



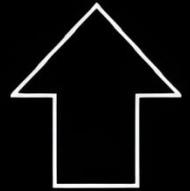
## Users rush to ‘Upscrolled’ over social media apps’ bias & ‘selective suppression of voices’

**FIGHTBACK AGAINST BIG TECH COMPANIES’ HEGEMONY AND THEIR POLICIES?**

New social media app, ‘Upscrolled’ has got a huge response. People rushed to download it on Apple as well as Android’s play store. It crossed 2.5 million downloads within a short period. This shows how users were waiting for an alternative as they were unhappy with big tech companies that arbitrarily formulate policies, suppress content that didn’t go down well with the financiers or owners’ political tilt.



### UPSCROLLED



**Users unhappy with other social media apps that suppress content, flock to new platform**



**The Asian Tribune**  
www.asiantribune.net

The new social media app, Upscrolled, has gained a large number of users in a short period.

In fact, the app was getting downloaded at such a fast pace across the world that hundreds of thousands downloaded it in a day.

Soon it became the top App on Apple play store. So what’s the reason for such a wave?

Clearly, users were dissatisfied and needed an alternative, a new platform that would not censor them and would allow them to express their support or criticism for any regime.

While users were complaining that Meta that owns Facebook and Instagram was taking down pro-Palestine posts and X also acted harshly on accounts that were critical of Israel, TikTok also announced that use of the term ‘Zionism’ in a negative or

degrading way would lead to action on the user. Many users had announced that they were feeling uncomfortable as content that either favored Palestine or criticized Israel was flagged or taken down.

Besides, the users repeatedly said that there was no free speech on these platforms and that criticism of Israel government’s policies or actions should not be seen as anti-Semitism. Users who reported from Palestine had their videos taken down and even handles penalized or shut.

After TikTok’s ownership changed, the founder of ‘Upscrolled’, Issam Hijazi says that his platform is inclusive and doesn’t shadow ban or censor people for their views.

He also said that the platform was needed as big companies sell users data for profit and suppress content apart from censoring the users selectively. That prejudice or bias is fed into machine as the

algorithm is created in this manner to suit the tilt of the owners, makes it difficult for the users who find it suffocating and stifling.

Right now, the major social media platforms include Meta’s Facebook and Instagram, Elon Musk’s X and TikTok.

Meta also owns WhatsApp. Upscrolled is seen as an alternative to big social media networks that have millions of users but their control mechanism doesn’t allow the users to express themselves.

Especially, during Gaza crisis, it was felt that there was less space to speak up in favour of Palestine.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has documented over 1,050 takedowns and suppression of content on Instagram and Facebook that had been posted by Palestinians and their supporters.

Peaceful, pro-Palestine content

is restricted. Human Rights Watch (HRW) has noted that the censorship of content regarding Palestine on Insta and Facebook is systemic and global.

Meta’s inconsistent enforcement of its own policies led to erroneous removal of content about Palestine.

“While this appears to be the biggest wave of suppression of content about Palestine to date, Meta, the parent company of Facebook & Instagram, has a documented record of crackdowns on content related to Palestine”, says HRW. Billionaire Larry Ellison’s tech giant now owns TikTok. Feeling restricted, a large number of users now seek freedom of speech & have shifted to Skylight & Upscrolled.

[editor@asiantribune.net]

# Rise in hate crimes and growing incidents of violence against Muslims in Uttarakhand

## EXCLUDED, TARGETED, & DISPLACED

COMMUNAL NARRATIVES AND VIOLENCE IN UTTARAKHAND

A Fact-Finding Report

The Asian Tribune  
[www.asiantribune.net](http://www.asiantribune.net)

In the last few years, the hill state—Uttarakhand has seen a shocking rise in incidents of attacks on Muslims.

Hate crimes and incidents of harm to the property of Muslims, have also gone up. The situation has reached an alarming level recently and the Muslim community is now worried about its safety. In view of the growing cases of attacks and violence against Muslims, a fact-finding report has been released.

Social activists & citizens from different walks of life who visited the state to take

take stock of the situation, gathered in New Delhi when the report was released.

