

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2210
ANSWERED ON 21/12/2023

Women's participation in research and development sectors

2210 # **Shri Mithlesh Kumar:**

Will the Minister of **Science and Technology** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government has launched several schemes/initiatives/fellowships to increase participation of women in research and development sectors;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of funds allocated for the above schemes during the last three years;
- (d) whether these schemes have drawn interest of women towards science and technology and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details of the impact of these schemes in increasing the inclusion of women in the research and development sector, and science and technology sectors, along with the percentage increase of women working in these sectors?

A N S W E R

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

(a) to (b) Yes Sir, the Government has launched several schemes/initiatives to increase the participation of women in research and development sectors. The Department of Science and Technology is implementing a holistic scheme 'Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)' to encourage and promote women in the Research & Development (R&D) in Science & Technology (S&T) domain. The Women Scientists Scheme under WISE-KIRAN provides opportunities to women scientists, especially those who had a career break to pursue research in basic and applied sciences, to address societal challenges, and to get training in the field of Intellectual Property Rights. In 2023, DST launched new programmes under WISE-KIRAN Scheme namely, WISE Fellowship for Ph.D. (WISE-PhD) and WISE-Post Doctoral Fellowship (WISE-PDF), which support women to pursue Doctoral and Post-Doctoral research, respectively, in Basic and Applied Sciences; WISE-SCOPE programme encourages women scientists to carry out research to address societal challenges. DST has also launched the 'WIDUSHI' programme in 2023, which enables unemployed senior women scientists and retired women scientists to continue their scientific careers. Another programme 'WISE Internship in IPR (WISE-IPR)', provides one-year, on-the-job training in the field of Intellectual Property Rights to enhance job opportunities.

Besides the fellowship programmes, the Department also provides institutional support through ‘Consolidation of University Research through Innovation and Excellence (CURIE)’ Programme to develop research infrastructure and facilities in women institutions to encourage women’s participation in research and development. In addition to this, Vigyan Jyoti is another unique initiative of DST that encourages meritorious girls of Class IX-XII to pursue higher education and careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), especially in the areas where participation of women is low. Moreover, DST is also implementing ‘Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)’ programme that aims to transform institutions for a more gender-sensitive approach and inclusiveness with the ultimate goal to improve gender equality in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Medicine).

(c) The budget allocation for the WISE-KIRAN Scheme is Rs.95 Crore in FY 2020-21, Rs. 100 Crore in FY 2021-22, Rs.125 Crore in FY 2022-23 and Rs.131.20 Crore in FY 2023-24.

(d) Yes, these programmes have drawn the interest of women towards science and technology, as from FY 2020–21, around 11500 proposals or applications have been received under different programmes of the WISE-KIRAN Scheme.

(e) The WISE-KIRAN scheme has a significant impact on increasing the inclusion of women in the research and development sector in S&T fields. Since its inception in 2014, around 2950 women scientists have been supported under the WISE-KIRAN Scheme for R&D activities. More than 50000 girl students of Class IX–XII from 250 districts have benefited from various interventions under the Vigyan Jyoti Programme. The CURIE programme supported 42 Women PG Colleges and 11 Women Universities to establish state-of-the-art research facilities that impacted thousands of girls through quality education and research. In addition, 30 institutions have completed the pilot phase of the GATI programme.

Overall women's participation in extramural R&D projects has increased significantly to 25% in 2019-20 from 13% in 2000-01 due to various initiatives undertaken by the Government in the S&T sector. As per the latest statistics available, out of total R&D personnel, 18.6% women in 2020-21 were directly engaged in R&D activities as compared to 16.6% in 2018–19.
