UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS
INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL (IQAC)
Research Scholar Feedback 2018-19

About University of Madras

University of Madras is one of the three affiliating institutions established by the British in 1857. The University was organised on the model of London University. It takes pride in being the mother to all Universities in South India. The enactment of the Madras University Act, 1923 greatly encouraged the research and teaching functions of the University. Keeping in line with the motto of this great institution 'Doctrina Vim Promovet Insitam' which means Learning Promotes one's own innate knowledge, the University has been striving to deliver quality higher education to the masses for the past 164 years. Keep furtherance of knowledge in various disciplines and subjects as its primary goal, the University with 73 Departments offers Post Graduate courses as well as research and development activities through Post-Doctoral (D.Sc./D.Litt./LLD), Doctoral and M.Phil. degrees to the students. The prime objectives of the University are to encourage and support continuously: (a) socially relevant education, (b) improvement of the quality of education and (c) an equitable access to all sections of the society to higher education.

The University under the capable leadership of the Vice-Chancellor supported by the Syndicate, Senate, Academic Council and the faculty of the Departments take holistic decisions and actions bearing in mind its primary goal. The mission and vision statements are framed such as to remain accountable to all the stake holders including the students, teachers, employees, employers, alumni, the society as a whole and the Government. The Vision statements of the University are

- To inculcate values of Equality, Unity and Justice.
- To make our education relevant and excellent.
- To promote educational programmes in various disciplines of knowledge with synergistic interaction with society and industry.

- To contribute to the advancement of knowledge through research, publication and disseminations.

- To provide leadership in higher education by imparting quality and socially relevant knowledge.

- To develop aptitudes and skills of students to equip them to face the challenges and needs of fast changing society.

- To give greater opportunity to women in order to prepare them to be effective leaders.

- To make students to be conscious of their duty to the country and to fellow human beings.

University of Madras is one of the top ranked Universities in India. To maintain the quality standards and to carry out periodic checks to the education system, the University Authorities conduct the Academic Audits, Student Feedbacks and so on every year through the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), for the Students, Research Scholars, Faculty and Administrative Staff. This periodic internal assessment helps in updating the Syllabus/curriculum on a timely basis and also address any shortcomings in the academic process. During the year 2018-19 the IQAC audit and feedback mechanism was carried out using questionnaires in the print format. The feedback data was analysed and the results are discussed in the following sections.

The subsequent section details about the IQAC and its functions at the University of Madras.

About IQAC

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) proposes that all accredited institutions must establish Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post-accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since, quality enhancement is a continuous process; the IQAC is a part of the institution's system and work towards realization of the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance. The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the overall performance of institutions.

In line with the NAAC mandate, the University of Madras has established IQAC with effect from 01.07.2005. The University has been accredited by NAAC with 5-star status in 2000 followed up the IInd and IIIrd Cycle with 'A' grade in 2007 and 2014 respectively.

The IQAC plays a vital role in the re-accreditation process, as the cell reviews the quality of education in the University in following ways:

➢ **Conduct of Academic Audit:**

The IQAC conducts academic audit for all the University Departments, by inviting subject experts from other Universities/Institutions to review the syllabus, question paper and answer scripts of the students of the respective Department. The report submitted by the expert is placed before the IQAC Advisory Committee and the same also placed before the Syndicate. Following which, as per the recommendation of the Syndicate, the report submitted by the experts will be sent to the Heads of the concerned Departments for further action.

➢ **Feedback Mechanism:**

The IQAC being at the helm of maintaining Quality at the University has a robust feedback mechanism in place. Feedback is collected from all stakeholders including Students, Scholars, Faculty, Administrative Staff, Employers and Alumni. Feedback is collected in the form of questionnaires. The questions are designed to quantitatively assess the performance and quality indicators of the process and infrastructure at the University. The periodic feedback assessment helps to maintain quality and foster a healthy environment between the stakeholders. The feedback is based on 5-point scale. This feedback is again scrutinized and placed before the IQAC Advisory Committee and the same is placed before the Syndicate. Subsequently the scrutinized feedback is sent to all faculty through the Heads of the Departments.

➢ **Annual Quality Assurance Report**

As per the direction of NAAC, the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) must be submitted according to the prescribed format every year. The AQAR consists of the data of the University for the academic year, which includes details of academic activity, research activity, financial resources, publications details and etc. IQAC prepares the report diligently.

