
Growth Trend of ICSSR Funded Research: A Scientometric Study

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Abstract

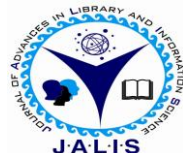
The present study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of research supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), a major organization that promotes social science and humanities research in India and plays a key role in research and development activities. Data was collected from the Scopus database, resulting in a total of 1780 publications included in the analysis, covering the period from 1972 to 2025. MS Excel and Biblioshiny software were used for analysis to meet the study's objectives. The results indicated that the majority of documents (1565) were articles, with Jawaharlal Nehru University contributing the most publications at 58. The growth rate of publications funded by ICSSR was found to be 1.29. Aznarul Islam (17) was identified as the primary author of the research funded by ICSSR.

Keywords

ICSSR, Funding, Scientometrics, Growth Trend

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scholarly communication is the system by which research and academic works are produced, assessed for quality, disseminated to the academic community, and preserved for future use. This system encompasses conventional communication methods, including publication in peer-reviewed journals and books, as well as additional platforms. Open access, sustainable publishing, and author rights are fundamental components of scholarly communication. Research funding refers to the financial support provided to researchers, scientists, and institutions to cover the costs of conducting research. High-quality research necessitates specialized equipment, travel, personal investment, and time; thus, external support is crucial for facilitating most academic and scientific advancements. Research funding significantly shapes the scope and impact of research efforts within academic institutions. Research is typically financed by both public and private entities, including government agencies, private foundations, industries, and internal institutional funds. International funding is frequently supplied by philanthropic entities or intergovernmental organizations. In the UK, the Wellcome Trust, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (USA), the European Research Council, and the NIH are among the few organisations that offer significant grants for high-impact research across various fields. In India, the research funding landscape is significantly shaped by specialised government departments. The comprehensive ecosystem of government-supported agencies that serve specific fields includes DST (Department of Science and Technology), DBT (Department of Biotechnology), CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research), and ICSSR (Indian Council of Social Science Research), among others (Debnath & Kumar 2025).

In India, ICSSR, or the Indian Council of Social Science Research, is a major organization that supports social science and humanities research. The ICSSR was established in 1969 and is overseen by the Ministry of Education of the Government of India. The council is important for increasing knowledge about social issues and gives policymakers and stakeholders research-based solutions to help with national development through different initiatives and programs. These include doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships, national fellowships, research projects, internships and training programs, capacity building for researchers,

publishing grants, and hosting national and international seminars, conferences, and workshops. The ICSSR promotes study in the social sciences and humanities through research institutions, accredited institutes, and regional centers. It manages the National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC), which offers library and information services to social science scholars. The organization aims to establish a national agenda for social science research while contributing to informed policymaking and societal development by fostering research excellence. Since its inception, ICSSR has played a significant role in fostering the talents of both new and experienced academics by providing funding opportunities, collaborative projects, and training in research methodologies. This has led to high-quality research that can be used to inform policy and decision-making. It has also made a substantial impact on arts and culture, helping to decolonize people's perceptions of themselves and their roles in society across the country. However, despite its long history, the assessment, output, and, most importantly, the impact of ICSSR-funded research remain limited. The scientometric approach can help identify new research areas, leading institutions, key authors, and gaps that need attention. This study aims to deliver evidence-based outcomes by analyzing publishing and citation patterns, author productivity, and thematic trends to evaluate how ICSSR funding has influenced social science research in India. However, the Assessment is a vital process for evaluating and advancing knowledge in a particular subject or discipline. Therefore, it is also important to identify the studies funded by ICSSR to understand the trends and productivity in the field of social science.

1.1 SCIENTOMETRICS

Scientometric analysis evaluates and quantifies various aspects of a researcher's output, including publication distribution, authorship trends, productivity levels, growth patterns, and collaborative efforts. It examines author trends and attributes, providing indicators for the development of science and technology policies and research administration (Gayathri & Srinivasaragavan, 2024). The present study examines the Scopus database to assess the research output funded by ICSSR from 1972 to 2025.

