

- There seems to be mismatch or non-availability of certain technical personnel in some disciplines. The scheme, National Technical Manpower Information System (NTMIS) under the Ministry of Human Resources Development needs to be carefully studied and utilized for promoting good scientific research.
- The question of availability of young research workers in the form of JRF/SRF was also debated and merits of the National Entrance Test (NET) organized under the auspices of CSIR/UGC were also discussed. Certain suggestions emerged as to how the selection of young researchers through the NET could be further improved.
  - Agencies take, on an average, anywhere between 6 and 9 months, for approving for funding a project received from the investigators. While it was recognized that projects should be supported only after a careful scrutiny and rigorous peer review, agencies would have to make efforts to help the scientific community and reduce the processing time while approving the research projects.
  - In view of the careful selection process used for approving projects, only 20–30% of the projects received are, on an average, approved by various funding agencies. This also reflects the fact that our scientific community is not coming forward with very good research proposals for consideration.
  - The outlay per funded project being supported by different agencies varied considerably, ranging from rupees ten thousand to more than Rs 20 lakhs. This goes to show the variety of project support being provided under extra-mural R&D funding.
  - Under many extra-mural R&D funding schemes, grants are being provided for equipment and the question of optimal utilization of the equipment during the progress of the project and after the completion of the project, has been a common concern of all the agencies.
  - There was a general consensus that considerable amount of new knowledge is being generated as a result of R&D funding provided by various agencies and appropriate means have to be found out as to how the information could be effectively disseminated, not only to the members of the scientific community, but also to R&D managers and other users of this information. Mechanisms such as the National Management Information System (NMIS) which could provide only 'information-on-information' were

noted. The use of well-known publishers for disseminating the reports, in the form of catalogued publications was emphasized, since the reports normally printed by the agencies are not available later for reference, as they are normally printed and distributed at one go.

In addition to the above issues which were discussed, the agency representatives were keen to establish such regular communication amongst themselves and have suggested several other issues [for example (a) support to private industry/organization, (b) the use of zero-based-budgeting (ZBB) technique for projecting the requirements of the R&D schemes, (c) follow-up of identified thrust areas, etc.] which should also be discussed in the inter-agency committee. The committee had desired that the information provided by all the funding agencies regarding their extramural R&D funding schemes should be suitably edited by DST and, if necessary, a report may be commissioned to the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS) which report could then be made available to members of the scientific community generally.

V. Siddhartha lives at 51, Bharati Nagar, New Delhi 110 003, India

## NEWS

## DST issues revised guidelines on overhead expenses in R&D programmes of the Central Government Departments/Agencies

According to the 'guidelines on overhead expenses in R&D programmes of the Central Government Departments/Agencies' issued by the Department of Science and Technology in February 1990, 'an amount of 10% of the total cost of the project will be provided as part of the project subject to a maximum of Rs 1.00 lakh in each case', as benefit to the host Institute for overhead expenses. Owing to increase in the cost of providing infrastructural facilities and several other factors, various S&T agencies suggested to the Department of Science and Technology that the overhead expenses be increased from the present level. On the basis of the views expressed by these depart-

ments/agencies, and in partial modification of OM SP/ZOO/89 dated 19th February 1990 issued by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, the following amendment to para 2 of that Office Memorandum has been issued by DST in an OM dated November 27, 1992.

*Benefits to Host Institutes:* Towards meeting their costs for overhead expenses including infrastructural facilities, an amount of

- i. 15% of the total project cost without any upper limit -- for educational institutions; and
- ii. 15% of the total project cost with an upper limit of Rs 2.00 Lakhs -- for

other than educational institutions (e.g. laboratories and institutes under S&T Agencies, other Departments) will be provided as a part of the project.

- iii. On projects costing more than Rs 40 lakhs, the quantum will be decided on a case to case basis.

The above amendment will take effect in respect of new R&D projects to be sanctioned on or after April 1, 1993 and is subject to the condition that no additionality will be provided in the sanctioned budget provision of the Ministry/Department of the Government of India sponsoring R&D funding schemes.