



Science for Society

Science for Man

Science in Thinking

BREAKTHROUGH SCIENCE SOCIETY

All India Committee

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

Education and research in India facing a crisis

Statement on the Union Budget, 2024-25

31 July 2024

The scientific community is dismayed to see the display of apathy toward the development of education, science, and technology as reflected in this year's Union budget.

The scientific community expected the Union Government to honour its commitment made in the New Education Policy, "The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest" (article 26.2). Reaching 6% of the GDP requires the Centre to commit at least 10% and the states to commit 30% of their budgets to education. In comparison, the actual commitment in the Union budget is only 2.59%.

The budgetary allocation to the science funding agencies like DST, CSIR, DBT, etc., was reduced by 22% in the financial year 2022-23, and it was expected that the government would address the dire fund situation this year. However, the allocation to these funding agencies remained stagnant, which indicates that these agencies are being permanently downsized. On the other hand, the new funding agency Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), which was created with much fanfare last year, has received only Rs. 2000 crores. The purported 70% contribution from private donors is nowhere in sight. As a result, the overall support for scientific and technological research is in jeopardy.

But the most devastating and unexpected blow has come in the form of an increase in customs duty on laboratory chemicals from 10% to 150% (yes, a 15-fold increase!). Most science laboratories need imported chemicals. Naturally, many ongoing research projects will have to be discontinued.

The scientific community demands that these retrograde steps of the FY2024-25 budget be repealed and adequate provisions be made for education and science and technology research.

Dhrubajyoti Mukhopadhyay
President

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