2. REVIEW

The study analyses the insights from ICSSR-funded research by focusing on the associated impact and

growth trend of the contributions. Throughout the years, several bibliometric and scientometric analyses have been conducted to evaluate the findings of studies on specific themes, countries, writers, and sources. A study by Gayan and Mog (2025) examined the reading habits of research publications using a bibliometric methodology and analyzed bibliometric data from the Scopus and WoS databases. The analysis indicated a continuous rise in publications on reading habits in the digital environment (RHDE) from 2007 onward. From 1998 to 2023, "digital reading" emerged as the predominant issue, with China in the forefront of publications, followed by the USA. Moreover, Chen C.M. emerged as the most prolific author, while Zhejiang University (China) was identified as the preeminent institution in RHDE research. Choudhary and Kumari undertook a study to evaluate the knowledge of ICSSR services and programs among research academics at Mahatma Gandhi Central University in Motihari, Bihar. The results demonstrate that most researchers are aware of the services, tools, and initiatives offered by ICSSR. Arora et al. analyze the structure of data in the ICSSR Data Service repository, outlining its characteristics, capabilities, and accessible datasets. The study promotes data sharing to enhance reuse and offer perspectives on the genesis, generation, and management of social science research data. Senthilkumar, P, et al. performed a scientometric analysis of the research output on blended learning indexed in the Scopus database from 2015 to 2023. The data indicate a significant increase in records, rising from 854 publications in 2015 to 22,344 in 2023. The results indicate that articles comprise the predominant portion of publications (~83.11%), with a notable average of 10.49 citations per record. Jain conducted a comprehensive study of 22 institute libraries and three regional libraries across diverse Indian states to analyse their annual acquisitions of books, periodicals, CD-ROMs, annual budgets, levels of computerisation, hardware and software resources, Internet connectivity, library networks, and the availability of interlibrary loan and photocopy services. The survey concludes that ICSSR institute libraries have begun computerized operations and are actively working to digitize their collections. These libraries must understand the evolution of literature and consumption trends in the social sciences. It also investigates the integrated online "ICSSR Data Analytics" and visualization tool developed with the "R" computer language. Devnath and Kumar examined the research funded by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India's scholarly productivity, citation impact, and Altmetric

score. The results show that the amount of research being done is steadily increasing. The CSIR funds only 24% of research published on open-access platforms. Each paper gets an average of 22.46 citations. Most of the CSIR-funded research is shared in the form of articles (91.97%). This method is supported by the fact that articles have gotten 87% of all citations, showing how important it is to publish in standard journal formats.

The examination of research output is an important feature that reveals a growing trend in the academic community. The scientometrics study assesses important research outputs across all aspects of academic and research institutes, topic areas, and so on. The purpose of this study is to look into the scientometric aspects of ICSSR-funded research to identify traits and productivity related to the subject.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the growth of publications and citation patterns of documents funded by ICSSR
2. To identify the preferred source and journals for publication by researchers
3. To identify the most contributing authors and institutions of ICSSR-funded research
4. To identify the trending topics by analyzing keywords

4. MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

To conduct the study and achieve the study's objectives, the researcher has adopted and followed the following steps.

To carry out the research, the first step was to select a database. For this study, the Scopus database was chosen for its popularity, as it indexes thousands of peer-reviewed publications across many fields. Because of its extensive database coverage, intellectual groups regularly use it to search for literature tailored to their specific needs.

Secondly, the search method was developed since it is essential for achieving the study's objectives. The search was conducted in the funding category, specifically for the sponsor or funding abbreviation ICSSR, covering the years 1972 to 2025. After filtering out, a dataset comprising 1780 entries was extracted from the Scopus database on October 27, 2025. This dataset was indexed under the ICSSR-funded research publications classification. To

analyze the bibliographic data, Biblioshiny by Bibliometrix software was used to determine the main and sub-themes. Later, MS Excel was utilized to visualize the data accordingly.

