

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AMONG AAU FACULTIES: 1988-1993

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ABSTRACT: *A survey of research activities at Addis Ababa University (AAU) has been made to investigate disparities in the extent of research activities conducted in different faculties of the institution and determine the major sources of fund for such activities during the last five years (July 1988-July 1993). Findings reveal that distribution of research projects and funds among faculties/institutes that received support during the period under discussion was highly uneven. Two faculties, the faculties of Science and Medicine, were in general the leading ones in terms of number of projects and fund attraction. The pattern in those that trail behind is irregular, however. When it comes to source of funds, locally, the University itself; and internationally, SAREC (Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries) were found to be the principal research donors with grants spanning over the various faculties of the University. For SAREC-supported research undertakings, the general pattern in the number of projects and fund allocation has shown a slight increase. But this was irregular and unpredictable for AAU-supported projects.*

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INTRODUCTION

One of the major reasons for the existence of a university anywhere in the world is to get involved in research activities. A university in which research is pushed to a marginal area as something to be conducted only when conditions are favourable hardly deserves the name. Thus, scientific research and investigations, besides teaching, should be one of the major tasks of universities (Commission for Higher Education, 1978). Otherwise intellectual deterioration of the force driving the institution itself would be something inevitable.

Findings through research tremendously contribute to the development of a nation. Practical solution to the problems of millions of people who are today cut off from the joys of social and economic progress is, to some extent, achieved through research. Research is, in fact, a tool of significant importance in the struggle made to overcome problems of developing countries (Gbakima, 1992). Therefore, the major focus of universities should be research, the medium for new knowledge and innovation, through which a nation's development is made possible (Andrian & Bhukula, 1986).

**Brief Historical Review of Research Functions
at Addis Ababa University**

Addis Ababa University, formerly known as Haile Sellassie I University, is an outgrowth of the University College of Addis Ababa which was established in 1950. Since its very inception, research has been among issues of top priority in the academic life of the institution. In the charter for Haile Sellassie I University, it is stated that provision of facilities for research and publication of results of such research was one of the duties of the then governing body (Board) of the University (Haile Sellassie I University, 1961). The attention given to research became more obvious in the early 1960's when research institutes and a few other units were created with the primary objective of promoting multi-disciplinary research. During this time, a small but growing body of Ethiopian scholars and scientists began to apply modern methods of scientific research (Bhagavan, 1989).

In 1971, further measure was taken and the Office of Associate Vice-President for Research was established to function under the Academic Vice President's Office. This effort, in 1978, culminated in the setting up of the Research and Publications Office - an office designated to act as a centre for organizing and coordinating research activities. Today also, the idea of improving the educational quality and research status of the

University stands in the front line of the immediate tasks to be embarked upon.

Organizing research units and facilitating all possible resources imply that the staff-particularly the academic staff are required to participate in research. The University, with this understanding, expects its intellectuals to transmit knowledge and also do research so that the social, political, cultural and economic problems of the society are investigated and solutions sought for. To materialize this objective, policies have been laid and included in the legislation of the University. The policies entitle full time instructors to a fully paid research leave of one semester after every four years and a sabbatical leave after every seven years of service (AAU, 1987). Moreover, they can, while on teaching, use 25% of their time for research and also get the necessary financial and material support for approved research projects (Aregay, 1988).

Despite such seemingly favourable situations, development of research at AAU in general and in some departments/faculties in particular is stifled to some degree for various reasons. Major constraints in this regard will be discussed in the following section of this paper.

Problems of Research at AAU

Conducting research is a task that demands a lot of things to be facilitated. It is not a job that one can embark upon just because one wanted to. Lehtinen (1987) as cited in Daniel & Tasew (1993) argues that the general positive attitude and interest one has in research practice doesn't by itself take one anywhere unless the essential conditions of research are facilitated. No matter how much competent and skilled a researcher is, he/she can't do anything fruitful in a condition where there is physical or mental stress. A researcher needs time, money, incentives and other necessary supplies as well as cooperation of all concerned bodies like government authorities, relevant institutions, subjects of the research, other researchers etc. In general, a researcher, to do an effective job, should be guaranteed with all sorts of favourable conditions like political, social, economic and cultural security (Shaeffer & Nkinyangi, 1983).

