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Ministry of Finance

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Rs. 1, 00, 000 Crore initiative to drive research and infrastructure over the next four years

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Expressing concern over the quality of education, Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley has said that education will be treated in a holistic manner from pre-nursery to Class XII. Presenting the General Budget 2018-19 in Parliament here today, the Finance Minister expressed the Government's resolve to increase the digital intensity in education. "The Government proposes to gradually move away from "black board" to "digital board," he said. The Finance Minister underlined that a district-wise strategy for improving the quality of education is also being prepared. Emphasising the need to step up investment in research and related infrastructure in leading educational institutions, the Finance Minister announced the proposal to launch a major initiative named "Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE)". Shri Jaitley said that over the next four years, a total of Rs. 1, 00, 000 crore will be invested in the initiative.

Referring to higher education, Shri Jaitley announced the launch of "Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF)" Scheme. He pointed out that 1,000 best B.Tech students will be identified from premier institutions each year and facilities will be provided to them to undertake Ph.D in IITs and IISc with an attractive fellowship. Acknowledging the critical nature of the training of teachers during service, the Finance Minister also referred to the move to initiate an integrated B.Ed. programme for teachers.

The Finance Minister pointed to the need for best quality education to the tribal children in their own environment. "To realise this mission, it has been decided that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an Ekalavya Model Residential School", Shri Jaitley said. He emphasised that Ekalavya schools will be treated at par with Navodaya Vidyalayas and will have special facilities for preserving local art and culture, besides providing training in sports and skill development.

Referring to the initiative of setting up Institutes of Eminence, Shri Jaitley said that more than 100 applications have been received. "We have also taken steps to set up a specialized Railways University at Vadodara", the Finance Minister said. He added that 18 new Schools of Planning & Architecture (SPAs) will also be established in IITs and NITs as autonomous schools.

Stressing the need to reach out to every household of old, widows, orphaned children, divyaang and deprived as defined by the Socio-Economic Caste Census, the Finance Minister enumerated the implementation of a comprehensive social security and protection programme. He announced that a sum of Rs.9, 975 crore has been allocated for the National Social Assistance Programme this year.

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