

SR/S9/Z-07/2005
Government of India
Ministry of Science and Technology
Department of Science and Technology

Technology Bhavan
New Mehrauli Road
New Delhi 110 016

Dated the 5th of May, 2005

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Ramanna Fellowships.

The Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC) is an apex advisory mechanism through which the Department of Science and Technology (DST) promotes basic research in sciences and engineering. The SERC system of DST is the single largest basic research funding mechanism which cuts across disciplines and institutions. From budding young scientists to women scientists re-entering the research system to active researchers — it has been the mainstay of basic research in the country for close to three decades, especially in the academic sector.

2. DST, under the SERC umbrella, grants a large number of research projects to scientists of varying age groups. These projects are granted after an elaborate and thorough peer-review. SERC projects have sustained themselves as a benchmark of quality. The quality of peer-review, the openness and objectivity of the SERC system is widely acknowledged. These projects are also regularly monitored during their implementation and graded. A good fraction of these projects are implemented excellently well which again points towards the high standards of SERC's peer review.

3. It has long been felt that one needed to evolve a system whereby such performing excellent scientists could get core financial support for maintaining their research activities without interruption even while they are seeking major grants for upgrading their research activities. For core financial support one needed to only judge their performance in their past project and overall direction of their work rather than an elaborate critical review of a new research proposal. A scientist maintains certain level of core activity, gradually acquires higher and higher experience and expertise and then moves on to solve bigger, more complex problems with more sophisticated tools, techniques and equipments. While the existing SERC schemes offer number of avenues for support to individual researchers for their research plans after critical peer-review, SERC does not have a mechanism at present for offering uninterrupted core financial support to scientists for maintaining their core activities.

4. The **Ramanna Fellowship** has been instituted to fill this gap. This will enable a scientist to carry on his core research activity in an uninterrupted fashion even as she/he is thinking of bigger and more challenging problems. As it is open for 'performing scientists' of all ages, with or without employment, one will be able to sustain a group of performing scientists throughout their productive careers. This will help maintain core competence in crucial areas. This scheme will thus recognize the basic fact that basic research is essentially an individual-centric activity.

5. The details of Ramanna Fellowships are being given in **Annexure I-IV**. This programme will be under implementation till further orders.

6. This issues with the approval of Secretary, DST vide Diary No. 2982 dated 29.03.2005 and with the concurrence of the Integrated Finance Division of DST vide their Diary No. 2762/JSF/2004 dated 31.03.2005.

(PRAVEER ASTHANA)
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