

PARLIAMENT QUESTION: INITIATIVES FOR SCS IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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The details of schemes, fellowships, capacity-building programmes and other initiatives implemented to promote science, technology, research and innovation by Ministry of Science and Technology under its various Departments including the participation of Scheduled Castes are given below. These initiatives are being implemented on PAN India basis in competitive mode and the financial support is provided on merit basis including the state of Andhra Pradesh.

1. Department of Science and Technology

1. **Vigyan Dhara:** The Vigyan Dhara scheme came into force with effect from 16.01.2025. It merges three key umbrella schemes of DST into one, focusing on:

Science and Technology Institutional and Human Capacity Building: This component focuses on strengthening India's scientific infrastructure and human resource pool. It aims to build and enhance research and development (R&D) labs across academic institutions, creating a robust environment for scientific research. Special initiatives are also incorporated to ensure inclusive participation and capacity-building for the Scheduled Caste (SC) community.

Research and Development (R&D): Vigyan Dhara emphasises research in **various** critical areas, including basic research, translational research in sustainable energy and water, and access to international mega facilities. This component also fosters collaborative research through international bilateral and multilateral cooperation with focus on SC population.

Innovation, Technology Development, and Deployment: This segment of the scheme aims to drive innovation at all levels, from schools to higher education and the industry. It seeks to promote technology development and deployment, with increasing collaboration between academia, government, and industry, as well as supporting startups. Special initiatives are also incorporated to ensure inclusive participation of the Scheduled Caste (SC) community.

2. **National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems (NM- ICPS):** The Mission promotes inclusive growth by empowering Scheduled Caste (SC) **communities** in deep-tech sectors. It emphasizes education, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship through fellowships, skill development, and startup incubation. SC students and researchers at UG, PG, and PhD levels benefit from targeted programs, while rural and underserved regions gain industry-relevant training. Technology Innovation Hubs (TIHs) across leading institutions ensure equitable access nationwide. By promoting AI, ML, Robotics, IoT, Cyber Security, and Drone Technologies, NMICPS builds indigenous capabilities, strengthens job readiness, and creates sustainable pathways for SC participation in India's digital and innovation economy.
3. **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) (erstwhile Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)):** ANRF in its endeavour to facilitate equal participation of researchers

from all sectors of society, has initiated the scheme Inclusivity Research Grant (IRG). IRG scheme provides funding support to researchers belonging to the Scheduled Caste /Scheduled Tribe to undertake research in frontier areas of science and engineering. IRG subsumes the Empowerment and Equity Opportunities for Excellence in Science (EMEQ) scheme of erstwhile SERB.

II. Department of Bio-Technology

The **Department** of Biotechnology (DBT) is implementing the Biotech-KISAN (Krishi Innovation Science Application Network) scheme and the Biotech-based Societal Development Programme to promote participation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in science, technology, research, and **innovation**. These initiatives provide training, and capacity-building programmes to farmers, youth, and women from SC communities, enabling them to adopt biotechnology solutions in agriculture and allied sectors. Department also implements two Student fellowship programs where reservation norms of Govt. of India are applied to promote participation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in higher education and research. 1) DBT Junior Research Fellowship program and 2) DBT PG Teaching program where reservation policy of Govt. of India applies. These programs are being implemented across the country and UT including state of Andhra Pradesh.

III. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (under Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR))

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) undertakes a range of initiatives under its Capacity Building and Human Resource Development (CBHRD) scheme to promote research in science, technology, and innovation education. These initiatives integrate fellowships, research support, outreach programmes, training activities, and public science engagement to foster scientific temper and innovation, thereby retaining and attracting scientific talent in critical technology areas. The CSIR operates the CBHRD scheme, which benefits students across India, irrespective of region, caste, or gender. This also includes the state of Andhra Pradesh. Further, CSIR operates Jigyasa Programme which is a student–Scientist Connect Programme that promotes STEM education by organising outreach programmes, training initiatives, and public science engagement activities. The programme fosters scientific temper, curiosity, and early interest in STEM careers among school students. The key features of the program are Laboratory visits, hands-on experiments, and demonstrations; Interaction with scientists and exposure to research infrastructure; and Innovation challenges under Jigyasa EPIC Hackathon, and science workshops. Jigyasa Programme is open pan-India including students from Andhra Pradesh.