When we come to research activities at AAU, we observe a number of impinging factors that put researchers off conducting research, perhaps to the extent expected. Most of such constraints have been discussed by Bhagavan (1989), Andargatchew (1991) and, Daniel & Tasew (1993). Shaeffer & Nkinyangi (1983) and Gbakima (1992) also highlight some of the difficulties encountered by researchers in developing

countries in their attempt to conduct research. Following are some of such major problems affecting research at Addis Ababa University.

1. *Lack of sufficient budget* - Theoretically research is one of the highly encouraged activities in Addis Ababa University. But in practice we see that it is not backed by the necessary financial assistance. The annual budget earmarked by the University for the whole research and related activities is an amount much less than what many of the individual projects supported by foreign donors get. Even some units within the University itself like Awassa College of Agriculture, for example, have an annual research budget from the government which is about 2.5 times greater than that of the whole University. Of course, this could be reasonable as Ethiopia is primarily an agricultural society wherein research in the area should be encouraged. But it should also be clear that the University is critically short of research fund. Currently, the RPO, for example, doesn't have the capacity to support all projects submitted for funding. In order not to reject incoming proposals, however, it trims funds requested to a minimum cost and many projects consequently end up in securing only 50% (sometimes even less) of what they request. The other mechanism used by this office to handle the problem is releasing only part of the fund approved and postponing the remaining part until funds for the following year are made

available. Even doing this, the office sometimes finds all its money exhausted by April or May and starts looking for other sources in order to keep things going.

2. *Absence of incentives* - A problem well recognized by most researchers and University authorities but still receiving only a heap of sympathy is lack of any form of incentives. Everybody in principle accepts that research is a worth encouraging activity. But under the existing policy, there is no incentive of any sort that researchers get in return. The main worry, however, is that if this situation is allowed to continue indefinitely, no doubt, research in the institution would one day collapse and bringing it back to life could then be very difficult. Because research has almost become the least rewarding job in the University today, many faculty members choose to do something else which is paying instead of sweating on research.

3. *Low economic income* - It has now been quite long since salaries of the staff members failed to cope with the soaring cost of living. This is very likely one of the main reasons why a number of our best researchers and academics have migrated and still migrate abroad to work for better paying institutions. Forced by low earning, those in the country also hunt for additional source of income to supplement their wages. Without that life seems to be too tough and so long as cost of

living and salaries continue going further apart, the alternative that University researchers would be left with can't be anything else except shifting their attention from conducting research to making ends meet.

4. *Unfavourable teaching situations* - In addition to the heavy teaching loads, schedules of the University are also serious constraints particularly to researchers in the social sciences and related areas that demand field work. Teaching assignments are spread continuously over the semester weeks making it almost impossible to go out for data collection. On top of that, schedules are hardly flexible and so tight that one can't easily arrange make-up classes if one risks going out for a short while. Worse still, a research conducted under such a hard-pressed situation would, no doubt, be poorly administered and consequently bear almost no fruit. Thus a situation like this would keep the potential researcher away from conducting research and make him/her stick to teaching only as performance evaluation is mainly made on the basis of classroom instructions.

5. *Lack of technical skills and competence* - Shortage of senior researchers and, in some cases, reluctance of such people to share their experience to the younger staff have hindered research development in some faculties. Like any other field of life, research work also involves apprenticeship.

Beginning from designing the proposal up to the more demanding stage of conducting the actual research, a junior and unexperienced staff which, according to the 1991/92 academic staff list, is estimated to about 62% (21% B.A./B.Sc. and 41% M.A./M.Sc. holders) needs proper guidance of experienced researchers. This figure must have gone up following the 1993 expulsion of many senior and experienced staff and long term effect of this situation on research development of the University is even anticipated to get worse.

