

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 605**  
ANSWERED ON 04/12/2025

**WOMEN IN STEM**

605 SHRI RAJINDER GUPTA:

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

- (a) whether Government is taking measures to support women scientists in the country with fellowships and research grants to address gender gaps in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM);
- (b) If so, the details thereof along with the progress made in this regard;
- (c) If not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) the challenges witnessed in this regard; and
- (e) the proposed measures to be taken for enhanced women representation in STEM?

**ANSWER**

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

(a), (b) and (e): The government is taking various measures to support women scientists in the country with fellowships and research grants to address gender gaps in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The Department of Science and Technology is implementing a holistic scheme 'Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)' to encourage and promote women in the Research & Development (R&D) in Science & Technology (S&T) domain. The WISE-KIRAN Scheme provides opportunities for women scientists, especially those who have had a career break, to pursue research in basic and applied sciences, address societal challenges, and receive training in the field of Intellectual Property Rights. Under WISE-KIRAN Scheme, the WISE Fellowship for Ph.D. (WISE-PhD) program supports women to pursue research in basic and applied sciences. Further, the WISE-Post Doctoral Fellowship (WISE-PDF) and WISE-Societal Challenges with Opportunities (WISE-SCOPE) programs encourage women to pursue post-doctoral research in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields. The DST is also implementing the 'Women's Instinct for Developing and Ushering in Scientific Heights & Innovation' program (WIDUSHI), which enables senior women scientists under two categories viz. retired (Category-A) and not in regular employment (Category-B) to continue their scientific careers. Another program 'WISE Internship in IPR (WISE-IPR)' provides one-year on-the-job training in the field of Intellectual Property Rights.

Besides the fellowship programs, department provides institutional support through 'Consolidation of University Research through Innovation and Excellence (CURIE)' program to develop research infrastructure and facilities in women institutions to encourage women's participation in research and development. Vigyan Jyoti is another unique initiative of DST that encourages meritorious girls of Class IX-XII to pursue higher education and careers in STEM.

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) supports women scientists through the “Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation (BioCARE)” Fellowship program to enhance their participation in Biotechnology and allied areas helping women re-enter and sustain career in science.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched “A Special Call for Research Grants for Women Scientists (ASPIRE)” in 2023. This scheme motivated women academics/scientists from all across the country to participate in state-of-the-art research and development.

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) launched a Pragati Scholarship Scheme exclusively for undergraduate female students to provide an opportunity for higher education and empowering women through technical education.

Over the past decade, several measures have been taken to enhance women's representation in STEM under schemes run by Department of Science and Technology (DST). Under WISE-KIRAN, the number of women scientists supported increased from 2,713 before 2014 to 4,419 by 2025. Similarly, under Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)- Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE) scheme, the count of meritorious women supported rose to 50,642. For doctoral studies under INSPIRE Fellowship, 5,035 meritorious women were supported. Additionally, 439 women have been supported under the INSPIRE Faculty / post-doctoral support program. At the school and pre-university level, initiative such as Vigyan Jyoti has encouraged 1,12,386 girls (in classes IX–XII) to pursue higher education in STEM. Under the INSPIRE-MANAK scheme, 1,76,743 girls were encouraged to foster a culture of scientific curiosity, innovation, and experimentation through original ideas and projects to build early interest in science and societal applications.

In terms of progress, enrolment of women in STEM courses at higher-education level has substantially improved. According to the latest available data from All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE 2022), women constitute about 43.2% of students enrolled in STEM. At the same time the percentage of women employed in STEM-related fields in the government and private sector has increased from 13.9% in 2015 to 18.6% in 2021 (Research & Development Statistics -2023, DST).

(c) to (d):      Does not arise.

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