



## Research interest and research self-efficacy of MSW students in Kerala

Jesly Jacob<sup>1</sup> and Jose Antony<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

*Research is the backbone to every profession to enhance the body of knowledge and for the efficacy of practices. Social work research and social work practice are not two different entities but two sides of the same coin. Social work practice utilises the knowledge produced and verified through research and social work practice helps to identify the researchable areas in social work. research interest and research self-efficacy are two important factors that determine the involvement and success of an individual in research related activities. This study investigates the research interest and research self-efficacy of Master of Social Work (MSW) Students in Kerala and various research related factors involved with their training. Majority of the participants have average research interest and research self-efficacy. Research interest is significantly correlated only with research self-efficacy in early tasks of research and not correlated with any other subscales of research self-efficacy. Habit of reading research journals and previous research experience have good correlation with research interest. Habit of reading research journals, peer discussions on research, research related guidance from teachers and previous research experience have significant correlation with research self-efficacy. More time from supervisors, workshops to improve self-esteem, early*

1. Jesly Jacob Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Social Work, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kerala.
2. Jose Antony Professor, " "

*involvement in research and merging research and practice are suggested to improve research interest and research self-efficacy.*

*Keywords: Research interest, research self-efficacy, social work education*

## **Introduction**

Data generation and verification of data is possible in social work discipline through social work research. Social work practice considers research as a secondary method of Social Work. Research is a method of practice for social work, whereas research is a method for knowledge production in other professions. Research is important for social work practitioners as well as academicians. Social Work research must be considered very important for the training of social work professionals. A focus on social work research will contribute to the knowledge base of the profession, effectiveness of other social work methods like case work, group work and social work administration, identity of social work profession and overall well-being and development of society. A social work practitioner should have good knowledge on social work research to improve the practise and a good social work researcher should have good ideas about issues faced by practitioners to solve it based on the evidence obtained from research. Social Work Research itself is a problem solving method to provide a solution for individuals, groups and communities. So that huge importance is given for research in the curriculum of any post secondary level social work programme. Completion of research study is mandatory for the completion of graduate and post graduate level social work programme. Very rigid time schedule of academic calendars make the research process, a hectic task for the students as well as social work educators. No much exploration is done on the research interest, research self-efficacy of social work students for finding the areas of deficiency and to cater them. Studies on the research interest, research self-efficacy and factors affecting them is essential for a better outcome from social work education. Scientific data and their interpretation are the base of any educational process.

Interest of the individual is a main factor that plays behind the success of any endeavor. Interest of students determine their involvement and success in

social work related activities. Along with interest, belief of the individual to complete a task is also a determining factor of research involvement and success of social work students and it is called research self-efficacy. Research interest and research self efficacy can be developed through social work training programmes. Research interest and research self-efficacy can be considered as an outcome measure of social work training. This study evaluates the level of research interest and research self-efficacy of Master of Social Work(MSW) students in Kerala. Master of Social Work Programme is the most dominant educational qualification of social work practitioners in Kerala. Research interest and research self-efficacy of MSW students is taken as a predictor of research involvement of future social workers. Research interest and research self-efficacy of MSW students determine the future of research in social work discipline and the sustainability of the professional knowledge base of the discipline.

### **Review of literature**

Farely et al., (2006, p7) defined social work as“an art, a science, a profession that helps people to solve personal, group (especially family), and community problems and to attain satisfying personal, group, and community relationships through social work practice”. Social work is the scientific profession which takes other discipline’s knowledge for guiding, social practice (Chukwu et al., 2017). Sinokki, 2011 said that, Social workers equip themselves to deal with Personal problems of individuals, broad problems which affect communities (as cited in Chukwu et al., 2017). Uranta & Ogbanga, 2017 emphasise that methods and techniques which have been tested many times are used in social work discipline (as cited in Chukwu et al., 2017). Efficacy of Planning as well as implementation of various developmental projects in a country is depending on the reliability, validity and adequacy of available data(Chukwu et al., 2017).

