the project is framed, (e) proposed methodology, (f) feasibility, (g) statistical methodology, (h) ethical consideration, (i) research background of the PI, and (j) overall proposal. Additional suggestions/comments from reviewer/s could be sought to improve the project. They would be requested to give their confidential opinion on whether the project should be considered for intramural funding. A letter of appreciation/ token honorarium upto Rs. 2000 per project may be given to each expert to evaluate each proposal in a time-bound manner not exceeding 2 weeks.
- h) The grant would be awarded to the top 5 projects based on the aggregate scoring from the RPC committee members and the three external reviewer experts, considering a weight of 40:60, respectively.
- i) The grant amount could be used for
 - a) Purchasing equipment, lab items, chemicals, software, hardware, and any other relevant item essential for the project's completion. Any item purchased for the project from the grant would be purchased through CPS as per KHS rules and

shall be KHS property, however it will be maintained in the respective departmental stock books.

- b) Budget for article processing charge to the maximum extent of Rs 50,000.00.
- c) Attending conference (includes registration fees, travel, and stay as per MGIMS guidelines). This applies only if a paper from the sanctioned research project has been accepted for oral presentation at National Conference or international conference in India and should be as per KHS rules.
- d) No budget would be allocated for hiring any staff/overheads for the project.
- j) All proposals should be prepared in the required format and submitted only after they have been approved by the IEC of MGIMS.
- k) All faculty members of MGIMS would be eligible to compete for this grant. Any faculty member who receives a grant must put forth concrete deliverables before his/her next application can be considered. These deliverables are to be achieved within a maximum of three years of the sanction of the project and would include:
 - i. Publication in a peer-reviewed indexed journal in PubMed
 - And / or**
 - ii. Generate an independent grant from a government (National / International) or UN funding agency
- l) The faculty member/s who receive the grant under this scheme will be expected to complete the work within 24 months from the date of grant of the project.
- m) All investigators are required to submit a report at six monthly intervals to apprise them about the project's progress, with the final report at two years from the date of grant of the project.
- n) A single PI can receive a maximum of 2 grants, provided he/she fulfills the deliverable/s as stated above for his/her previous grant.

6. Organization of research development programs:

- a) KHS would explore conducting periodic faculty research development programs that may be performed as virtual web-based CMEs, on-site training, or hybrid mode as feasible. Web-based seminars would be conducted with the help of external experts, while the onsite programs could be conducted with internal (those with high research

credentials) and external experts. MGIMS alumni and members of the KHS could be also approached as a resource faculty for both the web-based or onsite programs as per their availability and expertise in the specific field.

- b) These could include research methodology, grant application writing, manuscript writing, statistical computations and data analysis etc.
- c) External experts taking webinars or on-site training at MGIMS would be entitled to an honorarium (Rs. 2000 for one Programme). The Institute would take care of the travel expenses of external experts (Airfare/ AC 1st class/Car if traveling by road) and local hospitality. A suitable memento would be presented at the end of the program as a token of appreciation to internal and external experts.
- d) Faculty/ residents/ other staff members who would like to participate in these would have to pay a nominal amount not exceeding to Rs. 1000 per day. A certificate of participation will be presented to all those who actively participate in the program.

7. **Appreciation for scientific publications in high-quality journals:**

- a) Every year, the best researcher for the different categories would be nominated for the Best Researcher Award and awarded a memento and certificate at the Annual Foundation Day / Convocation Day/Independence Day celebration at the Institute. This would be awarded in the following categories
 - i. **Young Best Researcher Award:** Postgraduates and Senior Resident
 - ii. **Early career Best Researcher award:** Up to 5 years post-MD/MS/PhD
 - iii. **Mid-career Best Researcher award:** >5 – 15 years post-MD/MS/PhD
 - iv. **Senior Best Researcher Award:** >15 years post-MD/MS/PhD
- b) The selection for the award would be based on the following:
 - i. h-index as per Google Scholar as noted on 31st Dec of the previous year (Rank 1 for the highest)
 - ii. i-10 index as noted on 31st Dec of that year (Rank 1 for the highest)
 - iii. Total number of citations as noted on 31st Dec of the previous year (Rank 1 for the highest)

