

Empowering Women in Science: CSIR-NIScPR Takes the Lead at Science Summit 2025

Work Ecosystem Should Be Conducive for Women in Science

Designing Gender-Sensitive Policies for a Level Playing Field

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The CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR) participated in the Science Summit 2025 at the 80th United Nations General Assembly (SSUNGA80), focusing on "Women and Girls in Science: Driving Gender-Inclusive Innovation, Gender Equality, and Breaking Barriers," with CSIR serving as a case study.



The summit, which addressed key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Geetha Vani Rayasam, Director, CSIR-NIScPR, highlighting the importance of gender equality in science "A conducive work ecosystem is essential for women in science. We need to provide solutions to address women's inequality and break barriers with specific policies."

Dr. Naresh Kumar, Chief Scientist, CSIR-NIScPR, provided an overview of the session. He highlighted that

women make significant contributions to science, noting that "globally, 35% of STEM professionals are women."

Dr. Ranjana Aggarwal, Outstanding Scientist, CSIR, India, chaired the session on Gender-Inclusive Innovation and stated, "Over the last three science summits, CSIR has made concerted efforts for diversity, including gender as a focus. It's a global issue of inequality faced by women. A gender-diverse team is crucial for responsible governance in the system."

Dr. Sanjay Mishra, Former Professor and Senior Advisor, Department of Biotechnology, GoI, spoke on advocating for gender-sensitive policies and Gender Equality Plans to promote equitable opportunities in research and innovation. Dr. Mishra emphasized, "Designing and implementing gender-sensitive policies can create a level playing field for everyone. We should value women's contributions to global sustainable development." He also highlighted India's initiatives, saying, "The Indian government has launched programs like GATI for research institutions and Vigyan Jyoti for schools to promote women in science."

Dr. Bhavani Rao R, UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India, discussed how female scientists are shaping the future, moving from inspiration to aspiration. She pointed out, "AI technology should be free of gender biases by the implementation of ethical AI policies and targeted programs". We need compassion-driven research and capacity building at the basic level to encourage women to become leaders."

Mrs. Sandhya Wakdikar, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-NIScPR, India, shared the findings of a study on mainstreaming gender in STEM, stating, "Our survey of organizations and individuals showed that women constitute 16.1% of CSIR's personnel. Stress management programs are crucial in institutions."

The summit's second session featured a panel discussion on STEM for a Changing World, chaired by Dr. Akhilesh Gupta, Former Senior Adviser, DST, noted the disparity in access to funding and resources, emphasizing, "Men have more opportunities, but women have lesser ones. Bringing equality to the system is also the job of men."

The panel, comprising Lt Cdr (Retd) Ms. Vartika Joshi, Climeworks Mammoth, Iceland; Dr. Nadia Asheulova, Director, S.I. Vavilov Institute for the History of S&T, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Federation; Dr. Sridevi Annapurna Singh, Former Director, CSIR-CFTRI, India; Dr. Disha Ahuja, Managing Director, Ahuja Engineering Services Pvt Ltd., India; deliberated on gender-inclusiveness for embracing diversity in STEM fields.

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