

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 924
ANSWERED ON 09/02/2023

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VAJRA SCHEME

924. SHRI DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK:

Will the Minister of Science and Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is implementing the Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) scheme and if so, the details and the aims and objectives thereof;
- (b) whether the Scheme would help facilitate strong international connections to the country's Research and Development (R&D) ecosystem, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to overcome the difficulties in the implementation of the Scheme; and
- (d) whether Government is undertaking any other policies for promoting participation of NRIs and overseas scientific community in R&D in the country and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF
THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY & EARTH SCIENCES
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) Yes Sir, the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) is implementing the Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme with the aim to bring a strong international connection to the R&D ecosystem of India. The scheme offers adjunct/visiting faculty assignments to overseas scientists, faculty members and R&D professionals including Non-resident Indians (NRI) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) to undertake high-quality collaborative research in academic and research Institutions of India. The objective of the scheme is engagement of VAJRA faculty in collaborative research in cutting-edge areas of science and technology including interdisciplinary areas of priority with one or more Indian collaborators.

(b) Yes Sir, VAJRA Faculty scheme facilitates NRI'S / OCI's visits to the host Institutions in India, resulting in collaborative researches and joint publications which paves the way for future collaborations and strong international connect to the R&D ecosystem of India.

(c) Visiting VAJRA Faculties have been allowed to undertake the visit in many stints so as to overcome the practical difficulties experienced in implementation of the scheme.

(d) In addition to the above, SERB has a fellowship program named as Ramanujan Fellowship, which is meant for brilliant Indian scientists and engineers from outside India to take up scientific research positions in India, those Indian scientists/engineers who want to return to India from abroad. Similarly, Department of Biotechnology (DBT) implements Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship and DBT TWAS Fellowship Program which encourage scientists (Indian Nationals) working outside the country in Biotechnology Research.

Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has also developed "Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark" (PRABHASS), a National Digital Portal with support from different Ministries/Departments of Government of India to connect several diasporas with Indian S&T community for different interactions, guidance and collaborative R&D.
