

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 261
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22ND JULY, 2025**

ENGAGEMENT OF SKILLED INDIVIDUALS IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF ICMR

261. DR. AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE:

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to ensure that Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has access to the most advanced infrastructural facilities along with the steps taken to enhance the budget allocation thereof;
- (b) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to attract best talented and skilled individuals in ICMR's research activities, especially in order to prepare the country and bolster its defence for any kind of future biological warfare threats emanating from adversaries; and
- (c) whether ICMR plans to collaborate with international research institutions for joint research projects?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a): Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has 28 institutes across the country with state-of-the-art facilities working for formulating, coordinating, and promoting biomedical research. With the long-term goal to prepare the country against public health emergencies, Pradhan Mantri - Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) has been launched for developing capacities of health systems and institutions. Under the scheme, four zonal National Institutes of Virology (NIVs) at Jammu, Dibrugarh, Jabalpur and Bengaluru and National Institute of One Health (NIOH) Nagpur have been approved for ICMR. Satellite Centre of National Institute of Translational Virology and AIDS Research (ICMR-NITVAR) Pune has also been approved. Two mobile Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) vans have already been procured and deployed at National Institute of Virology (NIV) Pune and Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) Gorakhpur. Besides, 10 Viral Research & Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) have been inducted for upgradation to Infectious disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (IRDLS), and 05 VRDLs have been inducted for upgradation to Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories. A total of Rs. 1670 Crores has been allocated to Department of Health Research (DHR) under the PM-ABHIM scheme for the period (2021-22 to 2025-26).

Allocation for ICMR has increased significantly from Rs. 820.00 crores in 2014-15 to Rs. 3125.50 Crores in 2025-26, this increase becomes approximately 281 per cent, reinforcing Government's commitment for advancing health research.

(b): Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has informed that it continues to prioritize talent engagement and development to advance health research in India. Its multifaceted efforts include targeted recruitment, flexible research opportunities, and advanced training programs tailored for young professionals, researchers, and scientists.

ICMR has revised its intramural and extramural research grants making those more competitive and increasing the grant size of extramural grants. The structured training and mentorship approach has been instituted. Early-career Small Research Support Grants (Ignition Grants) are also given through the intramural program. This grant of Rs. 30 lakhs per project is given for a maximum duration of 3 years. This is for helping newly recruited scientists to establish their own research credentials and build capacity for securing future funding.

This is further supported through a dedicated talent and research capacity-building scheme of Department of Health Research (DHR) namely, the Human Resources Development (HRD) scheme. Department has restructured some of the programs under HRD Scheme enhancing their effectiveness and reach. The eligibility criteria for the Start-up grant programme has been broadened, number of monthly fellowships have been enhanced and the number of seats has been increased in programmes like Short Term Studentships (STS) for MBBS/BDS students (from 1000 to 2000), MD/MS Thesis Support (from 100 to 500) and Fellowships for Ph.D. (from 300 to 500). To encourage female researchers, Women scientist Fellowships are awarded. A Young Medical Faculty PhD Program was launched in 2024, to enhance the number of clinical researchers in the country. A record total of 4291 fellowships have been supported in the FY 2024-25. Besides, a new Faculty of Medical Research (FMR) has been created through AcSIR -ICMR collaboration. In the first year, 140 PhD students were enrolled in FMR. Medical scientists from ICMR have also enrolled for PhD in FMR, in addition to those from outside.

(c): The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has informed that it has Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with different international organizations/ agencies. It also collaborates with institutions in countries like USA (Department of Health and Human Services-DHHS, International AIDS Vaccine Initiative-IAVI), Sweden (Forte), Germany (German Research Foundation), France (French National Institute of Health and Medical Research -INSERM), South Korea (Institute for Basic Science – IBS), Switzerland (Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative –DNDi, Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership-GARDP, Swiss National Science Foundation- SNSF) , Nepal (Nepal Health Research Council – NHRC) and Thailand (Department of Medical Sciences-DMS) among others. These collaborations are done in the mutually identified areas through different modes viz: (i) joint research projects; (ii) joint workshops/ symposia and (iii) exchange of Scientists under approved collaborative projects.
