

IDENTIFYING YOUNG SCIENTISTS AND ENCOURAGING RESEARCH

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Department of Science and Technology has taken several initiatives to support young scientists which include:

Scheme for Young Scientists and Technologists programme (SYST) focusses on encouraging young scientists and technologists to work towards delivery of science and technology (S&T) led solutions for identified socioeconomic challenges. In the last five years (2021 through 2025, inclusive), 120 young scientists have been supported under SYST.

WISE – Fellowship for Ph.D. programme aims to provide opportunity to carry out doctoral research in basic and applied sciences to women scientists and technologists between the age group of 27-45 years who want to pursue research in STEM fields as bench-level scientist. It provides opportunity to women to pursue higher education, i.e., Ph.D. through independent project grant. In the last five years, 241 young scientists have been supported through WISE Fellowship for Ph.D.

Vigyan Jyoti Programme aims to inspire and empower girls to pursue careers in STEM, bridging the gender gap. It provides a supportive ecosystem for girls pursuing science from school to college and enhances Access to Knowledge & Opportunities by collaborating with Knowledge Partners (KPs) including IITs, CSIR labs, NITs, IISERs, AIIMS, and other esteemed institutions. Through periodic activities, Vigyan Jyoti provides exposure to cutting-edge advancements and facilitate interactions with experts, inspiring VJ scholars to pursue careers in STEM. In the last five years, 1,12,682 students have been supported under the Vigyan Jyoti Programme.

CSRI-Post-Doctoral Fellowship (CSRI-PDF) Programme under the ‘Cognitive Science Research Initiative’ provides opportunities to young scientists (below 40 years) for pursuing innovative research in frontier areas of Cognitive Science. In the last five years, 20 young scientists have been supported under CSRI-PDF.

The **Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)** scheme aims to attract meritorious youth to study basic and natural sciences at the college and university level and to pursue research careers in both basic and applied science areas including engineering, medicine, agriculture and veterinary sciences spread across all States/UTs across the country. The ultimate aim is to expand the R&D base of the country. It has the following fellowships aimed specifically at young scientists:

Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE) which aims to enhance the rate of attachment of talented youth to undertake higher education in science intensive programs by providing scholarships and mentoring through summer attachment with leading researchers. The scheme offers 12,000 Scholarships every year of Rs 0.80 lakh per year for 5 years for undertaking Bachelor and Masters level education in natural and basic sciences for the talented youth in the age group 17-22 years. In the last five years, 53,097 students have been supported through SHE.

INSPIRE Fellowship is offered to students having secured 1st rank in Basic & Applied Sciences including engineering, medicine, agriculture, veterinary 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 MSc level who are eligible for admission to the PhD Program in any recognized university/ academic institution in the country. In the last five years, 3101 young scientists have been supported through INSPIRE fellowship.

INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship provides opportunities to the post-doctoral researchers in the age group of 27-32 years for 5 years in both basic and applied sciences area including engineering, agriculture, veterinary and medicine. In the last five years, 482 young scientists have been supported through INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) is implementing the Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG), National Postdoctoral Fellowship (NPDF), Ramanujan Fellowship and International Travel Support (ITS) to identify and support young scientists in India.

Also, ANRF (erstwhile SERB) had programs like Start-up Research Grant (SRG), SERB Research Scientist (SRS), Teachers Associateship for Research Excellence (TARE) to encourage young scientists to engage themselves with scientific activities/undertake research work. The number of young scientists benefitted under these programs in the last five years are given below:

Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG): 712

Start-up Research Grant (SRG): 1887

National Postdoctoral Fellowship (NPDF): 1561

Ramanujan Fellowship: 168

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) under its Capacity Building and Human Research Development Programme provides fellowship to young researchers to pursue doctoral and postdoctoral research. During last five years, 9880 young researchers have been provided fellowship for pursuing doctoral and postdoctoral research under this programme. Further, CSIR operates the Raman Research Fellowships (RRF) Programme to provide an opportunity for advanced exposure and training to the bright young scientists of CSIR by availing short-term research stints at leading global research centres abroad. During the last five years, 65 young scientists of CSIR were awarded the Raman Research Fellowship to pursue research in 22 countries.

Department of Biotechnology has implemented various programmes to identify young scientists across the nation with selection of more than 500 scientists in the last five years under the following programmes:

DBT Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship

Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation (BioCARE)

MK Bhan – Young Researchers Fellowship Programme

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has sanctioned 21 National Fellow Programme and 50 Young Scientists Projects, through a competitive selection process for young scientists of ICAR Institutes. The projects commenced on 1st January, 2026 and will continue up to 31st December, 2028 with a total approved outlay of Rs. 22.4377 crore in the last five years.

All the above schemes/ programmes are implemented on a competitive basis nationwide, including Bihar. A number of youth from Bihar, including those from rural and backward/aspirational districts are supported through these programmes to pursue scientific research. INSPIRE programme of DST has supported 1033 students from Bihar in the last five years for undertaking higher education under science intensive programs through the SHE scholarship. Moreover, 48 young researchers have been awarded the INSPIRE fellowship and 8 postdoctoral researchers have been awarded the INSPIRE faculty fellowship. 4084 girls were supported in Bihar under Vigyan Jyoti program. ANRF supported 32 young scientists through Start-up Research Grant, 8 Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG) and 4 National Post Doctoral Fellowship (N-PDF) were awarded in State of Bihar.

Additionally, in the aspirational district of Nawada, Bihar, under a DST-funded project, two Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) hubs have been established in Sirdala and Meskaur blocks by ICAR-RCER, Patna. Selected rural youths have been trained in the use of digital technologies and ICT tools to enable them to deliver timely, location-specific agricultural advisories to around 40 farmers.

This information was given by THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY & EARTH SCIENCES DR. JITENDRA SINGH IN A WRITTEN REPLY IN THE RAJYA SABHA TODAY.

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