

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2199

ANSWERED ON 06/08/2026

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN STI

2199 SMT. SANGEETA YADAV:

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

- (a) whether Vigyan Dhara provides focused interventions to increase women's participation in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI);
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether measurable targets and a monitoring mechanism have been prescribed to achieve gender parity;
- (d) the measures to promote women-led innovation through academia-industry collaboration; and
- (e) the expected impact of these initiatives on the country's scientific ecosystem?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (b): Under the Vigyan Dhara umbrella, the Women in Science and Engineering - KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN) scheme provides a comprehensive framework of targeted interventions to enhance women's participation across the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) ecosystem. Catering to women at different stages of their academic and professional careers, the programme supports doctoral research through WISE-PhD, promotes post-doctoral research and societal innovation through WISE-Post Doctoral Fellowship (WISE-PDF) and WISE-Societal Challenges with Opportunities (WISE-SCOPE), enables senior women scientists to continue their scientific pursuits under Women's Instinct for Developing and Ushering in Scientific Heights & Innovation (WIDUSHI), and builds specialized capabilities in Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) through WISE-IPR internship. The Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence (CURIE) programme further strengthens research and development infrastructure in women-only higher educational institutions to foster excellence in scientific research. In addition, the Science and Technology for Women (STW) programme supports technology-based interventions to address women-centric challenges by promoting livelihood enhancement, reducing drudgery and improving quality of life, while Women Technology Parks (WTPs) facilitate technology transfer, skill

development and capacity building, particularly for rural and resource-poor women, thereby advancing inclusive and sustainable participation of women in the STI ecosystem.

(c) to (e): The Department has prescribed a robust monitoring and evaluation framework under the Vigyan Dhara scheme, particularly through its WISE-KIRAN component, to track progress towards enhancing women's participation in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). Projects are monitored through periodic progress reports, financial and technical reviews, evaluations by Expert Committees, field visits and interactions with implementing institutions and beneficiaries. Progress is assessed against measurable indicators, including the number of women researchers supported through internships, fellowships, research grants and capacity-building programmes, as well as the number of women empowered through Women Technology Parks (WTPs). Under the Science and Technology for Women (STW) programme, projects are further reviewed through field visits and third-party evaluations, wherever feasible, to assess their impact on women's livelihoods and access to technology. Evaluation studies of WTPs have demonstrated strengthened linkages between rural women and S&T institutions, enhanced technology awareness, improved convergence with local authorities and increased income-generation opportunities through technology interventions.

To promote women-led innovation through academia-industry collaboration, the Department also supports women innovators and entrepreneurs under the National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI), which provides end-to-end support from ideation to commercialization through programmes such as Promotion & Acceleration of Young and Aspiring Innovators and Startups (PRAYAS), Seed Support Programme (SSP), Technology Business Incubators (TBIs), Inclusive TBIs (iTBI) and Centres of Excellence. These initiatives provide infrastructure, mentoring, legal and Intellectual Property support, industry networking, access to finance and product development funding. Under NIDHI-PRAYAS, 535 women innovators have been supported with idea-to-prototype funding of ₹40.40 crore, while NIDHI-SSP has supported 183 women-led startups with seed funding exceeding ₹60 crore.

These initiatives are expected to comprehensively enhance women's participation and retention in Science and Technology, strengthen the pipeline of women scientists, promote greater gender diversity in research and innovation, and foster women-led technology entrepreneurship, thereby creating a more inclusive and equitable scientific ecosystem. Their positive impact is already reflected in the steady increase in women's participation in the STEM workforce, which has risen from 13% in 2000-01 to 18.6% in 2020-21 and further to 29% in 2023-24, as reported in the Research & Development Statistics 2025–2026 published by the Department of Science and Technology.