Enhancement and refinement of body of professional knowledge is a major concern of social work profession (Roberts, 1989). Fanshel, 1980 emphasise that stimulating research production and utilization of research knowledge is the way to achieve the enhancement of body of knowledge (as cited in Roberts,

1989). According to accreditation standards given by Council of Social Work Education (2008), students of social work should have proficiency to use research evidence in practise and to use practise to develop scientific inquiry (CSWE, 2008). In addition to this, Moore and Avant (2008) have emphasised the need to strengthen social work research curriculum from the undergraduate level for socializing students to involve in research behaviours as early as possible (Maschi et al., 2013). Social work research is defined as “the systematic and scientific study of social problems with the objective of producing knowledge for planning and carrying out social work problems” (Chukwu et al., 2017).

From literatures it is clear that, the role of research to expand practice knowledge as well as to preserve the status of profession is recognised by Social Work Profession (Montcalm, 1999). Reid in 1993 emphasised the need of social work profession in ensuring research training to all students in social work (Montcalm, 1999). Efficacy testing of social work intervention, validating methods of assessment in social work, effectiveness determining of social work interventions are description of social work intervention research given by Harrison and Thyer in 1988(as cited in Thyer, 2001). These authors also support the experimental or quasi experimental intervention studies in social work for valuable contribution to the body of knowledge of social work profession (as cited in Thyer, 2001).

Social work training prepares students to become informed consumers of social work research (Roberts, 1989). Consumers of a research means, utilising the knowledge developed from scientific research into social work practise. Utilising research knowledge in practice will keep the profession up to date. Research skills developed by the students is necessary for them for scientific assessment of own practice, research findings’ utilization and to expand the knowledge base of the profession (Montcalm, 1999). Even though there is high importance for research course in social work, Many authors including Wainstock, 1994 have explained the negativity, ambivalence and apprehension of students in social work programmes towards research courses and statistics (as cited in Montcalm, 1999). Epstein (1987) observed that research courses in social work curriculum receives much groaning,

moaning and hyperventilations than any other part of social work curriculum (Montcalm, 1999).

Bandura, (p.4, 1997) defined self-efficacy as “one’s capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to produce given attainments” (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Holden et al., 1999, p. 465 conceptualised social work self-efficacy as ‘confidence in one’s ability to carry out a wide variety of professional tasks’ and research self-efficacy is a part of social work self-efficacy (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). So the efficacy of social workers is always depending on the research self-efficacy also. Research self-efficacy is an important factor in determining the quality of social work practice. Epstein, 1987 noted that Research related anxiety is a potential antagonist to research self-efficacy of students (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Research related anxiety is students’ unpleasant emotional state about research related activities (Maschi et al., 2013). Reissman, 1993 and many other literatures have explained the aversion exhibited by students towards social work research courses which result in uncertainty of students in their ability to successfully doing research (as cited in Montcalm, 1999).

High research anxiety, low research self-efficacy was found among social work students during their initial stages of learning by Adam et al., 2004 and Secret et al., 2003 (Maschi et al., 2013). Research courses during MSW programme does not cover statistics adequately and statistics receives only minimal time and attention (Roberts, 1989). Undergraduate statistics course has to make mandatory for MSW programme and experience of teaching research coursec by author reveals majority of students do not have basic idea of statistics (Roberts, 1989). Even if more training is received in quantitative methodology and journals encounter with more quantitative articles, students prefer qualitative methods for researches (Roberts, 1989). Students depend on qualitative researches for capturing complex interactions of human and for understanding human behaviour (Roberts, 1989). Lukton, 1980 negated that students of social work are more preoccupied with social work practitioners than social work researchers (as cited in Roberts, 1989).