➢ **Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) for faculty:**

IQAC provides supports the promotion activities of faculty in various cadres under Career Advancement Scheme, by screening applications according to the API (Academic Performance Indicators) guidelines provided by the UGC.

- ➢ **Capacity Building Activities:**

From time to time, the IQAC conducts programmes for faculty regarding promotion under CAS. It also conducts programmes for IQAC Coordinators and Principals of affiliated colleges as well as for faculty members of the Departments of the University.

All the reports prepared by the Cell are scrutinised by the IQAC Advisory Committee and the same is placed before the Syndicate. Thus, the IQAC ensures the quality of the institution is maintained and helps for the betterment of the students. University of Madras adheres to the NAAC mandate and the IQAC team coordinates and tenaciously works to uphold the quality at the University level.

Scope of IQAC

The major aim of IQAC is to ensure quality at the university level, the IQAC team collects feedback from various stakeholders including Students, Faculty, Administrative Staff, Employers and Alumni. The feedback is collected using various questionnaires designed to assess the performance based on a Likert scale. From the academic year 2017-18 onwards, the student feedback is collected through the Online mode, prior to this the student feedback was collected through printed questionnaires for the academic years 2016-17 and 2017-18. The significance of IQAC, University of Madras are listed below:

- ▪ IQAC at the University of Madras acts as the nodal agency to ensure quality teaching, research and extension activities.
- ▪ It enhances adoption and dissemination of best practices.
- ▪ It warrants periodic conduct of academic and administrative audit and its follow up.
- ▪ Builds an organised system of documentation and internal communication.
- ▪ Enhances dynamic changes to quality improvement and assists in decision making for the University Departments.

Limitations

1. Although IQAC attempts to collect data from all sectors, there are certain limitations to the survey that is carried out. Some of the limitations are listed below:
2. Since the survey is not mandatory, hence achieving 100% participation from all stakeholders is not possible.
3. The questions are designed as closed response rating scales, hence the analysis is more quantitative in nature.

4. The rating scale is prone to subjective evaluation and hence sometimes provide unreliable results.
5. The rating scale questionnaire may not reveal accurate results.

Methodology

The methodology adopted to determine the quality includes data collection using questionnaire and data analysis using appropriate techniques. The IQAC collects data from all stakeholders to analyse the performance and to ensure quality for all University Departments/Centres. There are separate questionnaires that are prepared to analyse the performance and effectiveness of the various stakeholders. Each questionnaire is thoughtfully prepared to quantitatively assess the quality indicators. The questionnaires are closed ended responsive, which provides the respondent to choose from the best possible options to reveal their thoughts and feelings. The questionnaire consists of statements to assess the quality of infrastructure and relationship between the administrative staff and the University. The options are on a 5-point rating scale, similar to a Likert scale that ranges from 1-5 as defined below:

1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Neutral; 4- Agree; 5- Strongly Agree

The questionnaire helps to measure the satisfaction levels and acts as an input measure to make necessary changes towards improvement of academic activities at the University. The various questionnaires are analysed and the results are documented and discussed in the forthcoming sections.

Analysis:

Research, which is a scholarly and creative endeavour of faculty leading to innovations and development, is a major pillar of strength in a university system. The advancement achieved through research and development contributes significantly to the academic excellence. Universities, as centers of teaching and research, they contribute towards building of the society and bring in key changes to the working environment. Faculty and students are keen to use their research to contribute to social innovation and sustainable development. The research environment determines the quality and quantity of innovations and research scholars form the backbone of any higher education institution. The University provides a conducive research environment for the scholars to work and present their research to the scientific community. Impactful research can be achieved by providing constant support, training and proper equipment and facilities to carry out research activities. The University

through the IQAC mechanism constantly obtains feedback from the research scholars of the University to assess the infrastructure as well as the work /research culture at the various research departments of the University.

Feedback forms are circulated through the online mode among the research scholars of the university and the responses are analysed in the forthcoming section. A total number of 11 closed end response questions were asked and the responses are obtained on a rating scale rom 1- 5, 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. Responses from 198 research scholars from various departments from sciences, social science and physical education have been collected and analysed.