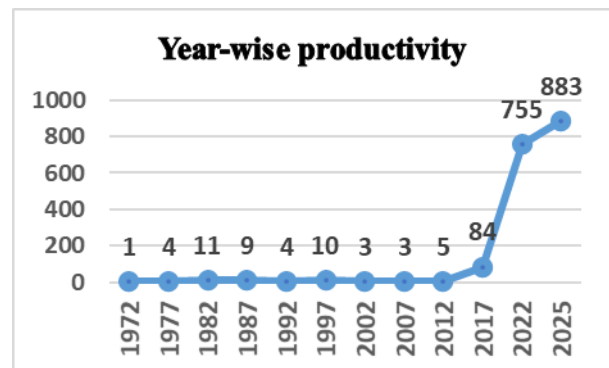
5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is limited to ICSSR-funded research conducted from 1972 to 2025. The Scopus database is selected for the study, as it indexes thousands of peer-reviewed publications across many fields. Because of its extensive database coverage, intellectual groups regularly use it to search for literature tailored to their specific needs. Under the Acronym ICSSR-funded/sponsored research, a total of 1780 publications have been found.

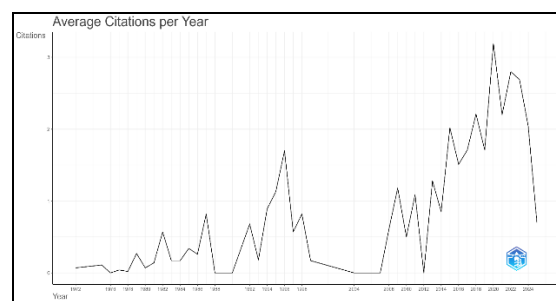
6. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Growth of Publication and Citations

The graphs below show the growth and patterns of the publications (Graph 1) and citations (Graph 2) of the documents.



Graph 1: Year-wise growth of publications



Graph 2: Average Citation Pattern

Graph 1 illustrates the yearly distribution of research output, demonstrating the evolution of publication numbers over time. In the initial years, the number of publications appears comparatively low, indicating a nascent phase of research endeavours and limited

Table 2: Highly cited publication by ICSSR-funded research

	Title	Year	Citation received	Name of the Journal
1	Green Human Resource Management and Employee Green Behavior: An Empirical Analysis	2020	450	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management
2	Land use and land cover change detection using geospatial techniques in the Sikkim Himalaya, India	2020	256	Egyptian Journal of Remote Sensing and Space Science
3	Sustainable economic development in India: The dynamics between financial inclusion, ICT development, and economic growth	2021	199	Technological Forecasting and Social Change
4	Institutional framework of ESG disclosures: comparative analysis of developed and developing countries	2023	181	Journal of Sustainable Finance and Investment
5	The feminization of agriculture or the feminization of agrarian distress? Tracking the trajectory of women in agriculture in India	2018	173	Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy
6	Assessing enablers of e-waste management in circular economy using DEMATEL method: An Indian perspective	2020	168	Environmental Science and Pollution Research
7	Capital structure of SMEs: a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis	2020	152	Management Review Quarterly
8	Green banking initiatives: a qualitative study on Indian banking sector	2022	146	Environment, Development and Sustainability
9	A comparison of the Indian diet with the EAT-Lancet reference diet	2020	145	BMC Public Health
10	Development and validation of a scale for measuring Sustainable Supply Chain Management practices and performance	2017	133	Journal of Cleaner Production

Table 2 lists the top ten most cited publications in the dataset, along with their year of publication, citation counts, and journals where they appeared. These highly cited works represent influential contributions and reflect a major research theme that has received significant attention. The article "Green Human Resource Management and Employee Green Behaviour: An Empirical Analysis," published in 2020 in Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, is the most cited, with 450 citations, indicating a growing interest in environmentally responsible human resource practices and sustainable organisational behaviour. It is followed by "Land Use and Land Cover Change Detection Using Geospatial Techniques in the Sikkim Himalaya, India," published in 2020 in the Egyptian Journal of Remote Sensing and Space Science and cited 256 times, demonstrating the importance of geospatial technologies in environmental monitoring and land management. The third most cited article, "Sustainable Economic Development in India: The

Dynamics Between Financial Inclusion, ICT Development, and Economic Growth," published in 2021 in Technological Forecasting and Social Change, received 199 citations. Other significant studies, published in prestigious journals such as the Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy, Environmental Science and Pollution Research, Environment, Development and Sustainability, and Journal of Cleaner Production, address topics such as women's participation in agriculture, e-waste management, green banking, sustainable diets, and supply chain sustainability. Overall, the citation patterns show that sustainability, environmental management, and socioeconomic development are major drivers of impactful research in the field.