6. *Administrative delays* - It is not uncommon to hear many researchers complain of the long process that their proposals undergo to get them the funds they require to start the actual research. This involves every step that the proposals are subjected to pass through starting from their own department to the section of the financial service from where they draw the research funds. A proposal has to go from the author to the Department, then to the Faculty which directs it to its Research and Publications Committee (FRPC), then back to the Faculty for approval, then to the Research and Publications Office (which sometimes sends it back to the Faculty when it finds documents incomplete), then to the Senate Research and Publications Committee for final approval, then to the University Finance Office for releasing the approved funds. As decisions at every level are made at a meeting, one can think

of the time spent while waiting for meetings of the respective bodies.

7. *Lack of necessary funds* - This still is one of the significant obstacles to the University researchers who, regardless of the existing constraints, volunteer to do research. Getting major funds to undertake research has become very competitive these days as demand for research grants is overall greater than the present supply especially when it comes to what external funding agencies have to offer. According to Bhagavan (1989), many of the research projects submitted get no funding or are substantially underfunded. Such a problem gets particularly worse when it comes to beginning researchers as almost all funding agencies of major research projects demand inclusion of previous publications in the curriculum vitae of the applicant before they decide to give away their money. In a way, this gives them a rough idea of how competent and experienced the prospective investigator is in the proposed field of research but this is what beginning researchers lack and consequently fail to stand a good chance of winning research funds.

8. *Difficulty in securing supplies* - Problems related to procurement of necessary facilities like chemicals, scientific equipment, vehicles and also maintenance of such equipment, employment of assistants, drawing of per diem or travel

advances and finally settlement of accounts have become a high wall one never hopes to climb. An instance was there when a researcher had to wait for more than a year only to get some chemicals necessary for the take off of an approved project. Added to the time spent waiting for approval of the proposal, such an obstacle, no doubt, kills the researcher's interest and hope to effect the project. For fear of such embarrassing situations, many researchers choose to shy away from trying a research work.

9. *Under-utilization of research outcomes* - Basically, research is not an activity performed just to keep oneself busy or do some sort of mental exercise. It is something done to contribute to solutions sought to alleviate a concrete societal problem or somehow influence an existing policy or practice. But if the destiny of research findings is just being thrown away like something useless, then why waste time and money on the exercise? Of course, the fear behind application of research results is to some extent convincing. Using such findings as a base to formulate new policies has a considerable degree of risk because no one can be sure whether or not a research result will have the desired effect. The problem with AAU, however, is that either the fear of the risk or undervaluation of results is too pronounced. Many researches conducted on the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination, (ESLCE) have, for example, shown shortcomings of the exam and

suggested alternatives but the irony is that we always see the ESLCE like that. This will, for sure, discourage the researchers and also hurt the research development of the University.

University Research as Coordinated by the Research and Publications Office (RPO)

Research activities at Addis Ababa University are normally administered and coordinated by the Research and Publications Office. In principle, all research work going on in the University is expected to run under the awareness of this Office. But, at the moment, there are many locally and externally supported projects being conducted without any report made to it. During the 1991/92 academic year there were, for example, 22 government-supported and 8 externally funded projects in Awassa College of Agriculture alone out of which only two were filed with the RPO. This, of course, was an exceptional case. There could, however, exist a few similar cases in some faculties where researches were/are conducted with the support of other agencies or the researcher's own fund but not reported to the RPO. The forthcoming discussion, any way, dwells only on those projects registered at this Office.