1. **Availability & Maintenance of Research facilities, ICT, Libraries, Laboratories and restrooms**

   To promote the quality of research and enhance the research output, the research environment must be well established. It is clear from the above figure that the majority nearly 54% of the scholars strongly agree to the research facilities such as ICT, libraries and rest room at the University. 34% agree to the statement while 9% are neutral to it, while 3% of them disagree with the facilities.
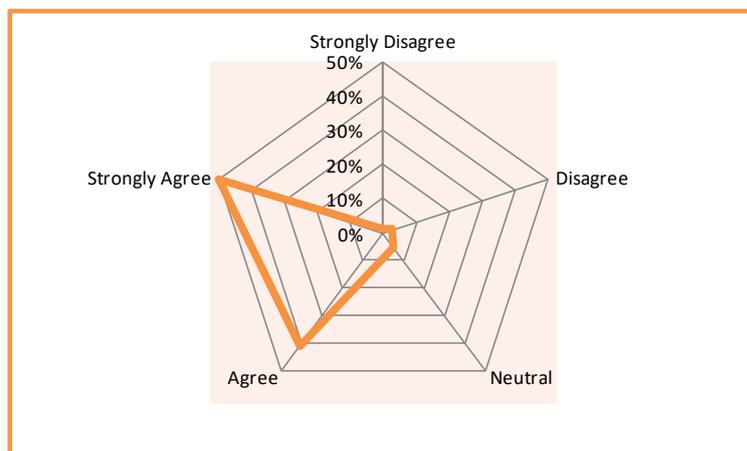

Figure i: Availability and maintenance of research facilities - ICT, Libraries. Laboratories and restrooms

2. **Scholar friendly Staff & Faculty**

   Good research can be carried out in an encouraging environment. The above chart clearly indicates more than 90% of the respondents feel that the Head is friendly. This indicates a very healthy relationship between the staff and the research scholars. None of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement. There is very good

relationship between the staff, faculty and the research scholars at the University of Madras.
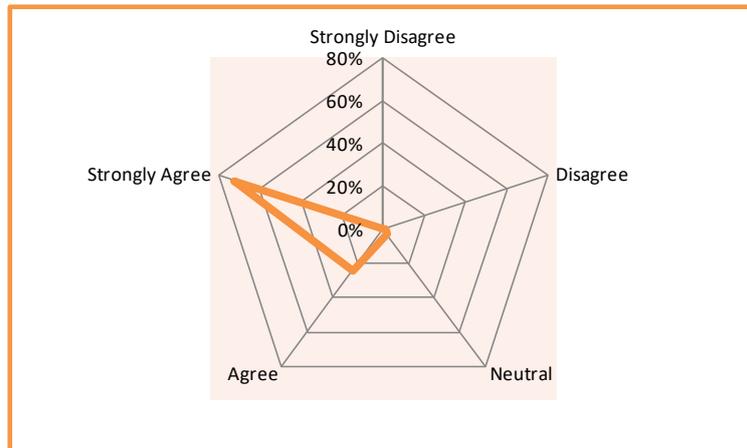

Figure ii: Head of the Department / Centre is Scholar friendly

3. **Grievance redressal**

It is important to address the concerns and problems the research scholars face during their research journey. Establishing committees to address grievances is an initiative that helps the scholars to voice out their anxieties and issues.   52% of the scholars strongly agree with the grievance redressal system at the University of Madras while 2% strongly disagree and 2% disagrees. Overall more than 80% of thescholars agree with the grievance redressal system at the University. Only 12% are neutral to the statement.
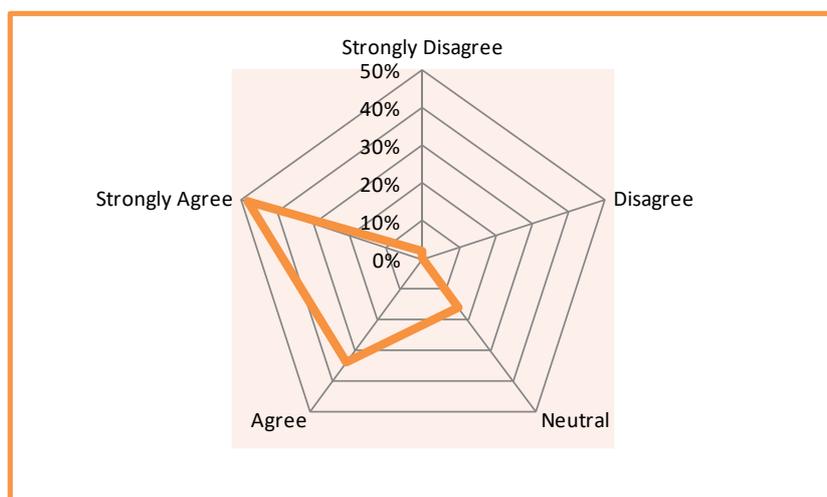
Figure iii: Grievance Redressal

