

To  
The Principal Scientific Adviser,  
Government of India

Dear Professor Sood,

Given the anticipated reductions in public research funding in the United States, many scientists currently working there are exploring alternative opportunities. In particular, a number of Indian scientists would be keen to return to India, provided the right conditions are in place. This presents a valuable opportunity for India to attract top scientific talent.

In this context, Yann LeCun, Chief Scientist at Meta, recently remarked that the U.S. appears to be “set on destroying its public research funding system,” suggesting that Europe may now have an opportunity to attract some of the world’s best scientists. Recognizing this, European policymakers are already considering measures to facilitate the recruitment of researchers from the U.S. For instance, Ekaterina Zaharieva, the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, recently indicated that the creation of a “special passport” for scientists is under discussion.

We believe that India, too, should seize this moment to strengthen its scientific ecosystem by welcoming accomplished researchers.

To this end, we would like to propose a few potential measures that could help achieve this goal:

1. Introducing a generous new fellowship/grant open to faculty members at all career stages to help attract those who wish to return to India from abroad. (some of the signatories believe that such a fellowship should be available to all, while others believe it should be exclusive to foreign returnees).
2. Increasing the hiring capacity of institutions to enable the recruitment of more scientists.

Additionally, we strongly recommend the following steps, which would not only support this initiative but also enhance the research environment in India more broadly:

1. Removing age-related restrictions for faculty recruitment (such as the age limit of 35 for assistant professors).
2. Establishing a unified job application portal for IITs, IISERs, and research institutes, similar to the Academic Jobs Online (AJO) system, to simplify the application process and reduce duplication of effort on the part of applicants. However, the recruitment process should remain decentralised and autonomous to individual institutions.
3. Easing any restrictions that may hinder foreign researchers from obtaining permanent academic positions in India.

We sincerely hope that these suggestions will be considered. Attracting top-tier scientific talent has the potential to significantly advance research and innovation in India.

Best Regards,

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