Available information shows that there were 95 research projects registered at the RPO from 1988/89-1992/93 academic years. Of these, 70 were AAU-supported while 19 were SAREC-funded. The remaining six received financial assistance from different foreign donors. As could be inferred from the figures above, fund-wise, the University itself from within the country and SAREC (Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries) from outside the country, were the principal donors that funded multi-sectoral research activities across the various faculties of AAU. However, it should be noted that a number of major initiatives in the University, particularly those in the research institutes, have also been supported by other external donors. NUFU through NORAGRIC (Norwegian Centre for International Agricultural Development) has, for example, extended a grant of over NOK three million (ca US \$448,430.00) to Awassa College of Agriculture during the last three years only. Moreover, a major research project is to start soon at the Institute of Pathobiology under the financial support of this agency. In general, a lot of other research donors like the EEC, IDRC, GTZ, DAAD, SSE, UNFPA, SIDA, IFS, WHO, TWMRF, UNICEF, CIDA, TDR, FINNIDA, IAEA, IAO, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, AMFAR, etc. markedly contributed to AAU research.

For ease of discussion, we now divide the research projects recorded at the RPO into two groups, i.e, those that were funded by AAU and those that were funded by SAREC and see each at a time. The six projects funded by different foreign agencies have not been included in here as the mission of this paper from the outset is to discuss only the major sources when it comes to funding.

A. AAU-Supported Research Projects

These are projects that are basically financed by the University through its Research and Publications Office (RPO). All facts presented in this section are concerned with activities that are strictly research proper and not the preparation of teaching materials, organization of seminars, conferences, workshops etc. or printing of journals and publications of research results which, in their broad sense, could have relationship with research undertakings.

During the last five years (1988/89-1992/93) a total of Birr 343,818.31 has been granted by AAU to fund 70 new research projects in six major sectors. Beneficiaries of these funds were 14 different faculties/institutes of the University. The remaining units did not obtain funds, most likely, for the reason that they did not either apply for grants or failed to submit adequately worked out proposals. Provided that satisfactory proposals are submitted, with the understanding that suggested

funds would be subducted to reduction to accommodate all proposals, there was no occasion when research projects were rejected for reasons of high competition. It should be specified here that the research institutes viz. the Institute of Development Research (IDR), the Institute of Educational Research (IER), the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) and the Institute of Pathobiology (IPB) did not as such apply for support during this period. Normally RPO is not the main source of research grant for these institutes and it is only a small portion that they get from this office. The major part of their research fund rather comes from international donor agencies and, foreign countries and institutions with which they enter into a bilateral agreement (Hailu, 1991; Bhagavan, 1989). Though little, they also generate income through consultancy services. Thus the fact that some of these institutes didn't receive much or any of RPO support doesn't imply that no research was conducted there. As these are primarily research units, it is rather there that most of the University research is conducted. In the IER, for example, there were 14 research projects that have been conducted during the study period while there were 20 in the IPB. Moreover, the school of Graduate Studies, where a significant proportion of the university research is conducted by postgraduate students, didn't compete for the grant made by the RPO during the period. This is because students in the School, save for very few, come from institutions outside AAU and thus can not compete for RPO research grant which is meant for faculty members. The main sources of research fund for the School are support received from SAREC (refer

to Table 6), an annual grant-in-aid from the University and, tuition fees collected from postgraduate foreign students.

Table 1: Distribution of AAU-Supported Projects and Grants by Faculties/Institutes (1988/89-1992/93).

Faculty/Institute/ College	No. of Projects	% of Total	Grants in Birr	% of Total
Awassa College	1	1.43	5,000	1.45
Bahir Dar College	4	5.71	17,345	5.04
Business & Economics	2	2.86	10,000	2.91
Education	5	7.14	31,978	9.30
Gondar Medical College	4	5.71	11,442.04	3.33
ILS	4	5.71	17,518.75	5.10
IPB	10	14.29	53,615	15.59
Law	1	1.43	4,316	1.26
Medicine	9	12.87	80,151.52	23.21
Physical Educ. & Sports	1	1.43	3,775	1.10
Science	11	15.71	54,322	15.80
Social Sciences	5	7.14	17,672	5.14
Technology	2	2.86	15,000	4.36
Veterinary Medicine	11	15.71	26,683	6.31
Total	70	100	343,818.31	100

Average number of projects per faculty is 5 while that of grants is Birr 24,558.45.

