

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4454
ANSWERED ON 02/04/2026

COVERAGE OF INSPIRE SCHEME

4454 SHRI RYAGA KRISHNAIAH:

SHRI ASHOKRAO SHANKARRAO CHAVAN:

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

- (a) the number of students supported under various components of Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research Scheme (INSPIRE) scheme during the last three years;
- (b) whether the Ministry has expanded the scheme to encourage innovation and research among school students through initiatives such as INSPIRE-MANAK and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of schools and districts covered under the scheme, so far; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Ministry to increase participation of students from rural areas and under-represented groups in scientific research programmes?

ANSWER

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

(a) The Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Scheme of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India is a national initiative aimed at attracting talented youth to study basic and natural sciences and pursue research careers in areas such as engineering, medicine, agriculture, and veterinary sciences, thereby strengthening the country's research and development base. The scheme operates through multiple components across different educational stages. INSPIRE-MANAK (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspiration and Knowledge) targets students aged 10-17 studying in Classes VI–XII by encouraging innovative ideas and scientific curiosity; schools can nominate up to five students annually through the E-MIAS portal, and selected students receive ₹10,000 through Direct Benefit Transfer to develop and present their projects at district, state, and national exhibitions. Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE) supports talented students aged 17-22 with 12,000 scholarships each year worth ₹80,000 per annum to pursue bachelor's and master's degrees in basic and natural sciences along with mentoring opportunities. At the research level, the INSPIRE Fellowship supports outstanding students pursuing PhD programs for up to five years with fellowships equivalent to CSIR-UGC NET (₹37,000 per month as JRF and ₹42,000 as SRF plus HRA and contingency grant of ₹20,000 per annum). Additionally, the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship offers early-career post-doctoral researchers aged 27–32 a five-year fellowship with ₹1,25,000 per month, annual increments, and a research grant of ₹35 lakh to establish independent research careers in basic and applied sciences. Together, these components create a continuous pipeline to nurture scientific talent from school level to

advanced research. The details of number of students supported under various components of the INSPIRE Scheme during the last three years are given below:

INSPIRE Components	No. of students supported		
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
INSPIRE-MANAK	46926	50009	49805
INSPIRE (SHE)	7976	9494	9046
INSPIRE Fellowship	796	305	923
INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship	100	58	171

(b) The Ministry has expanded its efforts to promote innovation and research among school students through initiatives like INSPIRE-MANAK. This programme targets students from Classes 6 to 12, encouraging them to submit original and creative ideas. Selected students receive financial assistance of ₹10,000 to develop prototypes of their ideas. The scheme has been broadened to include a larger number of schools across the country, with a special focus on rural and government institutions to ensure wider access. It provides a well-structured platform where students can showcase their ideas at district, state, and national levels. Additionally, mentoring support is offered throughout the process to help nurture scientific thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities among students.

(c) The details of the number of schools and districts covered across the country under the scheme, including district-wise data are given below:

Financial Year	No. of students participated	No. of schools participated	No. of districts covered
2023-24	854553	224283	719
2024-25	1013229	253459	723
2025-26	1147343	274528	729

(d) The Ministry has implemented several targeted measures to increase the participation of students from rural areas and under-represented groups in scientific research programmes such as INSPIRE-MANAK. To expand outreach, awareness meetings are regularly conducted with State and District Nodal Officers, along with teacher training workshops to sensitize and encourage schools to participate. A comprehensive multimedia campaign using videos, posters, social media, and email communication has also been launched to reach a wider audience, particularly in remote areas. These efforts have led to a steady rise in participation, with notable growth from rural regions. In addition to outreach, the Ministry has strengthened support mechanisms for selected students. Each shortlisted student receives ₹10,000 to develop a prototype of their idea. They are also provided access to mentoring and technical support through Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs). Student's progress through structured district, state, and national-level competitions, ensuring continued engagement and exposure. Further, mentoring workshops are organized in collaboration with premier institutions such as IITs and NITs for students selected at advanced stages. State-level winners receive financial assistance to refine their prototypes for national-level presentation. At the national level, students are supported with incubation facilities, including patent filing assistance and technical guidance, enabling them to transform their ideas into scalable and socially relevant innovations.
