



Rajya Sabha briefed about Space orientation programmes introduced for school students

Government Expanding Inclusive Space Education Ecosystem; YUVIKA Empowering Young Minds Across India: Dr. Jitendra Singh

Rural Students Get Priority in Space Education Initiative YUVIKA, Says Dr. Jitendra Singh in Rajya Sabha

Hands-on ISRO Training Inspiring Next Generation of Space Scientists, says Dr. Jitendra Singh

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today highlighted that the Government is systematically nurturing scientific temper among school students through inclusive and future-oriented initiatives like Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (YUVIKA), ensuring equitable access for rural, underprivileged, and aspiring young minds across the country.

Replying to supplementaries during Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha, in response to a starred question raised by Shri Ryaga Krishnaiah, along with supplementary questions by Shri Neeraj Dangi, Dr. Parmar Jashvantsinh Salamsinh, and Rajathi, the Minister elaborated on the design, reach, and impact of the YUVIKA programme.

Dr. Jitendra Singh informed that YUVIKA, launched in 2019, is a unique initiative aimed at “catching them young” by targeting students of Class 9 and exposing them to space science and technology at an early stage. He noted that the programme has been structured to ensure democratic and equitable participation, with 10 students selected from each State and 8 from each Union Territory annually, thereby maintaining balanced regional representation.

Emphasizing inclusivity, the Minister stated that the selection criteria already incorporate special weightage for rural students, including 15% preference for students from Panchayat-level schools. He added that the selection process is comprehensive, considering quiz performance, participation in science fairs, Olympiads, and extracurricular activities such as NSS and Scouts, ensuring a holistic evaluation of students.

Providing details of participation, Dr. Jitendra Singh informed that 1,320 students have benefited from the programme so far, across five editions. The programme could not be conducted in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, participation has been steadily increasing, with around 350 students selected annually in recent years, indicating growing outreach and impact.

The Minister further stated that YUVIKA is conducted as a one-month residential programme during summer vacations, where selected students undergo hands-on training at premier ISRO centres, interact with scientists, and gain exposure to cutting-edge space technologies. Currently, the programme is conducted at seven major centres, including Satish Dhawan Space Centre (Sriharikota), Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (Thiruvananthapuram), and Space Applications Centre (Ahmedabad), among others. Two additional centres at Mahendra Giri (Tamil Nadu) and Jodhpur (Rajasthan) are being added to further expand capacity.

Addressing concerns regarding outreach and awareness, particularly in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Dr. Jitendra Singh reiterated that the programme is inherently inclusive, covering students from both Central and State Boards, including government schools. He emphasized that awareness and participation are facilitated through nationwide quiz competitions, science fairs, and academic engagements at district and state levels.

Highlighting the broader ecosystem being developed for nurturing scientific talent, the Minister also referred to complementary initiatives such as Vigyan Jyoti, aimed at encouraging girls from Class 9 to 12 to pursue STEM careers, and other fellowship programmes supporting women at different career stages.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also underlined the rapid growth of India's space sector, noting that it has expanded from a modest base to a nearly \$9 billion economy, with projections reaching \$44 billion by 2033. He added that over 90% of foreign satellite launches by India have taken place in the last decade, reflecting the transformative reforms undertaken in the sector.

The Minister concluded by stating that initiatives like YUVIKA are not only building a strong pipeline of future scientists but are also contributing to India's long-term vision of becoming a global leader in space technology and innovation by 2047.





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