Requirement of research by the academia act as a motivation behind the articles published in journals and these articles focus is not on the concern of practising social workers (Robertson, 1989). Another important fact is, social work researchers or academicians have lost contact with social work practise as their accessibility to clients and practise is limited (Robertson, 1989). Students who prefer doctoral level education may not be reducing the gap between research and practise as they become researchers or academicians and the practitioners hold a masters degree in social work (Robertson, 1989). Researchers in social work are more attached to sophisticated methods of social work, which were not given much emphasise during master's degree (Robertson, 1989). Inadequacy of practitioners in research methodology would hinder them from applying research knowledge into practise (Robertson, 1989). Gap between research and practice must be reduced by the initiative of researchers to compensate their remoteness from practice and their attachment to sophisticated research methods which is unknown to practitioners (Robertson, 1989). Any knowledge produced through research should be useful by the practitioners for the enhancement of profession. This will happen by a harmony between researchers and practitioners. Scientific method is embraced by the social work research but these researches make less than adequate value in practise context because of methodology choices of researchers and non-compatibility of topics with social work practise (Robertson, 1989). Social work practitioners have neither the desire nor the power to ask changes from the social work researchers (Robertson, 1989). Researchers should initiative to reduce the alienation between researchers and practitioners by adapting the researches as per the needs of the practise (Robertson, 1989).

### **Methodology of study**

The Objective of the study is to explore the research interest and research self-efficacy of MSW students in Kerala. Research interest was measured using, Interest of Research Questionnaire which was developed by Bishop and Bieschke in 1994 and Research self-efficacy scale by Greeley et al., in 1989 are the tools used to measure research interest and research self-efficacy respectively. Interest of research questionnaires consist of 16 questions which require

participants to give appropriate responses on a five point likert scale including responses, very disinterested, disinterested, indifferent, interested and very interested. 0.89 is the coefficient of alpha which proves the internal consistency of interest of the research questionnaire (Bishop and Bieschke, 1994). Research self-efficacy was measured using, Research self-efficacy scale which has 51 questions and for every question respondent is asked to give a score from zero to hundred based on the level of confidence of the participant on the activity involved in each question. Research self-efficacy scale has four subscales, including early task of research, conceptualisation, implementation and presentation of result. 0.94 is the coefficient of alpha which proves the internal consistency of Research Self-Efficacy Scale (Forester et al., 2004). In addition to interest in research questionnaires and research self-efficacy scale, a background questionnaire was also used. Background questionnaire includes information like age, specialisation and habits related to research.

Universe of this study is all MSW students in Kerala. The population of this study is all second year MSW student in Kerala. Samples were selected by multistage random sampling. Kerala, was divided into Northern Kerala, Middle Kerala and Southern Kerala. From this geographic division Middle Kerala was selected randomly and that includes Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kottayam and Palakkad Districts. From these four districts two districts were randomly selected. List of all colleges with MSW programme was made for the selected districts and half of the colleges were selected randomly. These colleges represent three different Universities in Kerala. All three tools were sent as emails to 200 second year students of selected colleges 158 students responded back and among them 150 students filled questionnaires completely and they became participants of this study. All the data collected were analysed with the help of excel and Statistical Package for Social Science Version 22 software and elicited patterns and reached conclusions.

## Results

The mean age of MSW students who participated in this study is 22 and minimum age is 21 and maximum age is 25. The gender of the students participated in this study was not considered by the investigator. Majority of

participants have completed their graduation before enrolling to MSW in Arts and Humanities (34%), least percentage (22%) of participants in social work itself and 34% of participants in Science stream .