- iv. Total number of publications (Only full-length original manuscripts, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, technical reports, and editorials in PubMed-indexed journals) as first author. Articles published between only Jan 1 – Dec 31 of the previous year would be considered (Rank 1 for highest).
- v. Total number of research projects that the concerned faculty is involved in as PI or Co-PI (Rank 1 for highest for total numbers). **All projects have to have prior approval from IEC MGIMS.** The projects could be
- Those sanctioned by the Government funding agencies (National/International), UN agencies or other agencies of National and International repute in the period Jan 1 – Dec 31 of the previous year would be considered.
 - Those without external funding and are being carried out within the existing departmental resources (both infrastructure and human resources).
- c) Equal weightage would be given to each of the above and the nomination would be based on the cumulative ranking of the **best of the four criteria** as mentioned in item 7b (Total highest rank score would be considered as Best)
- d) In case of a tie, the total score would include the fifth criterion. If there is still a tie, the candidate with the most Citations will be selected for the award.
- e) The winner of each category would be entitled to a special grant of Rs. 50,000 that he/she can spend on any of the following academic activities – e.g., purchase of books/journals, software for educational purposes, membership fees (national/international), attending conferences (National / International) or any other related academic activities. The faculty member should give a written declaration at the end of the financial year on the purpose for which the amount has been spent with adequate receipts for reimbursement of the prize amount. Any item purchased (books/software, etc.) would be considered as his/her personal possessions.
- f) The authorship for the concerned papers should follow the criteria of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). The authorship sequence should be agreeable to all authors mentioned in the paper. The Author group will have to submit a declaration in this regard to the committee. In case of any discrepancy around

authorship or if any ghost or gift authorship is found, the concerned research paper will be deemed ineligible for this incentive.

- g) If the publication results from an undergraduate project, postgraduate resident, PhD work, the first author would be the concerned candidate.
- h) The faculty member who has received the award in one category may be considered for the award in other category after a gap of three years.

8. Payment of publication charges for papers accepted in high-quality journals:

Nowadays, several high-quality open-access journals charge for publication. Most faculty members do not submit their articles for publication in these journals as they cannot afford the high article processing charges (APC).

- a) It is desired that the APC should be included in the budget for all funded projects. If the funding agency does not allow the inclusion of the APC in the budget, then it is recommended that the authors first attempt to get a complete waiver of APC from the journal editorial board. If the waiver application is not accepted or partially accepted, then APCs could be made available under this incentive. The authors will be given the desired letter from institutional authorities to facilitate the waiver process whenever required.
- b) Under this scheme, the KHS may pay a maximum of 50% of APC, with a total amount not exceeding Rs. 100,000 in one year, for the article accepted in high-quality journal (impact factor of 3 or above).
- c) Only the research work conducted by the MGIMS faculty will be considered for this incentive. The publication should be based on the research work carried out at MGIMS, with the concerned faculty being the lead investigator, and the work should have been approved by MGIMS IEC. Only full-length original research papers, systematic review and meta-analysis will be considered for this incentive. Letter to Editor, Short/brief communication, Case reports, and Commentary will NOT be eligible for this incentive.
- d) The faculty member claiming the incentive should also be the first author of the paper.

- e) If faculty claims the APC incentive based on publications resulting from undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG), or Senior Residents (SR) research, it is mandatory that the concerned student be the first author of the publication.
- f) The authorship for the concerned papers should follow the ICMJE criteria, and the authorship sequence should be agreeable to all authors mentioned in the paper. The Author group will have to submit a declaration in this regard to the committee. In case of any discrepancy around authorship or if any ghost or gift authorship is found, the concerned research paper will be deemed ineligible for this incentive.

9. Research support milieu:

- a) Faculty members from existing faculty, selected KHS members and selected alumni are invited to volunteer their time for the research cell. This cell will provide guidance and support for undertaking statistical analysis, manuscript writing, project management, or any other areas mutually agreed upon.
- b) The KHS would also subscribe to Science Direct to enhance institutional faculty access to research papers.
- c) The KHS would purchase the necessary software for the Central Library for undertaking quantitative data analysis, qualitative data analysis, plagiarism checks, reference management, and meta-analysis, language correction tools, or any other as per the need the faculty members can justify optimally. These will be sanctioned separately by the KHS Authorities to create an enabling environment for undertaking quality research within the institute. This may be included as part of the Central Library's annual budget.