

More power to women scientists, researchers

New Delhi, Oct 30 (India Science Wire): Being a woman it is difficult to strike a balance between work and home. Women have come a long way in enriching the scientific community in India. Due to caregiving responsibilities at home, women scientists often face difficulties and career interruptions. There was a long felt need to evolve a support mechanism to help them sail through it. Keeping this aspect in mind the Department of Science and Technology has launched two unique schemes for women scientists, researchers in science and engineering.

The schemes are SERB – POWER Fellowship and SERB – POWER Research Grants. These schemes are aimed to promote women researchers in regular service in academic and research institutions to take up research and development (R&D) at the highest level through these two categories of research support.

Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan launched the SERB – POWER schemes that aim to encourage emerging as well as eminent women researchers to undertake R&D activities in frontier areas of science and technology.

The SERB-Power Fellowship offers a personal fellowship and a research grant to top performing women researchers for a period of three years, while the SERB – Power Research Grants ensure funding to undertake highly impactful research across all disciplines of Science & Technology.

Speaking at the virtual event, DR Vardhan emphasised the significance of empowering women researchers in the S&T landscape. He said globally, just 30 per cent of the world's researchers are women while 18.6 per cent of India's full-time R&D personnel are women. Highlighting the problems faced by women scientists like career interruptions especially related to caregiving responsibilities, Vardhan said "they need special attention and alternate ways of support system .The new Science Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020 will also emphasise on encouraging women scientists."

The SERB – Power Fellowship will be given to women researchers in the age group of 35-55 years. The fellowship will be of Rs 15,000 per month in addition to regular income, while the research grant will be of Rs 10 lakh per annum for a period of three years.

Under the SERB – Power Research Grants, women researchers will be funded under two categories. The first category includes women scientists from IITs, IISERs, IISc, NITs, central universities, and national labs of the Central government institutions. They will be eligible for funding up to Rs 60 lakhs for three years. Level two will comprise scientists and researchers from state universities/ colleges and private academics. They will be eligible for funding up to 30 lakhs for three years.

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) is a body under the Department of Science and Technology. (India Science Wire)

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