Analysis of distribution of projects by faculties shows that Veterinary Medicine, Science, the Institute of Pathobiology and Medicine are in the lead while Awassa College of Agriculture, Law School, and Physical Education and Sports trail behind.

There are a couple of factors responsible for a distribution like the above. Most important is that these faculties are of different size and therefore vary in their potential to undertake research activities. Though all are considered as faculties, one can not normally expect units like Physical Education and Sports and, Law School which had only 11 and 13 academic staff respectively, to have the same number of projects with those relatively giant ones like the Science or Medical Faculty. Only a department in the Science Faculty, Biology or Chemistry Department alone, for example, is in many respects much bigger and more equipped than the above units and is thus expected to do more research than them. The 1991/92 academic staff list (this year is taken as it approximates to the mid of the study period) shows that these Departments had 23 and 22 members respectively out of which 14 in the former and 21 in the latter held the rank of assistant professor and above. This was nil and five respectively when it comes to Physical Education and Sports and, Law School. The rank of assistant professor is taken as a boundary here because,

relatively speaking, staff with this rank and above are believed to have a reasonably dependable skill and experience in doing research. Details of distribution of academic staff by faculties are shown in Table 2.

An exceptional case in relation to Table 1 is that of Awassa College of Agriculture which apparently was among those with the least number of projects. As our discussion in the previous section shows (refer to University Research as coordinated by the RPO), this College is in reality one of those units where research was extensively conducted. The reason could be that the staff had been motivated by the relatively encouraging external as well as government support extended to it for research. What is more, something peculiar to Awassa College only is that the research staff is paid an additional two-month salary in a year and this might have contributed positively.

Table 2: Distribution of AAU Academic Staff and those with the Rank of Asst. Prof. and above by Faculties that Received Grants (1991/92).

Faculty/Institute/ College	Total No. of Staff	Rank Order	No. of Asst. Prof. & Above	Rank Order
Awassa College	44	9	6	10
Bahir Dar College	66	4	3	12
Business & Economics	50	8	14	7
Education	44	9	12	8
Gondar Medical College	71	3	17	6
ILS	60	5	22	5
IPB	11	13	2	13
Law	13	12	5	11
Medicine	94	2	82	1
Physical Educ. & Sports	11	13	-	14
Science	103	1	63	2
Social Sciences	51	7	24	4
Technology	59	6	29	3
Veterinary Medicine	35	11	7	9

Source: AAU Academic Programmes Office, Academic Staff List 1991-1992

Veterinary Medicine, however, was just an average in terms of size and qualification of staff but among the highest when it comes to distribution of research projects. A possible reason can perhaps be that it, apart from those registered at the RPO, hardly had other projects funded by other agencies during the period under consideration. Whatever the case may be, the staff should be appreciated for the effort it made in this regard. The Institute of Pathobiology (IPB) was also among those with the highest number of research projects. This, however, can't be surprising as the institute is basically a research unit where the research work was run by a couple of experienced and well established researchers and seven M.A./M.Sc. holders employed for research duties. It also had many associate staff members from other faculties like Science (Biology Department), Medicine and College of Veterinary Medicine.

Apart from the difference in number and qualification of staff, as shown in Table 2, the above distribution is attributed to the difference in research environment among faculties. Though problems like shortage of chemicals and other necessary supplies are to be well recognized in the fields of health and natural sciences, on the one hand, most of the research in these areas is, on the other hand, done in laboratories located within the faculties themselves and thus can be conducted at any available time (after classes or in the evenings). But research in the field of social sciences demands more of field work.