4. Computer & Internet Facilities

Keeping in line with the first question, more than 52% of the scholars strongly agree and 38% agree with the computer and internet facilities at the University. Only 8% are neutral and 1% disagree with the statement. While none of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement.
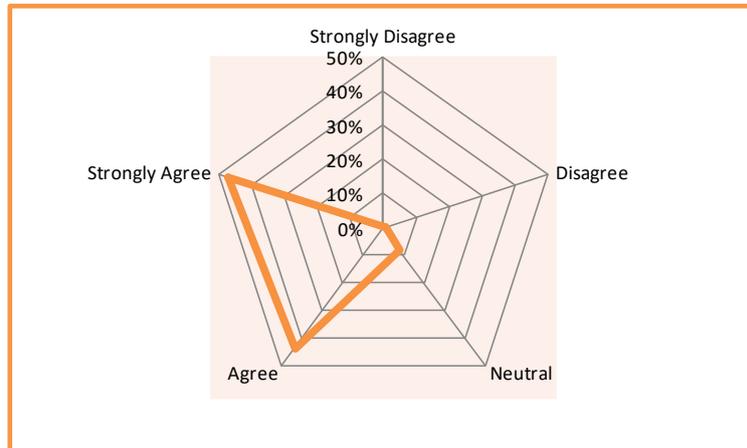

Figure iv: Computer & Internet Facilities

5. Availability of Textbook and Reference Books

57% of the respondents strongly agree to the availability of books and reference materials in their respective research areas, while 33% agree and 8% are neutral. Only 2% strongly disagree with the availability of reference material at the University.
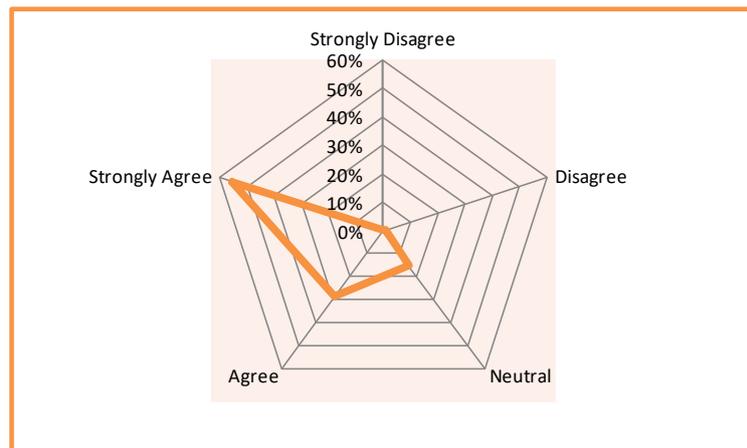
Figure v: Availability of Textbooks & Reference Sources

6. Availability of Databases and online resources

85% of the scholars (47% strongly agree and 38% agree) are happy with the database facility available at the University. It is very important that the research scholars have

access to pertinent research material to carry out and advance in their research. Availability and accessibility to authentic information at the right time can result in good research.
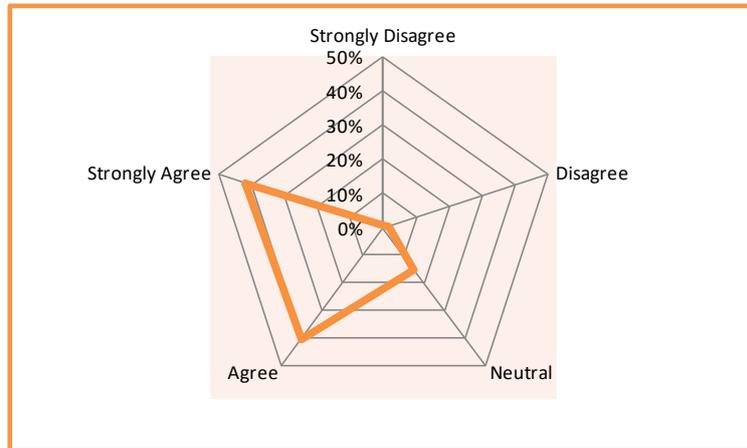