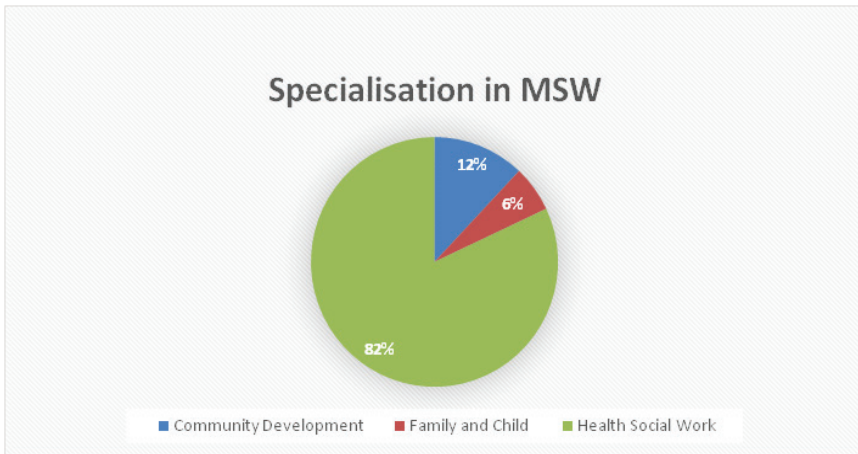


Figure 1 shows the different specialisation programmes selected by the participants as a part of their MSW programme. Majority participants(82%) of this study have chosen Health social work or medical and psychiatry social work as their concentration, 12% of participants selected community development and least participants (6%) selected Family and Child Practise.

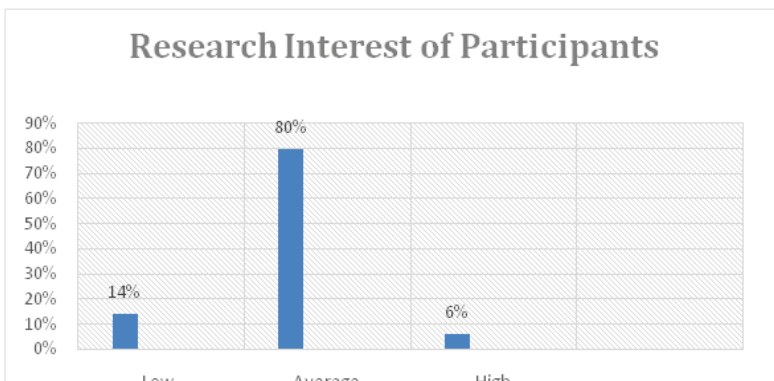


Figure 2 explains the percentage of different levels of research interest of participants. Majority of the participants (80%) have average research interest



and only 6% of students have high level of research interest and 14% of participants have low research interest



Figure 3 explains level of research self-efficacy of the participants of the study. 64% of participants have average research self-efficacy, 20% of the participants have high research self-efficacy and 16% of the participants have low research self-efficacy.

Correlations		Research-Self Efficacy	Early task of research
Research Interest	Pearson Correlation	.103	.179*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.212	.029
	N	150	150

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows the significant correlation between research interest and efficacy in early tasks of research. There is no significant relation between

research interest and research self-efficacy. And also there is no correlation between research interest and self-efficacy in conceptualisation, implementation and presenting the results of research.

**Table 2. Correlation between the habit of reading of research journals and research interest**

		Habit of reading research Journals	Research interest
Habit of reading research journals	Pearson Correlation	1	.237**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	150	150
Research interest	Pearson Correlation	.237**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table2 shows that, there is significant correlation between the habit of reading of research journals and research interest.

**Table 3. Correlation between research interest and previous research experience**

		Research Interest	Previous research experience
Research Interest	Pearson Correlation	1	.166*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.042
	N	150	150
Previous research experience	Pearson Correlation	.166*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	
	N	150	150

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the significant correlation between research interest and previous research experience at 0.05 level.

No significant correlation was found during data analysis between the peer discussion on research and research interest. No significant relation was found between the research interest and research guidance from teachers.

		Habit of reading research journals	Research Self-Efficacy
Habit of reading research journals	Pearson Correlation	1	.183*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.025
	N	150	150
Research Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.183*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	
	N	150	150

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 showing the correlation between habit of reading research journals and research self-efficacy. This correlation is significant at .05 level of sig value

		Previous research experience	Research Self-Efficacy
Previous research experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.459**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Research Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.459**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 show significant correlation between previous research experience and research self-efficacy and this correlation is significant at .01 level

<b>Table 6. Correlation between research related guidance from teachers and research self-efficacy</b>			
		Research Self-Efficacy	Research related guidance from teachers
Research related guidance from teachers	Pearson Correlation	1	.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	150	150
Research Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.255**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows the significant correlation between research related guidance from teachers and research self-efficacy at 0.01 level

<b>Table 7. Correlation between Peer discussion of research and research self-efficacy</b>			
		Research Self-Efficacy	Peer Discussion of Research
Research Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.345**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Peer Discussion of Research	Pearson Correlation	.345**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows significant correlation between Peer discussion of research and research self-efficacy at 0.01 level.

