

PARLIAMENT QUESTION: INNOVATION IN SCIENCE PURSUIT FOR INSPIRED RESEARCH

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The Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Scheme of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) aims to attract meritorious youth to study basic and natural sciences at the college and university levels, and to pursue research careers in basic and applied science areas, including engineering, agriculture, veterinary sciences and medicine. The ultimate goal is to expand the research and development base of the country.

The Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE) component of INSPIRE aims to enhance the participation of talented youth in higher education programs that are science-intensive by providing scholarships and mentorship support. The scheme offers 12,000 scholarships, each of five years' duration, at the rate of ₹80,000 per year, to pursue Bachelor's and Master's level education in basic and natural sciences. These scholarships are awarded to the top 1% of talented youth, as identified from central and state education board data, in the age group of 17–22 years.

INSPIRE Fellowship component of INSPIRE aims to provide fellowship to M.Sc. 1st Rank holders, in the age group of 22–27 years, in Basic & Applied Sciences including engineering, agriculture, veterinary sciences and medicine at the university/ academic institute of national importance i.e. IITs, NITs, IISERs level examination as well as Inspire Scholars having secured 70% marks in aggregate at the M.Sc. level who are eligible for admission to the Ph.D. program in any recognized university/ academic institutions in the country. The fellowships are tenable for a maximum of five years, two years as a Junior Research Fellowship (₹37,000 per month + HRA + contingency grant of ₹20,000 per annum) and three years as a Senior Research Fellowship (₹42,000 per month + HRA + contingency grant of ₹20,000 per annum) or until completion of the Ph.D., whichever is earlier, to enable the pursuit of a full-time Ph.D. program. A maximum of 1000 INSPIRE Fellowships per year are tenable.

The INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship component aims to provide opportunities to post-doctoral researchers in the age group of 27–32 years (the upper age limit is 37 years for SC/ST/ Women candidates and 42 years for persons with benchmark disabilities) for a period of five years, in both basic and applied sciences, including engineering, agriculture, veterinary sciences, and medicine. Applicants holding a Ph.D. degree with a strong academic and research track record are considered on a competitive basis. The fellowship provides a consolidated emolument of ₹1,25,000 per month, with an annual increment of ₹2,000 and a research grant of ₹7 lakh per annum, for a duration of five years. A maximum of 150 INSPIRE Faculty Fellowships per year are tenable.

Currently, the number of INSPIRE scholars, INSPIRE fellows and INSPIRE faculty fellows being supported is 49582, 3263 and 427 respectively.

The increase in Faculty Fellowships from 100 in 2020 to 150 in 2024 has significantly encouraged young researchers, as reflected in the rise in applications from 2,007 in 2020 to 2,753 in 2024. The expansion of postdoctoral fellowships is also enabling more young researchers to pursue research career in science and technology, thereby strengthening the country's research ecosystem.

This year, 54 national winners of the INSPIRE–MANAK (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspiration and Knowledge) scheme participated in the SAKURA Science High School Program and visited Japan from 15th to 21st June 2025.

This information was given by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science

and Technology, Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, MoS Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today.

NKR/PSM

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