Figure vi: Database searching

7. <u>Processing of Research Communication</u>

More than 85% agree with 50% who strongly agree and 37% agree with the timely processing of research fellowships and documents, this is very motivating for the research scholars. It is also motivating to note that only under 5% disagree with the statement.
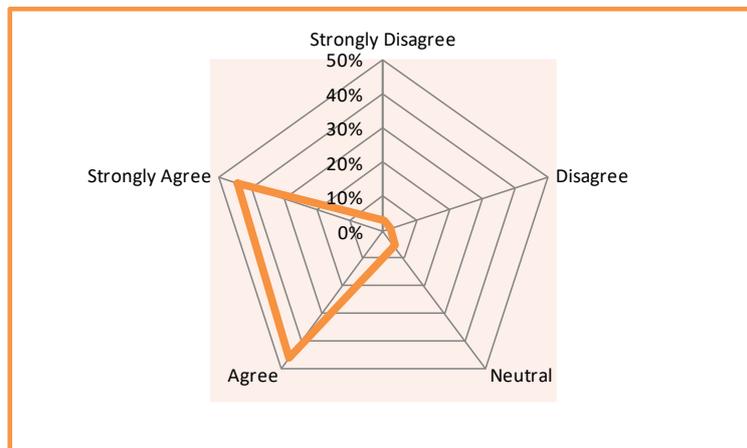

Figure vii: Processing of research communication

8. <u>Support to publish research articles & file patents</u>

Scholarly Publishing in reputed and peer reviewed journals is an indicator of research and it is observed from the above figure that nearly 48% and 35% strongly agree and agree with the support provided by the University towards publishing of research articles. Again only 4% disagree with the statement (3% strongly disagree and 1%

disagree). 15% choose to remain neutral about the statement, which could indicate that they have not explored the facility yet.
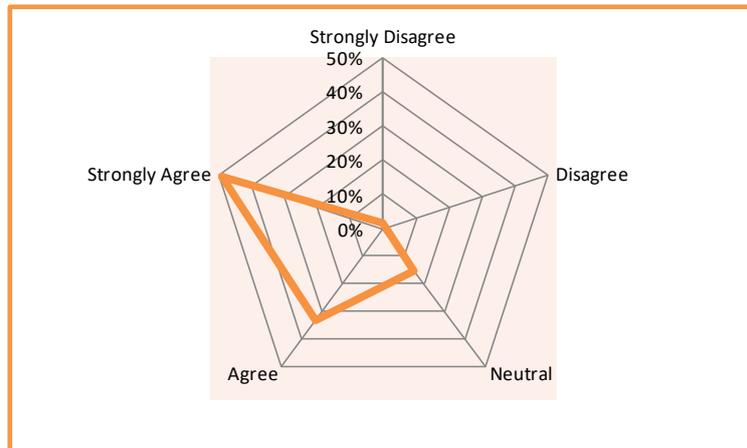

Figure viii: Support or publishing articles & filing of patents

9. **Consistent Ph.D procedure from Admission to Submission**

The process from admission till submission of the doctoral thesis has been very simplified and the research scholars can track their progress through the University website. 52% of the research scholars feel that the university provides a very friendly, consistent and efficient procedure right from admission to thesis submission. 35% also feel the same and agree to the statement. Keeping consistent with the previous responses 2% are unhappy and strongly disagree with the statement. Eventhough the number is negligible, the reason for the displeasure needs to be evaluated.
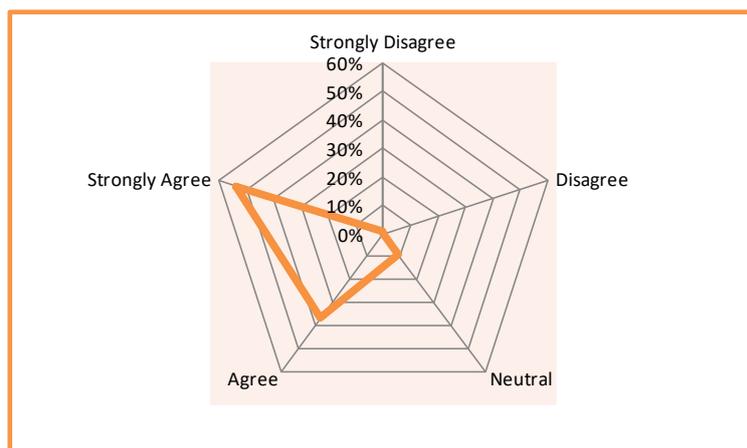