<b>Table 8. Correlation between habit of reading research journal and research self-efficacy in conceptualisation of research and implementation of research</b>						
		Habit of reading research journal	Presenting the research result	Implementation of research	Coceptualisation of research	Early task of research
Habit of reading research journal	Pearson Correlation	1	.128	.184*	.198*	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.119	.024	.015	.073
	N	150	150	150	150	150
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table 8 explains that there is correlation between habit of reading research journal and research self-efficacy in conceptualisation of research and implementation of research at 0.05 level.

<b>Table 9. Correlation of peer discussion of research with research self-efficacy in early task of research, conceptualisation of research and presenting the result of research.</b>						
		Peer discussion of research	Early task of research	Coceptualisation of research	Implementation of research	Presenting the research result
Peer discussion of research	Pearson Correlation	1	.283**	.281**	.341**	.387**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table 9 shows significant correlation of peer discussion of research with research self-efficacy in early task of research, conceptualisation of research and presenting the result of research.

**Table 10. correlation between research related guidance from teachers and research self-efficacy in early tasks of research, implementation of research and presenting the result**

		Research related guidance from teachers	Early task of re-search	Coceptualisation of research	Implementation of re-search	Presenting the research result
Research related guidance from teachers	Pearson Correlation	1	.217**	.193*	.260**	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.018	.001	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
 \* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 shows the correlation between research related guidance from teachers and research self-efficacy in early tasks of research, implementation of research and presenting the result at 0.05 level. Also research related guidance from teacher has correlation with conceptualisation of research at 0.01 level

**Table 11. Correlation of previous research experience with research self-efficacy in early tasks of research, conceptualisation of research, implementation of research and presenting the results**

		Previous research experience	Early task of research	Coceptual-isation of research	Implemen-tation of research	Presenting the research result
Previous research experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.254**	.435**	.468**	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11 explains the correlation of previous research experience with research self-efficacy in early tasks of research, conceptualisation of research, implementation of research and presenting the results at 0.01 levels. It means previous research experience has correlation with all aspects of research self-efficacy at 0.01 level.

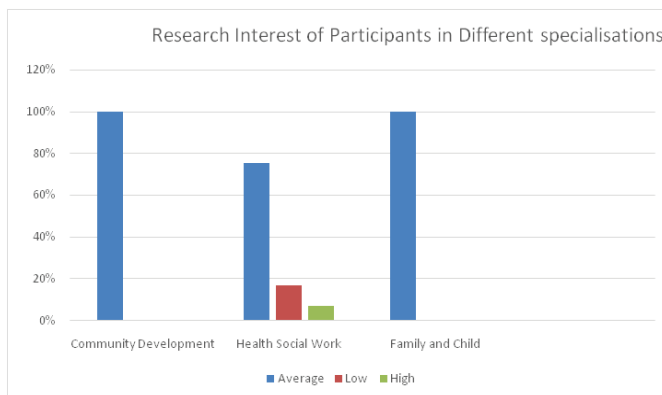


Figure 4 shows the level of interest of research of participants who belongs

to different specialisations in MSW programme. In community development and family and child social work, only average level of research interest is present in participants. In health social work majority of participants have average research interest but 17.07% have low level research interest.

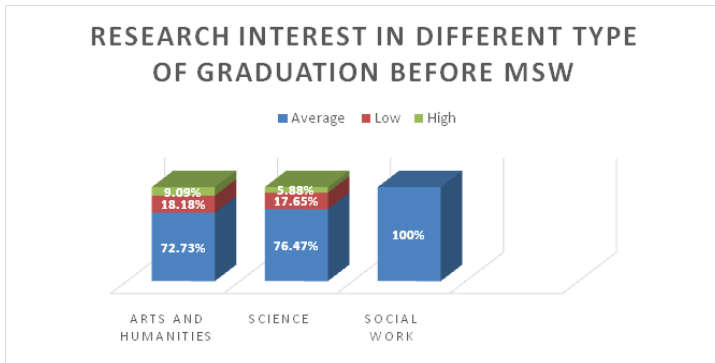


Figure 5 shows the levels of research interest in different type of graduation undergone by the participants. Interestingly participants with social work under graduation have only average level of research interest, neither high nor low level of research interest present in participants with social work under graduation. In science undergraduates and humanities undergraduates, more participants have average level of research interest.

