

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1949  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12/02/2021**

**Launch of SERB-POWER Initiative**

1949. **SHRI KULDEEP RAI SHARMA:  
SHRI TALARI RANGAIAH:  
SHRI SUNIL DATTATRAY TATKARE:  
DR. SUBHASH RAMRAO BHAMRE:  
DR. DNV SENTHILKUMAR S.:  
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:  
DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has launched the SERBPOWER initiative, if so, the details thereof and the aims and objective behind its inception;
- (b) the number of women researchers likely to receive Fellowship under this initiative along with the amount to be disbursed and the criteria fixed for availing the fellowship;
- (c) whether India has less than two women researchers out of every ten scientific researchers in the country, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether this Ministry has taken initiatives to encourage women entrepreneurship under Start-up India-Stand up India Schemes, if so, the details thereof and the achievements made so far; and
- (e) the details of other steps taken/being taken by the Government to increase the number of researchers especially women to promote research in Science and Technology?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE; MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; AND  
MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES  
(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)**

**स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण मंत्री, विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री और पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्री  
(डॉ. हर्ष वर्धन)**

(a): Yes, Sir. The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India has launched the Scheme titled "SERB-POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research)". The Scheme is aimed to mitigate gender disparity in science and engineering research funding in various S&T programs in Indian academic institutions and research and development (R&D) laboratories, address comparatively lower participation of women scientists in research activities, identify and support competitive women researchers in the country. SERB – POWER provides structured support in research to ensure equal access and weighted opportunities for Indian women scientists engaged in R&D activities. The R&D support to women scientists is provided through two components, namely: SERB POWER Fellowships & SERB POWER Research Grants. Annually up-to 100 POWER Research Grants and 25 POWER Fellowships will be provided.

(b): The SERB-POWER Initiative offers up-to 25 Fellowships per year to competent women researchers who are in regular service in academic and research institutions in the country. The Scheme provides personal fellowship of Rs. 15,000/- per month in addition to their regular income, research grant of Rs. 10 lakh per annum; and Overhead of Rs. 90,000/- per annum to the Institution of the POWER Fellow. This is a one-time fellowship to top performing women researchers in the age group of 35-55 years for a period of three years. A Search-cum-Selection Committee constituted for the purpose help in selecting the POWER Fellows. Applications are invited through nominations (by Heads of the Institutions or Fellows of the National Academies) and through Search-cum-Selection Committee.

(c): As per latest "Research and Development Statistics, 2019-20" of DST, India has 16.6% women researchers directly engaged in R&D activities. There are several reasons for lower participation of women in R&D. This includes familial issues like marriage, family responsibility, relocation due to transferable job of spouse etc. These reasons attribute to dropout from higher studies, career break, overage for scientific jobs and prolonged absence from place of work or even resignation from the job.

(d): Multifaceted initiatives have been launched by Ministry to encourage women entrepreneurship under Start-up India-Stand up India. The details of initiatives and the achievements made so far are as given below:

Women Entrepreneur's Quest (WEQ) Programme was initiated by DST in partnership with Anita Borg Institute, USA for scouting and supporting Women Entrepreneurs in Technology. A total of 42 start-ups have been supported so far and 21 start-ups have grown to next level. A few of the WEQ start-ups have setup offices in US as a result of this programme. Women Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Foundation (WEE) is India's first of its kind initiative by Indian Institute of Technology Delhi supported and sponsored by DST to strengthen women eco - system. The WEE cohort initiative helps women ranging from college going students to middle-aged housewives to take up entrepreneurship as a viable, fulfilling career option. 170 start-ups have been trained so far under WEE program. emPower was positioned as the India's first accelerator program for women start-ups in Technology. It is implemented by Zone start-ups, a DST supported Incubator hosted at Bombay Stock Exchange. The programme includes mentor-ship support, workshops, case studies, peer networking, industry connect and equity free seed fund. Support is provided to total 30 women each year under 'technology for businesses' and 'technology for social impact tracks' and concludes through a demo day. Top 3 start-ups are provided exposure to Canadian ecosystem fully funded by the Govt. of Canada. Women Start-up Program (WSP) of DST in partnership with Goldman Sachs aims to support ambitious and innovative women entrepreneurs by enabling them to transform their idea into a business venture. WSP reached out to 6200 women across the country through Massive Open Online Course program. A total of 97 women entrepreneurs were supported through boot camp, fellowship and prototype support, exchange visit to Israel for building partnership and market access cementing. A few WSP start-ups have led to cementing tie-ups in the cyber security and edu-tech domain.

The Department of Biotechnology's (DBT's) Non-profit section 8 company, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) is playing a significant role in promoting women entrepreneurship. BIRAC has been operating a woman focused entrepreneurship award, called WInER Award (Women In Entrepreneurial Research), in partnership with TiE-Delhi NCR. Under the award program, 15 women entrepreneurs working on ideas that impact large sections of the society are awarded Rs. 5 lakhs each along with other benefits including mentoring, hand-holding, an opportunity to go through an intensive accelerator programme. These 15 winners are given a chance to pitch and 3 final winners are awarded Rs. 25 lakhs each along with other benefits offered by TiE Delhi NCR. Three rounds of WInER Award have been successfully completed with 30 awardees. 200 women entrepreneurs and researchers under various schemes (such as Biotechnology Ignition Grant Scheme (BIG), Small Business Innovation Research Initiative (SBIRI), Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme (BIPP), Promoting Academic Research Conversion to Enterprise (PACE) etc.) of BIRAC have been supported. BIRAC has also supported two Bioincubators, which provides incubation space and mentoring (business, IP, legal) specifically to women students/ scientists/ entrepreneurs.

(e): Government has taken several other steps to increase the number of researchers especially women to promote research in Science and Technology (S&T). The "Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN)" Scheme of DST had been instituted to encourage women scientists through various programmes in the field of S&T. 'Women Scientist Scheme (WOS)' under KIRAN provides career opportunities including fellowships to unemployed women scientists and technologists, especially those who had a break in career, for pursuing research in frontier areas of science and engineering. Under 'Consolidation of University Research through Innovation and Excellence in Women Universities (CURIE)' Programme only women Universities are being supported for development of research infrastructure and creation of state-of-the-art research laboratories to enhance women's participation in S&T domain. Mobility Scheme under KIRAN addresses relocation issues of working women scientists and provides support in project mode for 2-5 years. Indo-US Fellowship for Women in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine) encourages Indian women scientists and technologists to undertake international collaborative research in premier institutions in USA for duration of 3-6 months. Recently launched "Vigyan Jyoti" Scheme encourages girl students of Class 9 to 12 to pursue education and career in S&T particularly in the areas where women are underrepresented. The SERB Women Excellence Award recognizes women Academy Awardees to expand their research horizon to higher levels. In addition, DBT is also implementing 'Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation Programme (BioCARE)' to encourage women scientists in Biotechnology research. Further, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) provides upper age relaxation of five years to women researchers to pursue doctoral and postdoctoral research for award of Fellowships/Associateships. To recognize the contribution of women scientists in the field of Earth System Sciences, Ministry of Earth Sciences has initiated a special award called "National Award for woman scientist" and is being conferred to one-woman scientist each year on the Foundation day.

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