This negatively affects the magnitude of research work in such areas as it is difficult to go out for a field work during the teaching weeks. Moreover, research in such fields involves things like hiring enumerators, finding appropriate informants, paying allowances for such people, etc. which further complicate the problem. So such differences that existed among the various faculties in general contributed to disparities in the share of projects.

When it comes to fund distribution, 54.7% of the total AAU-support went to three faculties/institutes, the Faculties of Medicine, Science and the Institute of Pathobiology. The fact that these three units stand high in their level of research activities and fund attraction has also been reported in the Year Book of the Research and Publications Office that covered a grant period from 1977-1994. On the other extreme, only 3.8% of the fund was shared among Awassa College of Agriculture, Law School, and Physical Education and Sports. It is, of course, logical that faculties/institutes with greater number of research projects get more funds and the vice versa because each project has to have some money to be conducted. A special case, however, was that of the College of Veterinary Medicine which, contrary to its high place in terms of number of projects, utilized funds below the average. A possible reason is that most of the projects it had were small ones with limited grants.

Regardless of the kind of situation under which they had to do these research work, it is in general necessary that researchers in faculties with high number of projects be credited with their efforts and contributions. Even if available, favourable conditions alone do not by themselves guarantee exercising research. In a unit where there is no problem of supplies, it is possible to find Ph.D. holders who have, after obtaining their last degree, worked in the University for a considerable number of years without engaging themselves in any serious research work.

Table 3: Distribution of AAU-Grant by Research Sectors (1988/89-1992/93).

Sector	Fund in Birr	% of Total
Agriculture	26,683	7.76
Education	49,323	14.35
Health	91,593.56	26.64
Natural Sciences	107,937	31.39
Social Sciences & Humanities	53,251.75	15.50
Natural Resources	15,000	4.36
Total	343,818.31	100

Average fund per sector = Birr 57,303.05

Analysis of Table 3 above shows that two sectors, natural sciences and health, took more than half (58.03%) of the total support granted by the University while agriculture and natural resources attracted relatively little (12.12%). This distribution is very much influenced by the situations in Table 1 above. There, we see that the Faculties of Science and Medicine were among the top four in terms of share of projects. A simple logic here is that if this is so and if we accept that each project has to have some fund, then there is no reason why the above sectors can't have the lion's share of the grant as researches conducted in the Science and Medical Faculties can't as such be in any other sectors different from natural sciences and health respectively. Of course, as compared to the total percentage of the number of projects they had, this is larger than expected and that shows that some of the projects were relatively big ones with considerable fund allocation. As to why natural resources attracted the least amount is not very clear. Perhaps research in such a sector demands a lot of money because one has to deal with things like moulding the environment, and as RPO doesn't have the capacity to offer much, researchers in this area might have resorted to better funding agencies which, of course, was not reported to the RPO. For agricultural sector, however, it is clear. As already discussed, this area of research is substantially funded by

NUFU and also gets an annual research grant from the Ethiopian Government through the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. Thus, it relatively had sufficient research funds and was therefore not necessary to turn to the RPO for financial support. That is why share of fund in the sector was among the least.

Project distribution by grant periods shows that there was an even share except for the years 1990/91 and 1992/93 during which a negligible decrease was observed. A possible reason for the decline could be that the University had some interruption during those two years and the academic programme was not operating as planned. Thus under those shaky situations it might have been difficult for the staff to think of doing research. Fund distribution was, however, uneven for the reason that the projects for each year possibly varied in size and consequently demanded varying sum of money. The table below in general shows that growth in number of projects had stagnated when seen against the years under study. This is very likely the consequence of problems of research discussed in the previous section.

Table 4: Distribution of AAU-Supported Research Projects and Corresponding Funds by Grant Periods (1988/89-1992/93).