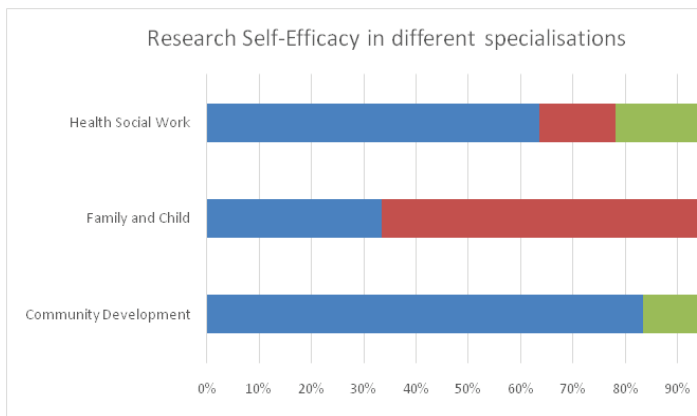




Figure 6 shows the level of research self-efficacy of participants in different specialisation of MSW programme. In community development 83.33% of participants have average research self-efficacy and the rest have high research self-efficacy. 66.67% percentage of participants in family and child concentration have low research self-efficacy and the remaining 33.33% have average research self-efficacy. Among participants in health social work, 63.41% have average level of research self-efficacy, 21.95% have high research self-efficacy and the remaining 14.63% have low research self-efficacy.

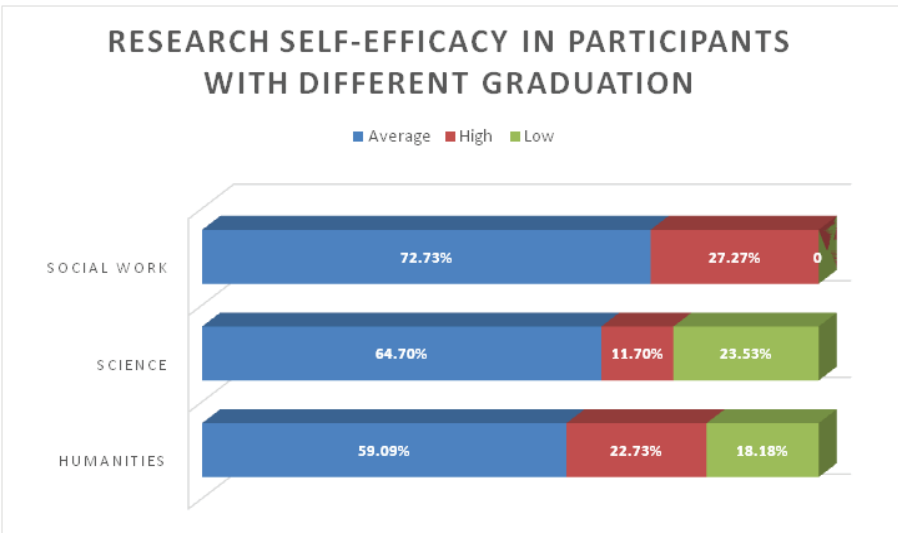


Figure 7 explains the level of research self-efficacy in participants with different types of graduation programmes before enrolling to MSW. Among, Participants with Humanities degree 59% have average research self-efficacy, 22.7% have high research self-efficacy and 18 % have low research self-efficacy. Participants with under graduation in science have average research self-efficacy for 64.71%, high research self-efficacy for 11.76% and 23.53% have low research self-efficacy. Participants with social work under-graduation have average research self-efficacy for 72.73% ,high research self-efficacy for 27.27% and no one have low level research self-efficacy.

