

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2206
ANSWERED ON 06/08/2026

PRIME MINISTER EARLY CAREER RESEARCH GRANT

2206# SMT. MAYA NAROLIYA:

SHRI LAHAR SINGH SIROYA:

SHRI BABUBHAI JESANGBHAI DESAI:

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

- (a) whether Government proposes to augment the existing frameworks with the Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant to prevent 'brain drain' of high-potential researchers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of initiatives taken by the Central Government to identify and encourage young scientific talent, including the number of scholars selected under these flagship programmes during the last five years; and
- (d) the details of operational scholarship schemes facilitating domestic and international higher education for meritorious students, including the eligibility criteria therefor and an assessment of their operational effectiveness in rural and remote areas inhabited by marginalized communities?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (b): The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has launched the Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG) programme to provide financial assistance to early career researchers in recognized academic institutions and public-funded R&D laboratories across the country to undertake research in frontier areas of science and engineering. The programme aims to strengthen the research ecosystem by enabling early career researchers to establish independent research programmes, pursue high-quality research with flexibility, and build long-term research careers in India. By supporting researchers at the early stages of their careers, the programme seeks to enhance research opportunities within the country and contribute to the retention of scientific talent.

The number of young researchers supported by ANRF under the Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG) programme since its launch till 29 July 2026 is given below:

Financial Year	Number of projects supported
2025-26	714
2026-27	578

ANRF has also launched National Post Doctoral Fellowship (NPDF) programme to support young researchers after finishing Ph.D. which is effective to retain them in the country. NPDF is aimed at identifying motivated young researchers and providing them with support for doing research in frontier areas of science and engineering. The fellows will work under a mentor, and it is hoped that this training will provide them a platform to develop as independent researchers. The year-wise details of the total number of NPDF fellows supported by ANRF during the last five years are given below:

Financial Year	Number of fellows supported
2021-22	272
2022-23	235
2023-24	96
2024-25	205
2025-26	557

(c) The Government has launched several initiatives to identify, nurture and incentivize young scientific talent across different stages of the research and innovation ecosystem. These include the Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Scheme of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG) and the National Post-Doctoral Fellowship (N-PDF) of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), Ramalingaswami Re-entry Research Programme of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), and the Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme of the Ministry of Education.

The INSPIRE Scheme aims to attract meritorious students to pursue higher education and research careers in science and technology through its various components, including INSPIRE-MANAK, INSPIRE Fellowship and INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship. The details of scholars/researchers selected under the INSPIRE programmes during the last five years are given below:

Financial Year	INSPIRE MANAK	INSPIRE Fellowship	INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship
2021-22	52720	359	71
2022-23	43381	919	86
2023-24	46926	796	100
2024-25	50009	305	58
2025-26	49805	856	171

The Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme was launched in 2026 by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, aims to attract and engage distinguished Indian-origin researchers, scientists and professionals with international research experience to strengthen India's higher education and research ecosystem through research, mentorship and institutional capacity building.

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT)'s Ramalingaswami Re-entry Research Programme facilitates the return and reintegration of highly skilled Indian scientists working overseas into the country's research and innovation ecosystem. The Programme supports up to 75 outstanding Indian scientists each year and provides fellowship support to encourage talented researchers to pursue research careers in India. The year-wise number of scientists selected under the DBT Ramalingaswami Re-entry Research Programme during the last five years is given below:

Programme/ Scheme	Year	Year-wise No. of Young scientists selected
DBT Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship	2020-21	75
	2021-22	61
	2022-23	47
	2023-24	36
	2024-25*	Result to be issued

(d) The INSPIRE Scholarship for Higher Education (INSPIRE-SHE) component of the INSPIRE Scheme of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) encourages meritorious students to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate studies in basic and natural sciences through scholarships and mentorship opportunities. The Scheme provides up to 12,000 scholarships annually to meritorious students.

Eligible applicants include students securing top 1% marks in Class XII examinations conducted by Central/State Boards and pursuing undergraduate or integrated postgraduate programmes in basic and natural sciences under the Direct Mode. Under the Institutional Mode, students admitted to specified premier institutions such as IITs, IISERs and NISER through notified national-level competitive examinations are also eligible. Continuation of the scholarship is subject to the student maintaining the prescribed academic performance, in accordance with the Scheme guidelines.

Financial Year	No. of Beneficiaries INSPIRE-SHE
2021-22	8643
2022-23	8447
2023-24	7976
2024-25	9492
2025-26	9046

Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP) Yojana Scholarship for College and University Students, implemented by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, provides financial assistance to meritorious students from economically weaker families for pursuing higher education. Students securing a position in the top 20th percentile of successful candidates in the Class XII examination conducted by the respective Board and having an annual family income of up to ₹4.5 lakh

are eligible to apply. The Scheme provides up to 82,000 fresh scholarships annually, with 50% of the scholarships earmarked for girl students, besides reservation for eligible categories as per Government norms.

PM-USP Special Scholarship Scheme for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (SSS) scheme, implemented by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, provides financial assistance to students domiciled in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh to pursue higher education outside these Union Territories. Eligible students are selected in accordance with the Scheme guidelines. The Scheme provides 5,000 fresh scholarships annually.
