

## **Workshop initiates nationwide effort to encourage girls towards science**

A day long workshop to reorient 50 principals and Vice-Principals of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) towards smooth implementation of the Vigyan Jyoti scheme has initiated a nationwide effort to encourage girls to pursue science.

JNVs are a system of alternate schools for talented students predominantly from rural areas and the Vigyan Jyoti's association with JNVs which saw the success of the pilot project will now spread its' tentacles to 50 districts of 27 States and Union Territories (UT) through Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS).

The day long workshop was organized by Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Smiti with stakeholders at the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti Office in Noida and it highlighted the enthusiasm of the teachers towards active participation in the scheme.



Dr Sanjay Mishra, Head, KIRAN Division DST highlighted need of Vigyan Jyoti to bring gender parity in STEM. He said that the main objective of the scheme is to bring back those talented girls who lack exposure, guidance & money.

The scheme aims to encourage and inspire girl students to pursue higher education and become self-reliant and also offers exposure for girl students coming from rural background to help understand how to plan their journey from school to college and thereafter from research to a job of their choice in the field of science.

Based on the penetration at district level, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya will act as Vigyan Jyoti Knowledge Centres to cater to girls from small towns and rural areas for bringing girls from diverse backgrounds in STEM.

50 meritorious girl students of Class XI will be selected from each district and they will join a year long program consisting of science camps, visits to Knowledge Partners (KPs), hands-on experiments, workshops at Atal Tinkering Lab, interaction with women role models, counseling

of students and parents, visits to other R&D Lab/Industry/NGO, lectures, special need based classes and so on. A scholarship of Rs. 1,000 per month will also be provided to girl students participating in the project.



Dr Aarti Kashyap coordinator of pilot programme of Vigyan Jyoti in IIT Mandi said that it is the best and appropriate scheme to bring in change of the mindsets among young girls and orient them towards becoming professionals in STEM areas.

Vigyan Jyoti was launched last year in 15 top notch academic institutions including IITs, IISER and Universities. Several institutions of National Importance like IITs, IISERs, National Labs, and Universities are also associated with Vigyan Jyoti as 'Knowledge Partners (KPs)' and will provide regular mentoring to selected girls.

It is one more transformative step among many taken by DST. The department through its various schemes specially targeting the women has contributed to improve gender ratio and the improvement is evident today specially at the lower level in scientific establishments.