The details of funds allocated and utilized for SC beneficiaries under various initiatives of Ministry of Science and Technology during last three years, for the state of Andhra Pradesh are as follows:

2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025
<i>No. of Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Funds Allocated/ Utilized (₹)</i>	<i>No. of Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Funds Allocated/ Utilized (₹)</i>	<i>No. of Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Funds Allocated/ Utilized (₹)</i>	<i>No. of Beneficiaries</i>
849	3,91,66,800	4828	6,92,55,000	4000	3,03,43,800	3415

The Central Higher Educational Institutions (CHEIs) under Ministry of Education (MoE), including Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research (IISERs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), and Central Universities (CUs), are statutory autonomous organisations established under respective Central Acts of Parliament and governed by provisions of the Acts/Statutes/Ordinances/Regulations made thereunder. As autonomous institutions, faculty recruitment is done within the institution itself, in accordance with their Acts and Regulations.

The admissions to CHEIs are through a centralized counselling process to ensure fairness and transparency. Further, technical institutions such as, IITs, IIITs, IISERs and NITs, provide complete tuition fee waiver to the students belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The institutions have also appointed Liaisoning Officers for ensuring the protection of rights of the students belonging to the SC and ST categories. Occurring of vacancies and filling them up with suitable, qualified candidate(s) is a continuous process. The vacancies arise due to promotion, retirement, resignation, death, opening of new institutions, schemes or projects, and additional requirement on account of enhanced students' strength and expansion of capacity in existing institutions.

In August 2021, all CHEIs under MoE had been requested to undertake special drive to fill backlog vacancies in their institutions in Mission Mode. The CHEIs undertook special drives to fill backlog vacancies in their institutions in Mission Mode. In September 2022, MoE had also exhorted all the CHEIs to fill up the vacancies in Mission Mode. From September 2022, all CHEIs, including IITs, IIITs, IISERs, NITs and CUs, have undertaken Mission Mode Recruitment drives to fill the vacancies. Till 24.01.2026 (i.e. the date of last Rozgar Mela), a total number of 3692 posts in the SC category have been filled up by all CHEIs, including 2216 faculty posts in the SC category, in Mission Mode.

A total of 336 posts (51 SC posts) have been filled up by institutions in Andhra Pradesh, viz., IIT Tirupati, IIITDM Kurnool, IIIT Sri City (Chittoor), IISER Tirupati, Central University of Andhra Pradesh, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh and NIT Andhra Pradesh including 191 faculty positions (32 SC posts), in Mission Mode.

To enhance Scheduled Castes representation, the Government employs constitutional reservations in legislatures, public employment and educational institutions, backed by targeted financial and institutional support. Educational measures include pre-matric, post-matric and merit-cum-means scholarships for SC students, plus empanelled free coaching, fellowships and mentorship for competitive exams. Details mentioned in part (a) also. Economic empowerment is promoted through Scheduled Castes Development Corporations and National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Council (NSFDC) schemes offer credit, skill training and enterprise grants. State and central outreach programmes identify eligible candidates via welfare offices and schools to provide residential coaching and mentorship and monitor outcomes through welfare departments to improve access, retention and placement of SC beneficiaries across the country.

Especially the Social Welfare Department in Andhra Pradesh's has launched Dr B.R. Ambedkar Study Circles for SC candidates, offering free residential coaching for UPSC, bank, SSC and RRB exams in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Tirupati, each with 100 seats and 33% female reservation; orders and applications were issued in 2025. The department also administers targeted scholarships, hostel support and placement linkages for Scheduled Caste students through welfare bureaus and empanelled institutions to boost access and employment opportunities.

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 Lok Sabha today.

NKR/FT/NM

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