Year	No. of Projects	Fund in Birr
1988/89	15	54,069
1989/90	15	87,285
1990/90	13	65,869.56
1991/92	15	61,128
1992/93	12	75,466.75
Total	70	343,818.31

Average number of Projects per year = 14

Winding up our discussion of AAU-supported projects here, we now take up those that were financed by SAREC. As already mentioned at the outset, SAREC was the major external funding agency to research activities at AAU. The following table shows its place in terms of major research grants made to different units of the University by external donor agencies. (Maximum grant and its source in each unit is considered).

Table 5: Maximum Research Grants Obtained from Foreign Donor Agencies by Different AAU Units (1988/89-1992/93).

Donor Agency	Grants in Terms of US \$ (Approx.)	Major Beneficiary (AAU Unit)
FINNIDA	62,415	IER
NUFU	2,173,114	Awassa College of Agriculture & IDR
SAREC	6,348,594	* Different Faculties
TDR	288,500	IPB

* See Table 6 below

B. SAREC-Supported Research Projects

SAREC (Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries) was founded in 1975 with the primary aim of supporting research efforts that contribute to the development of some selected third world countries, particularly those in Africa. To fulfil this objective, the Organization allocated 58 per cent of its bilateral and regional support to this continent (SAREC, 1990). SAREC's assistance to Ethiopia came to a reality in 1979. Since then a total of about SEK

132.5 million has been granted to the Country to finance research in various fields.

Research proposals to be submitted to SAREC by University researchers are channelled through the Research and Publications Office as institutional endorsement is a requirement. In fact, competition for the grant has these days become somewhat stiff and consequently, some proportion of the proposals submitted are rejected. A grant offered once covers a period of two years and is facilitated on the basis of a bilateral agreement signed between the Ethiopian Government (represented by ESTC) and the Swedish Government (represented by SAREC).

Over the first ten-year period (1979-88), nearly 70% of SAREC support of Ethiopia went to Addis Ababa University (Bhagavan, 1989). Major part of this fund was used for indigenous capacity building in the area of research training. Apart from those produced through the training component of individual projects, nearly 500 Masters dissertations in 27 different disciplines have been written under SAREC support extended to the School of Graduate Studies. Moreover, three Ph.D. theses in chemistry have been partially financed by this agency and a number of others that take full support are under way.

Research grants made to AAU by SAREC during the 1988/89-92/93 period adds up to SEK 50,725,270.00 (ca US \$ 6,348,549.00). These were used to fund a total of 19 projects in eight different sectors. As our discussion focuses on the period from 1988/89-92/93, the 1992-94 grant has been split into annual allocations and that of the 1992/93 has been considered here.

In the case of SAREC-support also, it is observed that the same faculties (Science and Medicine) were the most active as 68.42% of the total research projects belonged to them. The rationale behind this kind of distribution is again the same question of number and qualification of staff members in the various faculties. On the other extreme were Awassa College of Agriculture and the School of Graduate Studies with a total share of only 15.8%. Awassa College of Agriculture didn't perhaps submit many proposals to this agency because it had alternative sources of fund (NUFU and the Ethiopian Government). School of Graduate Studies, however, isn't as such a teaching unit and the academic staff working there have their academic bases in other teaching faculties. So, the two projects in this school are not, strictly speaking, research projects by themselves but are each there to coordinate and facilitate grants to M.A./M.Sc. and Ph.D. students of AAU who do research for their theses. A point to be noted in relation to this discussion is that the remaining fac-

ulties/institutes (about 14 in number) did not win any SAREC grant during the period under study. Producing reasons for each, however, needs a study by itself.

Table 6: Distribution of SAREC-Supported Projects and Grants by Faculties (1988/89-1992/93).

Faculty/College	No. of Projects	% of Total	Grants in SEK	% of Total
Awassa College	1	5.26	2,589,000	5.10
Medicine	5	26.32	14,797,800	29.17
School of Graduate Studies	2	10.53	9,800,000	19.32
Science	8	42.10	19,203,470	37.86
Technology	3	15.79	4,335,000	8.55
Total	19	100	50,725,270	100

Average number of projects per faculty is 4 while that of grants is SEK 10,145.00.

