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Adequate funding critical for science says PM

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"Adequate funding is no doubt critical for science and our Government has accorded high priority to this aspect. Unfortunately, private sector investment into R&D has not grown fast enough for us to double the overall national investments into R&D from the current level of 1% of GDP to 2%. Increasing private sector investments into R&D and making possible conversion of knowledge into value and wealth remains a challenge that I would like the council to look into," remarked the prime minister, Manmohan Singh after the release of the book "Science in India (2004-13): Decade of achievements and rising aspirations"at New Delhi on July 08, 2013.

The book compiled by the prime minister's scientific advisory council (SAC), traces the march of science in India over the last decade and underlines the significant achievements that have been recorded.

Dr Singh claimed that his government has taken a number of foundational steps to promote India's long-term economic and social transformation through the use of science. He added further that based on the recommendations and advice received from the council, the government has built five new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, eight new IITs and many advanced centres of higher learning during this period of the decade.

"A vigorous effort has been made to attract Indian diaspora for research careers in India and as we have heard from some distinguished scientists here, this is indeed beginning to pay off. The council has also prepared a vision document and road maps for developing the national science sector, which we need to take forward in a planned manner over the next few years," he added.

Talking about the new policies, PM said that the new Science, Technology and Innovation Policy launched earlier this year aims to make India a global leader in science. For this to happen, we need a regular supply of talent. Dr Singh further remarked, "Science is a tool to empower and emancipate our people. Unless our internal asymmetries are bridged, India will continue to figure poorly in various human development rankings. I would urge the scientific community to discover new methods for improved delivery of our R&D outputs. Public and political understanding of the opportunities offered by new and emerging technologies must be enhanced considerably. I would like the council to spearhead a change of mindsets, so that we remain open to the use of new technologies for addressing pressing national priorities."

"I have no hesitation in stating that the achievements of Indian science during the last decade have without doubt been very impressive. But we must not rest on our laurels. Based on our record, we can and we must aim higher in the years ahead. I am confident that this Scientific Advisory Council and Prof. CNR Rao's leadership, will continue to push the frontiers of Indian science simultaneously in the twin dimensions of excellence and relevance, as mentioned by Jaipal Reddy," concluded the prime minister.

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