

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1584
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.08.2023

INCREASING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN STEM AND AI

1584. SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI

Will the Minister of *WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT* be please to state:

- (a) what is the current participation/ employment levels of women in technical and non-technical roles in the field of AI; and
- (b) what are the steps being taken by the Ministry to increase women participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and specifically Artificial Intelligence (AI) related fields?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) & (b) : Government of India has implemented various policies and schemes for the holistic development and empowerment of women including creating an enabling environment for sustained participation of women in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) including new and emerging technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). These policies and schemes are focused on an amalgamation of 'skills development', 'the future of work' and 'inclusive growth'. As a result of these initiatives, the enrolment of women in the field of STEM in India is almost equal to that of men as against 36.2% enrolment in the field of STEM globally.

Government of India implements **Digital India Programme** with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society by creating a countrywide digital infrastructure as a utility for every citizen including women. With the aim to address the under-representation of women in different fields of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in the country, the Government of India has started a unique programme '**Vigyan Jyoti**' for meritorious girls. The Vigyan Jyoti envisaged hand-holding and interventions right from the school level i.e., Class IX till the PhD level to encourage girls to pursue a career in underrepresented areas of STEM. Various activities such as science camps, special lectures/ classes, counselling of students and parents, interaction with role models, tinkering activities, visit to Knowledge Partners/ Research Labs/ Industries/ NGOs are being conducted in the programme in order to motivate girls.

To mitigate gender disparity in science and engineering research funding in various S&T programs in Indian academic institutions and R&D Laboratories, Government of India has formulated **SERB - POWER (Promoting Opportunities For Women in Exploratory Research)** program. SERB - POWER is specially designed to provide structured effort toward enhanced diversity in research to ensure equal access and weighted opportunities for Indian women scientists engaged in research and development activities.

Training in Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) was provided to women scientists. Research Infrastructure Support under CURIE (Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence) Programme has been extended to Women PG Colleges. The 'SERB-POWER mobility grant' has been introduced to provide opportunity to women scientists to visit leading institutions/ universities across the globe for a period of 01-03 months.

Through Pradhan **Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (PMGDISHA)**, the Government of India is empowering the citizens including women in rural areas by training them to operate computer or digital access devices, send and receive emails, browse internet, access to Government services etc. and enabling them to use the Information Technology and related applications. The scheme aims to bridge the digital divide, specifically targeting the rural population including women.

Considering the need of gender advancement in STEM area at institutional level, the **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)** program has been launched by the Government of India. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) also implements a dedicated umbrella scheme "**Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)**", through, with aim to support women from all walks of life in the domain of Science & Technology. The DST has re-structured one of the flagship programme "Women Scientists Scheme" and come up with a new programme "WISE Post-Doctoral Fellowship (WISE-PDF)" that aims to provide opportunity to women scientists and technologists between the age group of 27-60 years who want to continue the research as bench-level scientists in basic and applied sciences. Under the Programme, financial assistance is provided for fellowship and research as per DST norms.

Under the WEST (Women in Engineering, Science, and Technology) initiative, women with Science & Technology background have the opportunity to brush up their abilities and get reabsorbed into the R&D ecosystem within the country's STEM domain after a career break.

To recognize the contributions of senior and young women scientists in the country who are working in the areas of Biology and Biotechnology, the Department of Biotechnology confers **Janaki Ammal- National Women Bioscientist Award** (earlier it was the National Women Bioscientist Award).

The Government of India has also launched an online campaign to celebrate women who have carved a niche for themselves in the field of STEM. More than 700 such STEM Stars have been featured on MyGov platform. Recognising the vital importance of Public-Private-Partnership, the Government of India has partnered with various private organizations working in the field of emerging technologies such as 3D technologies, artificial intelligence, nano-technology, robotics and gene therapy.
