

***Publicly Funded Research Institutions and the Legacy of Sir Shanti Swarup  
Bhatnagar***

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**ABSTRACT**

Sir S.S. Bhatnagar (b: 21 February 1894) was an extraordinary individual whose persona encompassed, both, a quest for new knowledge and a deep desire to put the knowledge to use. His own life spanned three broad periods of evolution; as a university professor and teacher (1921-35), as a practitioner of applied and industrial chemistry (1936-1945) and as a builder of publicly funded research institutions (1945-1955). In fact the last phase of his growth, and probably his most lasting legacy, grew naturally out of the preceding two phases of life and work.

In this lecture, we will attempt to examine this legacy in some depth. We shall seek to understand what inspired him to create the publicly funded research institutions in the early years of India's independence, his visions for such institutions as well his thoughts on the inter-relationship between research institutions and research universities. In the intervening six decades since many of the publicly funded research institutions were established, India as a nation has undergone a massive transformation. It is, therefore, pertinent to ask what role such institutions serve now, or even better, what role *should* they serve in the emerging India of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The lecture will examine Sir Bhatnagar's legacy of "organized" science and technology in term of its need and relevance to the problems of contemporary India.