

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3030**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.03.2026

**WOMEN IN STEM" FELLOWSHIPS UNDER MISSION SHAKTI**

3030. SHRI KARTIKEYA SHARMA:

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

- (a) the measurable outcomes of "Women in STEM" fellowships under Mission Shakti (Samarthya) in advancing participation of women researchers in frontier domains such as AI, quantum technologies, biotechnology and advanced materials as of 2026;
- (b) whether the Ministry is collaborating with the Department of Biotechnology and allied agencies to support women-led deep-tech and genomics startups through SANKALP or similar incubation hubs, and the details thereof; and
- (c) the status of the proposed "Nari Shakti Startup Fund" in providing equity-based support to women founders in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities working on climate-resilient agriculture, health-tech and other frontier science innovations?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (c): The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the country for the welfare of women and children, which are placed under three verticals, viz. (1) Mission Shakti, for safety, protection and empowerment of women; (2) Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0 for improving nutrition & health indicators of women and children in the country; and (3) Mission Vatsalya, for protection and welfare of children in difficult circumstances.

The 'Mission Shakti' aims at strengthening interventions for women's safety, security and empowerment. It seeks to focus on proposing strategies for improving convergence across Ministries/ Departments and at different levels of governance. Mission Shakti comprises of two sub-schemes 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya' for safety and security of women and empowerment of women respectively.

The "Sambal" sub-scheme is for safety and security of women. It has the components of One Stop Centres (OSCs), Women Helpline (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) and Nari Adalat.

The “Samarthya” sub scheme is for empowerment of women. It has the components of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Shakti Sadan, Sakhi Niwas, Palna and SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW). It is a demand driven Centrally Sponsored sub scheme, under which funds are released to the States/UTs for implementation of various components.

Further, SANKALP: HEW (Hub for Empowerment of Women) functions as a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) for all components of Mission Shakti. It serves as a single window system to bridge the information and knowledge gap regarding schemes and facilities available for women as well as guide them to avail the benefits and entitlements.

Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW) known as SANKALP: HEW (Supportive Action for Nurturing and Knowledge-Based Advancement, Last-Mile Delivery and Potential Realization of Women : Hub for Empowerment of Women), set up at National, State and District levels for empowerment of women with aims to facilitate inter-sectoral convergence of schemes and programs meant for women at Central, State/ UT and district levels with the mandate to create an environment in which women realize their full potential to address gaps in state action for women and for promoting inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral convergence through strengthening the processes that promote holistic empowerment of women by creating an environment conducive to social change by improving access and utilization of government schemes.

The Department of Science and Technology is also implementing a holistic scheme ‘Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)’ in the country to provide various opportunities to women in the Science & Technology (S&T) domain through various programmes viz. WISE Fellowship for Ph.D. (WISE-PhD) to pursue doctoral research in basic and applied sciences; WISE-Post Doctoral Fellowship (WISE-PDF) for post-doctoral research in basic and applied sciences; WISE-SCOPE to address societal challenges through S&T interventions and WIDUSHI to support senior women scientists continue their scientific career. Another programme, ‘WISE Internship in IPR (WISE-IPR)’ provides training in the field of Intellectual Property Rights. A unique initiative ‘Vigyan Jyoti’ aims to encourage meritorious girls to pursue a career in underrepresented areas of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) through various year-round activities viz. parent-student counselling, career counselling, special academic classes, tinkering activities, role model interactions, lab/industry visits, science camps, etc.

During the financial year 2025-2026, around 900 women have been supported under various programmes of WISE-KIRAN.

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