6.5 Most contributed institutions/affiliations in ICSSR-funded research

The table below presents the list of the most contributing institutions in ICSSR Funded research.

Table 3: Most contributed institutions in ICSSR-funded research

Affiliation	No of articles
Jawaharlal Nehru University	58
University of Delhi	50
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University	48
Birla institute of technology and science	46
Indian institute of technology Kharagpur	32
Vidyasagar university	32
Aligarh Muslim University	31
Institute for social and economic change, India	31
University of Hyderabad	31
University of Kashmir	31

Table 3 shows the institutions that have contributed the most to ICSSR-funded research, as well as the number of articles produced by each. Jawaharlal Nehru University stands out as the most productive institution, contributing 58 articles. This demonstrates

its strong research orientation and active participation in ICSSR-funded projects across a range of social science disciplines. It is followed by the University of Delhi, which has 50 publications and a strong presence in policy-oriented and interdisciplinary research. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University is ranked third with 48 articles, indicating the growing importance of agricultural and rural development studies within the ICSSR research framework. Agricultural and rural development studies are increasingly important within the ICSSR research framework. The findings demonstrate a diverse and collaborative research landscape in India's social science sector.

6.6 Most contributing author in the ICSSR-funded research

The table below lists the authors who contributed most of the documents during the study period. Table 4 lists 10 authors, including the total number of documents, citations received, h-index, and average citations per year in ICSSR-funded research.

Table 4: Most contributing authors

Most Contributing Authors	No of documents	Total citations	h-index	ACPP	Affiliation
Islam, Aznarul	17	360	11	5.8	Department of Geography, Aliah University, Kolkata, India
Sahu, Tarak Nath	15	183	6	8.2	Department of Commerce, Vidyasagar University, India
Sarkar, Biplab	11	266	9	6.3	Department of Geography, Aliah University, Kolkata, India
Rajeev, Meenakshi	8	27	3	0.8	Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru, India
Alok, Swati	10	66	5	2.1	Department of Economics and Finance, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, India
Abdelrahman, K. Hassanein	8	127	5	7	Department of Geology & Geophysics, College of Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Kumar, Ajay	8	53	3	3.8	Department of Plant Sciences, Central University of Kerala, India
Maity, Sudarshan	8	47	3	5.3	Department of Commerce, Vidyasagar University, India
Malaisamy, A.	8	5	1	0.6	Department of Agricultural Economics, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai, India
Sharma, Ruchi	8	62	3	1.8	School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Indore, India

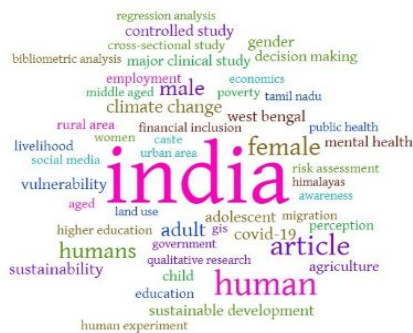
Table 4 displays the most prolific authors, ranked by their publication counts. The study indicates that the most prolific author is Islam, Aznarul, with 17

publications, followed by Sahu, Tarak Nath, with 15, and Sarkar, Biplab, with 11.

A total of 3,436 authors has contributed to the ICSSR-funded research, with 324 authors having authored only single-authored documents. On average, 2.77% of the documents involve co-authors or collaborations. From the table, it is clear that the top contributing author, Islam, Aznarul, from Aliah University, Kolkata, has received the most citations (360). He is followed by Sarkar, Biplab, with 266 citations. Tarak Nath Sahu has been cited 183 times across 15 documents, ranking third in total citations. Regarding the h-index, Islam, Aznarul has achieved the highest score among all authors, with a value of 11 and an average of 5.8 citations per document. The third most prolific author, Sarkar, Biplab, has an h-index of 9, followed by Sahu, Tarak Nath, with an h-index of 6, from the Department of Commerce, Vidyasagar University, India. The authors from the Geography and Commerce departments appear multiple times, showing strong contributions in these fields.

