



Science for Society

Science for Man

Science in Thinking

# BREAKTHROUGH SCIENCE SOCIETY

8A Creek Lane, Kolkata 700014, WB, INDIA

Tel: (033) 22640563, 9433369069, 9433944608, 9477514644

E-mail: breakthrough@ieee.org Web: www.breakthroughindia.org

Registration No. S/86180 of 1996-97 under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961

**A Voluntary Organization Committed to the Cause of Science, Culture and Scientific Outlook**

Date: 01-02-2023

## Statement on the Union Budget 2023-24

What does the scientific community expect to see in a Union budget? The current level of expenditure in S&T is hopelessly inadequate if India is to compete at the international level in knowledge generation. So the scientific community expects to see a significant increase in the outlay for research. But, out of a total budget of Rs. 45,03,097 crores, only Rs. 16,361 Cr (i.e., 0.36% of the central budget) has been allocated to the Ministry of Science & Technology.

Out of that amount, the Department of Science & Technology (DST) has been allocated Rs. 7931.05 Cr, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Rs. 2683.86 Cr, and the Dept. of Scientific & Industrial Research (DSIR) Rs. 5746.51 Cr. These are the agencies that fund scientific research, so appropriate funding of these agencies is crucial. The corresponding figures last year were: 6000 Cr, 2581 Cr, and 5636 Cr, respectively. Considering the inflation of 5.13%, the outlay in DBT and DSIR has actually reduced (these had to be 2713 Cr and 5925 Cr, respectively, to maintain the same level of support). More than 90% of the fund of these organizations is spent on salary, leaving very little for conducting scientific research.

Other ministries also support scientific research, including the Dept. of Atomic Energy (DAE, allocation Rs. 25,078 Cr), Dept. of Space (allocation Rs. 12,543 Cr), etc. But only a small fraction of their budget is spent on R&D. For example, in DAE, a major chunk of the fund is allocated to projects like building new reactors, enhancing and augmenting facilities, etc., and a much smaller amount goes into the DAE-funded institutions like TIFR, SINP, NISER, HRI, etc. The allocation to the Dept. of Space has actually been reduced from Rs. 13700 Cr last year to Rs. 12543.9 Cr this year.

The scientific manpower in any country comes from the education sector, and a robust health of education is crucial for its scientific prowess. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 document says (Article 26.1), "Unfortunately, public expenditure on education in India has not come close to the recommended level of 6% of GDP, as envisaged by the 1968 Policy, reiterated in the Policy of 1986, and which was further reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the Policy." It goes on to commit (Article 26.2) that "the Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest."

Education being in the concurrent list, the country's expenditure on education cannot be estimated from the Union budget alone. But it is generally believed that the Union government's commitment has to be at least 10% of the Union budget in order for the total spending on education to reach a level of 6% of the country's GDP. The scientific community, from platforms like Breakthrough Science Society (BSS) and India March for Science (IMFS), have been demanding this for many years. Ever since the introduction of the NEP-2020, the successive budgets have not reflected the necessary financial commitment. This year also, the outlay on Education is Rs. 1,12,899 Cr, which is only 2.507% of the Union budget.

Even out of this meagre amount given to education, a significant amount will be spent on facilitating online education—to be poured into NGOs and private companies to set up digital libraries and labs for developing apps for the effective use of 5G technology. The improvement of the infrastructure of government-run schools, colleges, and universities has received a low priority.

It is clear that the Union Govt. is bent on implementing the NEP-2020 without making the necessary financial provisions. The Breakthrough Science Society condemns the lack of political will to strengthen education and scientific and technological research, as reflected in the Union Budget 2023.

*D. Mukhopadhyay*

Dhrubajyoti Mukherjee  
President

*Soumitro Banerjee*

Soumitro Banerjee  
General Secretary