The press conference highlighted the pattern of violence, displacement and exclusion that is being faced by Muslim communities in Uttarakhand.

Legal experts, journalists, retired bureaucrats, eminent citizens and human rights' activists warned that the state is currently witnessing systematic human rights violations driven by hate politics and a steady erosion of constitutional safeguards. Journalist Kaushik Raj said

that the current escalation of violence can be traced to the *dharam sansad* in December 2021, noting that “since then, a clear pattern has emerged.”

He spoke about the Muslim shopkeepers who had been forced to flee overnight and reminded the audience that many Muslim families migrated to the region 50–60 years ago, long before Uttarakhand had even become a separate state.

Sharing an anecdote, he recalled a Muslim dry-cleaner telling a Hindu

customer, “Aap to mere khilaaf naare laga rahe the.” The customer replied, “*Aapka kaam achha hai*,” exposing the disconnect between lived relationships & manufactured hatred.

Journalist Srishti Jaswal said, “As a Hindu and an Indian, I am ashamed. In the name of illegality, genuine citizens are facing exclusion and physical violence.” She said that the violence has spread from Uttarkashi to Chamoli and beyond, creating a climate of fear. APCR held the press conference & released the report. [Continued on Page 3]

February 1, 2026, Sunday

## The politics of hate in hill state

**The state was carved out after a long movement that had seen sacrifice of all the communities but today it is a playground for communal forces and society is being divided on religious lines.**



**The Asian Tribune**  
[www.asiantribune.net](http://www.asiantribune.net)

Uttarakhand has changed a lot. Once it was a state that was known for its peace and simplicity of the people.

But now there is a sharp communal divide and it has become a fractured society.

Shadab Alam, a Uttarakhand resident, pointed to misplaced state priorities.

“Instead of addressing main issues like unemployment,

migration, and development, the government is fixated on Muslims and polarization,” he said. The Association for Protection of Civil Rights (APCR) organized the press conference.

Khurshid Ahmed, a long-time resident, spoke of growing insecurity: “People are afraid to reveal their names or run their shops. Faith is being...

..weaponized to deny dignity to people”. Placing the crisis in historical context, Latafat Hussain of the Uttarakhand Andolan reminded the audience that the state was formed through collective sacrifices of all communities. “Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Isai—sab ki qurbani thi,” he said, lamenting that while women lack proper medical care & mass migration continues, hate campaign is on.

“..yahaan ka bhaichaara mashhoor tha,” he said, calling for a renewed movement to reclaim Uttarakhand’s plural legacy.

Harsh Mander warned that governance in Uttarakhand has become “deeply anti-constitutional.” “The state is being projected as a *devbhoomi* where non-Hindus are unwelcome.

Email: [editor@asiantribune.net](mailto:editor@asiantribune.net)

# The world needs free media.

Corporate funded media is not free.

# Budgets must move beyond marginal increase and focus on children with an eye on future

The Asian Tribune  
[www.asiantribune.net](http://www.asiantribune.net)

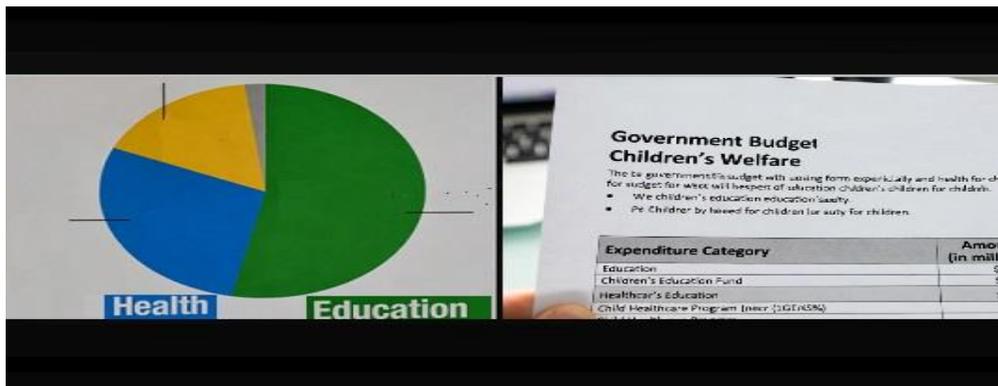
NEW DELHI: The Union Budget 2026-27 reflects a modest but notable uptick in allocations for children, signaling incremental progress rather than a transformative shift in fiscal prioritization.