When distribution of grant by faculties is analyzed, we see that the Faculties of Science and Medicine were able to win 67% of the total SAREC fund whereas Awassa College of Agriculture and the Faculty of Technology together utilized a total of only 13.65%. The logic again is that the more the number of projects a faculty has the more fund it would have to run the projects.

In terms of distribution of funds per sector it is observed that major portion (60%) of the total fund went to research training and natural science sectors while only little (7.4%) was utilized by the sectors of environment and construction.

Table 7: Distribution of SAREC-Grant by Research Sectors (1988/89-1992/93).

Sector	Fund in SEK	% of Total
Agriculture	3,062,00	6.04
Construction	720,000	1.42
Environment	3,040,000	5.99
Health	6,326,300	12.47
Industry and Technology	3,441,870	6.78
Natural Sciences	12,248,600	24.15
Natural Resources	3,615,000	7.13
Research Training	18,271,500	36.02
Total	50,725,270	100

Average fund per sector = SEK 6,340,658.70

As to why the natural science sector won what it did being the same as the explanation given to the similar distribution observed in AAU-supported projects (that the Science Faculty had relatively many projects), for research training the reason

seems that SAREC's major objective was to strengthen the indigenous research capacity when it comes to AAU. That is why this sector was given 36.02% of the total grant. Relatively small allocation for the construction sector could be that many competitive proposals have not been submitted in the area. But for environment, the allocation (5.99) isn't terribly low as compared to what the other sectors obtained.

Fund distribution by grant period shows that support increased from ca SEK 19 million in 1988-90 and 1990-92 to ca SEK 25 million in 1992-94 and number of projects from 15 in 1988-90 to 18 in the subsequent grant periods.

Table 8: Distribution of SAREC-Supported Projects and Corresponding Funds by Grant Periods (1988/89-1992/93).

Year	No. of Projects	Fund in SEK
1988 - 90	15	19,110,270
1990 - 92	18	19,065,000
* 1992/93	18	12,550,000

* Fund is half of the 1992-94 grant period as already explained.

The fact that number of projects has somehow increased depends on the funding capacity and plan of the donor agency. The fund, however, seems to have generally increased due to

two reasons. One is that the number of projects to be funded has increased from 15 to 18; thus this demanded more money. The other is that some of the principal investigators have, for some reasons, raised the budget they requested for their projects.

CONCLUSION

AAU can be traced as a spot in the country where modern and scientific research is conducted in a number of fields. However, significant disparities are observed in the number of research projects conducted in the various faculties of the University. This is attributed to different factors but mainly to the size of each faculty and the qualification and research experience of its staff.

In fact a possible reason of disparity in this regard, particularly among faculties with apparently similar research environment, is a subject of possible investigation by itself. Whatever the case may be, outcomes of research activities contribute to the practical solutions sought for problems of the nation and thus should research be encouraged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research problems of the University are of different kinds and magnitude. Some of these, however, seem to need practical solutions than mere sympathy as they are seriously hampering the research endeavours of the staff. Of course, this is not to turn a blind eye to the complex nature of problems of the institution. It is obvious that we are not in an affluent situation so as to give an overnight solution to our problems. But through persistent struggle, it could be possible to improve things bit by bit. For this, the following are suggested.

1. Research has to be given as important a place in the University's budget as is required.
2. Researchers should be provided with incentives that are within the capacity of the University.
3. On the basis of merits, evaluation should be made annually to identify researcher/s of the year. Such researcher/s should be awarded a prize.
4. The University should seriously consider and, if necessary, negotiate with the government to improve salary of the staff.

5. An attempt should be made to trim the procedures involved in approval of research projects. This could be done by forming one strong committee that can take the responsibility of receiving, reviewing and approving proposals at the faculty level and forwarding them to the RPO.
6. Research results with strong potential of practical use should be assessed and tried out.

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