

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 128**  
ANSWERED ON 29/01/2026

**WOMEN IN STEM**

128. SMT. RAJATHI:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the percentage of women enrolled in Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) higher education and the percentage of women employed as STEM professionals in the country, sector-wise;
- (b) the measures being taken to reduce high dropout rate of women in STEM education and careers; and
- (c) the placement and career development initiatives by Government to encourage and support women in STEM fields?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) As per the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–22, women constitute 43% of the total enrolment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines at the higher education level in the country. Further, according to the Research and Development Statistics Report-2023 published by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), women account for 18.6% of the total workforce engaged as STEM professionals in research and development (R&D) activities in the country. Sector-wise, 45.87% of the women employed in R&D are working in government institutions, 27.62% in the higher education sector, and 26.51% in the industrial sector.

(b) The Government has undertaken a range of targeted measures to address the dropout rate of girls and women in STEM education and careers arising from personal or social responsibilities at various stages. These measures include the provision of scholarships, fellowships, and internships from the school level through to post-doctoral studies under schemes such as Vigyan Jyoti, WISE-Doctoral of Philosophy (PhD), WISE–Post Doctoral Fellowship (PDF), WISE-Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), and Women’s Instinct for Developing and Ushering in Scientific Heights & Innovation (WIDUSHI). These initiatives aim to reduce financial barriers and encourage continued participation and career progression in STEM disciplines. In addition, enabling provisions such as hostel accommodation, career counselling, maternity benefits, structured mentoring, exposure visits, and interactions with role models have been incorporated to facilitate continuity in women’s education and research, minimize attrition, and promote sustained engagement in STEM careers.

(c) The Government is implementing a range of placement and career development initiatives to encourage and support women in STEM fields, with a particular focus on re-entry, research opportunities, leadership development and IPR training. The Department of Science

and Technology (DST) is implementing a comprehensive scheme, Women in Science and Engineering–KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN), to promote the participation and retention of women in research and development (R&D) across science and technology (S&T) domains. The WISE-KIRAN scheme provides research opportunities for women scientists, especially those who have experienced career breaks, enabling them to pursue research in basic and applied sciences, address societal challenges, and receive specialized training in Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Under this scheme, the WISE-IPR component offers one-year training programmes in IPR and its management for women scientists and technologists in the 25–45 age group, with the objective of developing a skilled cadre of women professionals proficient in IPR laws, protection, and management. In addition, DST has introduced leadership development programmes for women scientists at the early and mid-career stages, aimed at strengthening leadership competencies and supporting professional advancement. Dedicated training programmes are also being implemented to enhance the capacities of women scientists and technologists in emerging research areas, as well as in administrative and managerial skills. Complementing these efforts, the Department of Biotechnology supports women’s career progression through the Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation (BioCARE) Fellowship, which facilitates re-entry and sustained participation of women in the biotechnology sector. Further, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched ASPIRE (A Special Call for Research Grants for Women Scientists) in 2023 to promote women-led research and strengthen their career advancement across the country.

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