



In Parliament, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh Reaffirms Science & Technology Innovation (STI) Hubs Are Exclusively Dedicated to SC/ST Empowerment and Socio-Economic Advancement

Expansion of STI Hubs Subject to SC/ST Population Criteria; Over 4,000 SC/ST Beneficiaries in Andhra Pradesh Under the Initiative

Quantum Centre in Amaravati, Ocean Institute Block in Vizag Mark Science Boost in Andhra Pradesh

Posted On: 11 FEB 2026 5:50PM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today reiterated in Parliament that the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Hubs are exclusively dedicated to the empowerment, capacity building and socio-economic advancement of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), particularly in regions with a high concentration of these communities. He stated that the initiative operates in mission mode and that the Government remains committed to expanding the network of hubs wherever the prescribed criteria are fulfilled.

During Question Hour in the Budget Session, G.M. Harish Balyogi, Member of Parliament from Amalapuram, Andhra Pradesh, sought clarification regarding instances of under-utilisation of funds released to certain STI Hubs. He enquired whether a comprehensive review had been undertaken, especially in respect of institutions in Andhra Pradesh showing relatively lower utilisation levels.

Responding to the query, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that Andhra Pradesh is among the leading States in the implementation of STI Hubs. The State currently has eight such hubs supporting around fourteen to fifteen academic and scientific institutions across the public and private sectors. He shared that more than 4,000 beneficiaries from SC and ST communities in the State, including a near-equal number of women and men, have already gained from the initiative.

The Minister also referred to the broader thrust being given to science and technology infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh. He mentioned that the foundation stone for the country's first Quantum Centre was recently laid in Amaravati, and a National Ocean Institute block has been inaugurated in Visakhapatnam. He said these developments reflect the renewed momentum in the State, particularly in recent years.

Dr. Jitendra Singh stated that the STI Hub programme, launched in 2019, is designed to strengthen innovation ecosystems in areas where at least 70 per cent of the population belongs to SC or ST communities. The scheme allows both government and non-government institutions to host hubs, provided they meet the eligibility norms and possess adequate institutional capacity. He said proposals are periodically invited and the next call for proposals will be issued in March–April.

In response to supplementary questions from Members including Shri Bhaskar Murlidhar Bhagare and Shri C.M. Ramesh, the Minister said that aspirational, tribal-dominated, and backward regions with strong potential in agriculture innovation, forest-based livelihoods, climate-sensitive technologies, and rural entrepreneurship are eligible for consideration, subject to fulfilment of the laid-down parameters. He encouraged Members of Parliament to facilitate and promote viable proposals from their constituencies so that additional hubs can be considered in the next cycle of expansion.

The Government, he said, remains open to scaling up the initiative in partnership with States and institutions committed to advancing inclusive growth through science, technology, and innovation.



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