

PARLIAMENT QUESTION: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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The Government has implemented various schemes to increase the participation of women in research and development across all States and Union Territories, including Maharashtra. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has launched the 'Women in Science and Engineering – KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)' initiative to encourage women's participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields at various career stages. Under WISE-KIRAN, the WISE-Ph.D. program supports women pursuing doctoral research in basic and applied sciences. The WISE-PDF and WISE-SCOPE programs encourage women to engage in post-doctoral research, lab-based studies, and translational research from lab to land, respectively.

The WISE Internship in Intellectual Property Rights (WISE-IPR) program provides one-year, on-the-job training to develop expertise in Intellectual Property Rights. The WIDUSHI (Women's Instinct for Developing and Ushering in Scientific Heights & Innovations initiative) enables senior women scientists who are retiring within a year or have already retired to continue and advance their scientific careers. In addition to fellowship programs, DST also provides institutional and policy support through initiatives such as CURIE (Consolidation of University Research for Innovation & Excellence in Women Universities), which strengthens research infrastructure in women's institutions to enhance participation in research and development; GATI (Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions) which encourages institutions to implement evidence-based policies to retain women in STEM careers up to leadership positions; Science & Technology for Women (STW), which enhances women's livelihoods and promotes social entrepreneurship through Women Technology Parks (WTPs).

The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, had initiated a special scheme "Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation (BioCARE)" Fellowship Program, which aims to increase the participation of women scientists in biotechnology and allied areas.

The Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, implements the Women Scientist Scheme (WSS) under the Central Sector Scheme titled 'Human Resource Development for Health Research'. This initiative is specifically designed to support women researchers and scientists who have experienced a career break due to motherhood, family responsibilities, or similar reasons. The program aims to encourage their return to active research by providing opportunities in the field of biomedical and health research. Its primary objective is to reintegrate talented women scientists into mainstream research.

The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology, implements the Technology Development and Utilization Programme for Women (TDUPW) scheme to promote technology adoption and training among rural and peri-urban women and self-help groups (SHGs). In 2023, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched "A Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industries and Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE)", under which 301 R&D projects were sanctioned exclusively to women scientists.

The details of funds allocated/utilized for the said schemes during the last five years is given below:

Scheme	FY 2020-21 (Rs. in Crore)	FY 2021-22 (Rs. in Crore)	FY 2022-23 (Rs. in Crore)	FY 2023-24 (Rs. in Crore)	FY 2024-25 (Rs. in Crore)
D S T - W I S E - KIRAN	79.1	95.0	96.8	79.72	77.59

DBT-BioCARE Fellowship	4.44	3.90	0.50	10.36	5.70
DHR-WSS	5.3	4.2	6.77	6.79	13.46
DSIR- TDUPW	8.525				
CSIR-ASPIRE	-	-	-	-	34.23

These schemes have increased women's interest in science and technology. This is evident from the significant rise in women's participation in extramural R&D projects from 13% in 2000–01 to 18.6%, as reported in the Research & Development Statistics 2023 by the Department of Science and Technology (DST). This growth can be attributed to the various initiatives undertaken by the Government in the science and technology sector. Furthermore, the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) Report 2021–22 indicates that women now constitute 41% of total Ph.D. enrolments in science, engineering and technology disciplines, reflecting the growing interest and engagement of women in science and technology.

This information was given by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, MoS Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

NKR/PSM/AV

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