6.7 Frequently used keywords in ICSSR-Funded Research

Graph 4 presents the trending topics of ICSSR-funded research, based on the top research keywords that occurred frequently during the study period from 1972 to 2025.



Graph 4: Frequently used keywords in ICSSR-funded research

The graph (4) above illustrates the frequency of keyword occurrences. Throughout the study period, the topics that have been dominant among the authors are depicted as identified by the software; these topics encompass politics, gender relations, labor supply, social status, priority journals, ethics, and related subjects. Among all the trending topics, the term "India" appeared most frequently, with a total of 502 instances. It was followed by human (166), article (132), female (103), humans (90), male (81), adult (70), and so on. The colored blocks

encompassed a total of 50 keywords in various colors, along with the frequency of their usage by the authors in their documents throughout the study period.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Funding is a pivotal factor influencing the research process and the transition from theory to a tangible product. Without it, the most innovative concepts remain restricted to notebooks and laboratory experiments. It serves as a pathway between theoretical hypotheses and concrete breakthroughs. According to the study's findings, the growth rate of publications funded by the ICSSR is 1.29. According to the data, the number of citations and publications did not appear to increase at the beginning. Subsequently, both the number of publications and citations increased.

It has been observed that a large number of research projects supported by the ICSSR have been published as journal articles, totalling 1,565. This represents a large share of the total number of research papers published. It highlights that articles are the most widely used and preferred format for publishing scholarly literature. The article's citation is higher than that of other papers. The distribution of the literature across a specific topic area is described by Bradford's law. According to the study's findings, the journal preferred by the largest number of individuals is the Economic and Political Weekly, followed by the Journal of Economics and Development and the Geo Journal.

The article that was published in the year 2020 and has the title "Green Human Resource Management and Employee Green Behavior: An Empirical Analysis" has been cited a total of 450 times. This was followed by "Land use and land cover change detection using geospatial techniques in the Sikkim Himalaya, India," published in 2020 in the Egyptian journal Remote Sensing and Space Science, with a total of 256 citations.

The results reveal that 50 terms or topics are the most trending across all subjects in the ICSSR research. The term "India" occurred the most frequently, with 502 occasions. It was followed by humans (166), articles (132), females (103), humans (90), males (81), adults (70), and other themes. On the other side, among all the prominent topics, awareness had the fewest appearances. Common themes include health,

the environment, demographics, and social sciences. Jawaharlal Nehru University has made the most significant contribution among the institutes listed, followed by the University of Delhi and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. The number of papers published by an author determines which authors are the most productive. According to the research, there are a total of 3,436 authors. Sarkar, Biplab (11) submitted the fewest documents, with Sahu, Tarak Nath (15) coming in second. Islam, Aznarul (17) contributed the most among all authors. The article provides a comprehensive overview of research projects supported by the ICSSR from 1972 to 2025. An appreciable rise in research publications may be observed, along with a concomitant increase in related publications. In addition to the publication, the number of citations in the field of study has risen. Since its inception, the publishing landscape has seen significant expansion due to the benefits of widespread open-access services. It enhances the visibility and dissemination of published research articles.

It is important to note that, compared to other financing schemes, the amount of funds the ICSSR provides for research is rather small. Open access is thus an absolute requirement to ensure that the publication will be available and accessible. To ensure that materials are effective and accessible, researchers must follow certain rules when sharing their findings. As a result of this, the ICSSR will increase the visibility and ease of access to its sponsored research projects.

The present attempt covers only ICSSR-funded research from 1972 to 2025. Other organisations exist with the same mission and provide financial assistance to researchers in other fields. Funding and organisations offering support are very active, particularly in science and technology, and many organisations cover similar areas. So, in the future, researchers may find it appropriate to conduct studies on other organisations that fund research and development activities, as well as on ICSSR research, over a different time period.

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