

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4548
(ANSWERED ON 20.08.2025)**

**SETTING OF LABS IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND RURAL AREAS THROUGH
ATAL INNOVATION MISSION**

4548. SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH:

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

- (a) whether the Government is running any dedicated national mission to promote innovation, research and technological development among the youth and if so, the details thereof;**
- (b) whether innovation labs are being set up in schools, colleges and rural areas through 'Atal Innovation Mission', 'Startup India' or other schemes and if so, the details thereof;**
- (c) whether the benefits of these efforts are reaching the remote areas of the country effectively and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (d) whether the Government has started any special grant or fellowship scheme to provide financial aid to young researchers 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)**

- (a) The following missions/programs are being implemented to promote innovation, research and technological development among the youth:**

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

CSIR, through its constituent laboratories/institutes, is implementing the “Integrated Skill Initiative Program”, intending to equip young minds with the necessary technological skills through conducting training programs and workshops across the sectors and disciplines related to scientific and industrial research in diverse areas, along with exposure to CSIR labs. More than 1.70 lakhs individuals have been trained till date

through conducting several skilling/reskilling/upskilling training programmes to build a skilled workforce equipped to address the challenges and opportunities in diverse sectors.

Further, CSIR under its “Capacity Building and Human Resource Development” scheme provides doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships to nurture the young budding scientific talent and to nourish the objective of doing scientific research by pursuing PhD program. The scheme is pivotal in identifying promising young researchers with innovative ideas and providing them with training and research opportunities in niche areas of basic and applied sciences, engineering, medicine & Pharmaceutical Sciences. The scheme also promotes postdoctoral research in the country. The research fellows supported by CSIR are currently pursuing research in more than 650 academic and R&D institutions across the country.

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

ANRF has initiated the program, Mission for Advancement in High-impact Areas (MAHA) to address priority-driven, solution-focused research in mission-mode that would catalyse multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary and multi-investigator collaboration to address scientific challenges and advance the frontiers of technology in key scientific areas. ANRF has identified Electric Vehicle (EV) Mobility as the first priority area of focus under MAHA program and accordingly, Electric Vehicle (EV) Mission, has already been launched to support the scientific community, including young researchers.

Department of Science & Technology (DST)

The Department of Science & Technology (DST) is implementing the National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among the youth. The initiative comprises NIDHI-PRAYAS (prototype grant support), NIDHI-EIR (Entrepreneur-in-Residence fellowships), NIDHI-iTBI (Inclusive TBIs in Tier-II and Tier-III regions). These interventions together form a structured pipeline to take innovations from idea to prototype, incubation, and enterprise creation.

Department of Biotechnology (DBT)

DBT is implementing Star College Program to enhance the quality of science education at the undergraduate level across India. DBT introduced this initiative to strengthen critical thinking and promote hands-on experimental learning among undergraduate science students. The programme aims to inspire more students to pursue higher education in science by identifying colleges with the potential and ambition for excellence and supporting them with the necessary academic and physical infrastructure.

- (b)&(c) Yes, Sir. Under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) have been set up in schools to foster curiosity, creativity, and imagination in young minds; and inculcate 21st century skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc. Out of 10,000 labs established in the country, 5,694 (57%) have been set up in rural areas of the country. Further, 14 Atal Community Innovation Centers (ACICs) have also been established in colleges/Higher Education Institutions, to encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship in the underserved/unserved regions of India by providing enabling infrastructure and facilitating environment for innovation.**

Department of Science & Technology (DST), under its National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) has established 25 Technology Innovation Hubs (TIHs) in reputed academic institutions across India, each specializing in cutting-edge domains such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML), Robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), Cybersecurity, and FinTech, among others. These hubs play a crucial role in enhancing employment opportunities for youth by providing platforms for entrepreneurship, offering mentorship, funding, and incubation support. They also conduct training programmes, workshops, and internships to impart industry-relevant skills, thereby equipping young professionals with hands-on experience, exposure, and networking opportunities to succeed in the innovation ecosystem.

Further, DST under its NIDHI-PRAYAS, *PRAYASHALA (prototyping labs)* are being set up in host incubators across the country. Currently, 57 PRAYAS Centres have been supported. The Inclusive Technology Business Incubator (i-TBI) scheme has specifically extended incubation support to underserved regions. So far, 48 i-TBIs have been supported in various academic

institutions which are located in different cities including Tier-II and Tier-III cities, ensuring inclusivity across geography.

- (d) Yes, Sir. The details of fellowship schemes and special grants to provide financial aid to young researchers is as under:**

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

- CSIR, under its “Capacity Building and Human Resource Development Scheme”, provides Doctoral and Post-doctoral fellowships to young budding researchers for pursuing PhD and postdoctoral research programs. The financial aid is provided to the fellows in the form of monthly emoluments and an annual contingency grant.**
- Extra Mural Research (EMR) grant has been provided to scientists/faculty of universities/ R&D organizations for their capacity building by CSIR.**
- Financial assistance to young Indian researchers, scientists and academicians has also been provided by CSIR to attend international seminars and symposia abroad.**

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

ANRF has launched the National Postdoctoral Fellowship (NPDF) to identify motivated young researchers and provide them support for doing research in frontier areas of science and engineering. ANRF has also launched Ramanujan Fellowship to attract brilliant scientists and engineers of Indian origin working abroad to return and take up scientific research positions in India.

Department of Biotechnology (DBT)

DBT provides financial aid to the fellows in terms of fellowship and research grant under various programmes such as Post-Graduate Teaching Program, Junior Research Fellowship Program, Research Associateship Program, Ramalingaswami Re-Entry Fellowship Program, Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation (BioCARE), Indian Institute of Technology Bombay - Monash joint doctoral program, TATA Innovation Fellowship and HarGobind Khorana- Innovative Young Biotechnologist Fellowship Program.