Figure ix: Consistent Ph.D procedure from admission to submission

10. **Contribution of Doctoral Committee**

The Research Advisory Committee plays an important role in research. It is constituted to monitor the progress of research and provide valuable suggestions in

the course of research. The doctoral committee meets regularly to discuss any issues faced by the scholar and enriches with ideas and recommendations towards good research. Almost all of the research scholars are happy and 72% strongly agree, 27% agree with the conduct of the research advisory committee. They are also happy with the contribution of the RAC towards progress of research.
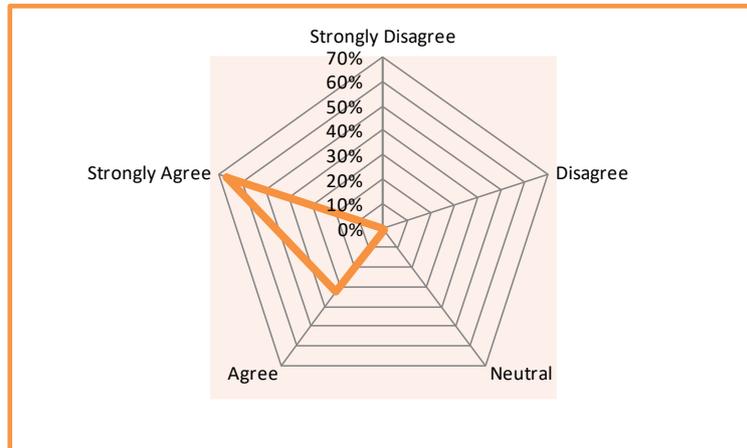

Figure x: Contribution of Doctoral/ RAC Committee

11. Overall ambience for research

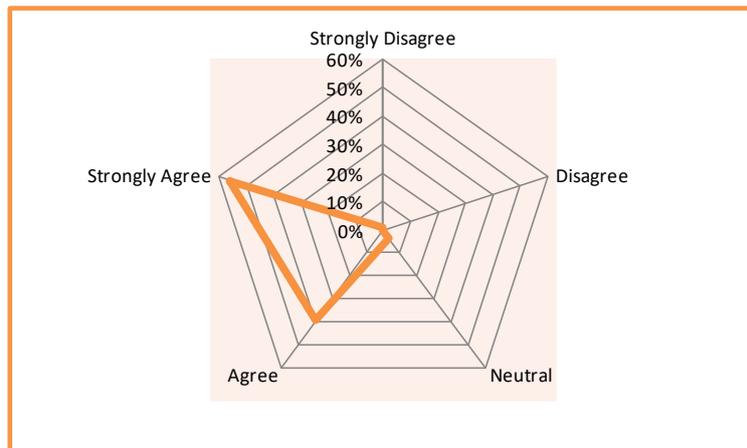The overall ambience to carry to research at the University is presented in the following figure.

Figure xi: Overall ambience for research

94% of the research scholars are satisfied with the overall research ambience at the University. They also feel the university environment is conducive for research and learning opportunities. Only 1% of the respondents strongly disagree. This is also consistent with the responses to all the other questions. 5% are neutral in their response.

Conclusion:

The analysis for the research scholar feedback collected indicates that majority of the research scholars are very happy and satisfied with the infrastructure and ICT facilities available at the University of Madras. All of the above charts clearly point out the respondents strongly agree or agree to all of the statements in the questionnaire. There is concern only from 2% of the respondents. The concerns will be addressed soon by the University authorities. It is stimulating to note that more than 90% of the research scholars are very happy with the overall ambience for research at the University. The authorities will strive further on to maintain this satisfaction index and give the best possible amenities and conveniences to promote research at the university.