## **Discussions**

Majority of participants have completed their graduation in Arts and Humanities subjects before enrolling to MSW programme. As social work under-graduation also comes under humanities, 66% of participants are from Humanities under-graduation. Highest number of participants have taken their specialisation as health social work and only a nominal number of participants have chosen other specialisation. Challenges in the health sector may be a reason for a higher number of MSW students to go for specialisation in health social work. Moreover, students of MSW may be opting health social work by a prejudice that, health sector has more opportunities for a social work. Such prejudiced selection may end in practising in a sector without much intrinsic motivation.

14% of participants with a low level of research interest, is a concern for social work discipline as it point out that, less number of practitioners would be engaged in social work research. Another challenge is 16% of participants have low research self-efficacy. Even if research interest and research self-efficacy is not significantly correlated, percentage of participants with low research interest and research self-efficacy is almost equal. This is supported by the finding of, Cameron and Este in 2008, that is, student anxiety and disinterest have been found as two problems associated with social work research education (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013).

Research interest is significantly correlated only with research self-efficacy in early tasks of research and not correlated with any other subscales of research self-efficacy. But early tasks of research are an initial part of the whole research process, and a good beginning means half of the process is good. Early tasks of the research involves identification of problem and review of literature, which highly need the interest of the individual. This may be the reason, behind the correlation between research interest and self-efficacy in early task of research.

Habit of reading research journals and previous research experience have good correlation with research interest. Cameron and Este (2008) have found the association between Research interest, course expectation, attitude of

instructor's, teaching practices and research related anxiety (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Sloan (2010) has attributed that prolonged involvement in the research process will reduce anxieties (Maschi et al., 2013). Similar to this, Merkle (2009) found that anxiety related to research and research self-efficacy are inversely related (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). A study conducted among psychology students by Beswick et al., in 1988 found that low self-esteem of students have significant positive correlation with research anxiety (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013).

Habit of reading research journals, peer discussions on research, research related guidance from teachers and previous research experience have significant correlation with research self-efficacy. Similar to this, Unrau & Grinnel, 2005 found that, prolonged participation of students' in research coursework will lead to enhancement of research self-efficacy (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Peer discussion of research, research related guidance from teachers and previous research experience have significant correlation with four subscales of research self-efficacy, that is early task of research, conceptualisation, implementation and presenting the results. Habit of reading research journals has significant correlation only with research self-efficacy in conceptualisation and implementation of research. Social work instructors have also found the connection between research anxiety of students and research interest (Maschi et al., 2013). Self-efficacy is considered as an outcome of social work education and research related anxiety is an antagonist to this outcome (Maschi et al., 2013).

Multon et al., 1991 found significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance, even studies with different research designs, samples and self-efficacy measures have agreed with this finding (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Fortune et al. (2005) found that, level of self-efficacy of a student is a determinant of self-rated skills in the field (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Similar to this Payne and Israel (2010) have found that help-seeking behaviour, reflective learning style, prior course participation and academic performance are determinants of overall performance of South African Students' in research design and analysis course (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013).

All participants with low as well as high research interest have taken specialisation in health social work. Interestingly no low as well as high research interest was found among participants with social work under-graduation. More exposure to social work research may be the reason behind the absence of low research interest participants in the social work under-graduation category. More exposure to research is a good approach to make research an inevitable style of social work practice. In family and child social work specialisation, the percentage of participants with low research-self efficacy is worrying and also in that category, no participants have high research self-efficacy. When students underestimate their research skills, they would keep themselves away from opportunities of research (Montcalm, 1999). Belief of students' about their competencies on research will influence the student initiated research activities, investment of efforts on undertaken research endeavours and persistence in mastering content of research (Montcalm, 1999). Negative attitude of students towards research and various concerns regarding the impact of research would have a negative impact of students' learning and it is clear from social work literature (Montcalm, 1999). Albert Bandura (1977) have noted that there is possibility for individuals to give up when they cannot believe in their ability to do the required tasks (as cited in Montcalm, 1999).