A quick analysis of the Expenditure Budget Statement No. 12 done by CRY – Child Rights and You - shows that total child-related allocations have risen to Rs 1,32,296.85 crore in 2026-27 (BE), up from Rs 1,16,132.5 crore in 2025-26 (BE), registering an absolute increase of Rs 16,164.35 crore.

Compared to the previous Budget (25-26), the share of the Child Budget in the overall Union Budget 2026-27 has increased from 2.29 per cent to 2.47 per cent, while allocations as a percentage of GDP have increased marginally from 0.33 per cent to 0.34 per cent.

Puja Marwaha, CEO, Child Rights and You (CRY) has stated that, “While this signals positive intent, the overall scale of investment remains limited when viewed against India’s demographic realities and the growing developmental needs of children.

Incremental increase in health, nutrition and education sectors are welcome



but achieving inclusive and sustainable growth will require sharper prioritization of children, with stronger and more equitable investments that go beyond marginal year-on-year gains.”

Child health and nutrition allocations for the Flexible Pool for Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), Health System Strengthening, National Health Programme and National Urban Health Mission have increased by Rs 261.15 crore to Rs 4,591.58 crore. Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 has seen a welcome 5.19 per cent rise, with allocations increasing by Rs 969 crore to Rs 19,635 crore. Poshan 2.0 programme is the government’s flagship nutrition initiative aimed at addressing malnutrition among children, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women through supplementary nutrition

interventions, and the increase could support wider coverage and more consistent delivery of nutrition services at the Anganwadi level.

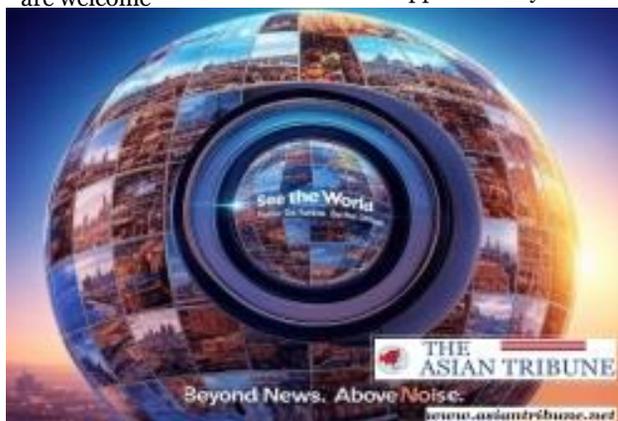
The PM Poshan Shakti Nirman scheme has received a 2 per cent increase, rising to nearly Rs 12,749.99 crore. Significantly, the Jal Jeevan Mission has been reintroduced into the Child Budget after FY 2024-25, with an allocation of around Rs 6,736.36 crore, underscoring the centrality of safe drinking water to child health outcomes.

Mission Vatsalya has seen a marginal increase of 3.33 per cent, reaching Rs 1,550 crore. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan has been allocated Rs 42,100 crore, a 2.06 per cent rise over the previous year. Encouragingly, allocations for Eklavya Model Residential Schools have increased sharply by over 20 per cent.

reflecting a stronger focus on educational access for tribal children. Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas have also received higher allocations.

The allocation of Rs 3,200 crore for Atal Tinkering Labs in 2026-27 signals renewed emphasis on innovation and scientific temper in government schools, while inclusion of the Skill India Programme in Child Budget aligns with the National Education Policy’s vision.

But several scholarship schemes for children from marginalised communities remain largely stagnant. Allocations for pre- and post-matric scholarships for Scheduled Castes have seen no increase, while scholarships for OBCs, EBCs, DNTs and children with disabilities have registered only.



THE ASIAN TRIBUNE

[www.asiantribune.net](http://www.asiantribune.net)

WORLD AFFAIRS