

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 4707
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.3.2023**

VAJRA SCHEME

4707. SHRI C.N. ANNADURAI:

Will the Minister of **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY** विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is implementing VAJRA scheme, if so, the details including the aims and objectives thereof;

(b) the details of the eligibility criteria fixed along with the nature and duration of support thereunder;

(c) whether the scheme will help strong international connection to the Research and Development (R&D) ecosystem of the country, if so, the details thereof;

(d) the challenges faced by the Government in the implementation of the VAJRA scheme including the steps taken by the Government to overcome these difficulties;

(e) whether there is any improvement in the related indices after the implementation of the scheme and if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether the Government is undertaking any other policies for promoting participation of NRIs and overseas scientific community in R&D in India and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी तथा पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)

(डॉ. जितेंद्र सिंह)

(a) Yes Sir, the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) is implementing the Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme with the aim to bring a strong international connection to the R&D ecosystem of India. The scheme offers adjunct/visiting faculty assignments to overseas scientists, faculty members and R&D professionals including Non-resident Indians (NRI) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) to undertake high-quality collaborative research in academic and research Institutions of India. The objective of the scheme is engagement of VAJRA faculty in collaborative research in cutting-edge areas of science and technology including interdisciplinary areas of priority with one or more Indian collaborator.

(b) The eligibility criteria to apply for VAJRA Faculty Scheme is as follows:

(i) The overseas scientist/faculty should be an active researcher working in an academic / research / industrial organization with a proven track record of research and development.

(ii) Indian Collaborator(s) should be a regular faculty/researcher in academic/research institutions in the country.

Nature and Duration of Support are given below:

(i) The residency period of VAJRA Faculty in India would be for a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 3 months.

(ii) VAJRA Faculty will be provided US\$ 15000 in the first month of engagement and US\$ 10000 p.m. in the subsequent two months.

(iii) One research visit by the Indian host to the Institute of the VAJRA Faculty for a period not less than a week and not exceeding 30 days will also be supported. Board will provide return economy airfare, not exceeding Rs. 1.5 lakh, per-diem and accommodation allowance as per the norms of the Board.

(iv) Collaborative research visits of not more than 2 research students after 2 years of engagement from the research group of Indian hosts to the Institute of the VAJRA Faculty for a duration of three to six months will be supported. Board will provide a return economy airfare, one-time

contingency grant of Rs. 60,000/- and fellowship equivalent to the norms of the Board.

(v) Rs. 5.0 lakh per year of research visit per VAJRA Faculty to the Indian host is provided to meet expenses related to the collaborative research.

(vi) Support to VAJRA Faculty to the tune of Rs. 1.0 lakh per year to give lectures in his/her area of expertise in the host Institute will be provided.

(c) Yes Sir, VAJRA Faculty scheme facilitates NRI'S / OCI's visits to the host Institutions in India, resulting in collaborative researches and joint publications which paves the way for future collaborations and strong international connect to the R&D ecosystem of India.

(d) Visiting VAJRA Faculties have been allowed to undertake the visit in many stints so as to overcome the practical difficulties experienced in implementation of the scheme.

(e) VAJRA Faculty positions has been offered to more than 80 foreign faculties including NRI'S / OCI, who have undertaken multiple visits to the host Institutions in India. Faculty from 71 international institutes/universities around the globe spanning 18 countries have undertaken collaborative research in 33 host Indian institutes including universities, national labs, etc. so far under the scheme.

(f) Department of Biotechnology (DBT) implements Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship and DBT TWAS Fellowship Program which encourage scientists (Indian Nationals) working outside the country in Biotechnology Research.

Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has also developed "Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark" (PRABHASS), a National Digital Portal with support from different Ministries/Departments of Government of India to connect several diasporas with Indian S&T community for different interactions, guidance and collaborative R&D.
