

## **Union Ministers discuss promotion of Govt schemes for women's participation in S&T**

The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan and Union Minister for Women & Child Development Smt. Smriti Irani discussed how government schemes like Women Scientists Scheme (WOS) and Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in Women Universities (CURIE) can be promoted for increasing women's participation in S&T.

Both the Ministers agreed that more effort is required to be made to popularise the existing schemes for increasing scientific temper among women, in synergy with the schemes already being run by Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Among other initiatives, 'Vigyan Jyoti' project was also discussed where aim is to create a quality pipeline from High school to top institutions (IITs, NITs and Central Universities) emphasising under-represented areas of STEM by a holistic focus on culture, training, finances, role-models, awareness and confidence.



The Minister's deliberated on areas for promotion of scientific temper among women in the country and convergence of efforts of different ministries in this direction, at a meeting held on 26 December 2019 at Anushandhan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Dr Harsh Vardhan said that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the issues faced by women in the scientific field and identify ways and means for promoting scientific temper among women in our country. “The Government aims to promote women-centric schemes, activities and programmes to encourage more and more women to opt for careers in Science and Technology including in scientific research”, Dr Harsh Vardhan added.

Smt. Smriti Irani said that the Ministry of Science & Technology should undertake research to identify the hurdles and challenges that women face while choosing careers in the field of Science and Technology. She said that convergence of efforts of different ministries is essential to achieve the aim of higher scientific temperament among women. She proposed that workshops should be conducted for leaders of scientific institutions to educate them to be sensitive towards gender equality. Smt. Smriti Irani also emphasized upon efforts to promote scientific skills among women.

During the meeting, various issues came up for discussion. The theme of ‘Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)’ and ‘STEM through Women’ was discussed. It was informed that Government has taken various initiatives, including Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation Programme (BioCARE), National Women Bio-scientist Award, WInER Award (Women in Entrepreneurial Research) and Golden Jubilee Biotech Park for Women (Chennai). It was also mentioned that about 15,000 women have been trained so far in the areas such as food processing, handicraft, herbal medicines, agriculture, pottery, ICT, waste utilisation etc. under the Technology Development and Utilisation Programme for Women (TDUPW).

After extensive deliberations, the Ministers agreed to identify the areas of collaboration and to define a concrete roadmap, where the initiatives can be taken by the Ministries of Science & Technology and Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, DG (CSIR)/Secretary (DISR), Dr Shekhar C. Mande, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr M. Rajeevan, and senior officers of Ministry of Science & Technology and Ministry of Women and Child Development were also present in the meeting.