In community development specialisation, no participants have low research self-efficacy. Participants with social work under-graduation, no one has low research self-efficacy. This is contrary to finding of Royse and Rompf (1992), which points that, students of social work have higher research related anxiety than students of other discipline (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Percentage of participants with low research self-efficacy is more in science undergraduates than humanities undergraduates. This is similar to the finding that research related anxiety is presented as a common problem of students in different educational levels in science and social science discipline (Maschi et al., 2013). Research related anxiety adversely affect social work students' self-efficacy, skills and overall academic performance and also research across various disciplines also found a negative relationship between academic skill and performance and anxiety related to research (Maschi et al., 2013).

### Road ahead

Social work teachers have to use creative and critical teaching learning activities to improve the research interest of students. Cameron and Este (2008) have found the association between Research interest, course expectation, attitude of instructor's, teaching practices and research related anxiety (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). From the above finding a positive attitude from the instructor can reduce the research related anxiety of students. Reducing the number of students per mentor can lead to investing quality of time by mentor on students and this may lead to better research experience by students. Workshops and trainings to improve self-esteem have an impact on research self-efficacy of social work. This suggestion is supported by Beswick et al., in 1988 through the study conducted among psychology students which found that low self-esteem of students have significant positive correlation with research anxiety (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013).

Influential role of social worker educators for reducing research related anxiety and to enhance positive research experience is supported by various literatures (Maschi et al., 2013). Including a social work research courses from the beginning of the social work programme and continuing this to the end of the programme can be considered to improve the research self-efficacy and positive attitude of research and for reducing research anxiety. Holden et al., 2002 have found that prolonged involvement in research has a positive effect on research self-efficacy of students (as cited in Maschi et al., 2013). Schilling, Schinke and Gilchrist (1985) provided several relevant suggestions for journal authors such as having practitioners review manuscripts, using a writing style understood by practitioners and spelling out practice implications of the findings. Asking students to read research journals and conducting group discussions is good to improve research interest and research self-efficacy as they are correlated from the finding. interest in research and research self-efficacy is improved with research experience. Research related internships is a good way to improve research self-efficacy and research interest. Asking students to conduct micro studies in their field work area is a way to merge research and practice.

## Conclusion

This study could explore the research interest, research self-efficacy and research related behaviour of MSW students in Kerala. As research is an inevitable part of social work profession, research interest and research self-efficacy of young budding social workers have the potential to determine the future of social work discipline. The correlation between research interest and self-efficacy in early task of research is a light in social work educators' path to cultivate good amount of research interest in them. High percentage of low research self-efficacy in some specialisations of MSW must be considered with high caution as this may reduce the availability of scientific information in one particular sector. Activities that promote research interest and more and more exposure to research is the only way to take the students to the heights of research interest and research self-efficacy.

## References

- Chukwu, N., Chukwu, N. N., & Nwadike, N. (2017). Methods of social practice. *Social work in Nigeria: Book of readings*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Ltd, 44-59.
- Council on social work education (CSWE). (2008). 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards [online]. Available at: <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id¼13780>.
- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2012). Directory of Accredited Program [online]. Available at: <http://www.cswe.org/default.aspx?id¼17491>.
- Farley, O. W., Smith, L. L. & Boyle, S. W. (2006). Introduction to social work. (10th. Ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Forester, M., Kahn, J. J., & Hesson-McInnis, M. S. (2004). Factor structure of three measures of research self-efficacy. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 12, 3-16.
- Maschi, T., Wells, M., Yoder Slater, G., MacMillan, T., & Ristow, J. (2013). Social work students' research-related anxiety and self-efficacy: Research instructors' perceptions and teaching innovations. *Social Work Education*, 32(6), 800-817.
- Montcalm, D. M. (1999). Applying Bandura's theory of self-efficacy to the teaching of research. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 19(1-2), 93-107.
- Roberts, C. A. (1989). Research methods taught and utilized in social work. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 13(1), 65-86.
- Thyer, B. A. (2001). What is the role of theory in research on social work practice?. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37(1), 9-25.