## Department of Biotechnology supports women scientists to achieve SDG5 towards gender equality in STEM fields

The Department along with its PSUs and Autonomous Institutes has initiated several programmes to bring more women into science to achieve Sustainable Development Goals(SDG5). In an attempt to enhance the participation of Women Scientists in Biotechnology Research, the Department of Biotechnology launched a **Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation Program (BioCARe)** for women scientists in January, 2011. The program is mainly for Career Development of employed/ unemployed women Scientists  for whom it is the first extramural research grant. The scheme is open for all areas of Life Sciences (including agriculture, veterinary science and medicine). Women Scientists who are employed or unemployed or are desirous of coming back after a break can get back to the main stream by getting their first grant as the Principal Investigator. Around **223**women scientists were supported during last 6 years.

**Janaki Ammal-National Women Bioscientist Award** is beingimplemented by the Department  to recognize outstanding research contributions of women scientists in basic and applied research in the areas of Biosciences and Biotechnology including agricultural, biomedical and environmental sciences with potential for application/product and technology development.The reward under senior category isone-time monitory award of Rs.5.00 lakhs. The women scientists who are below 45 years of age and have made significant research contributions in Biotechnology/Biological Sciences are awarded under young category with a minor research grant of Rs.5.00 lakh/year to pursue their ongoing research activities for a period of five years in addition to Award money of Rs.1.00 lakh (one time). Presently Department has provision to give one award under Senior category and two awards under Young category. In last 6 years 18 awards, 6 under Senior category and 12 under Young category, has been given.

BIRAC, PSU of the Department, is also playing a significant role in promoting “**women entrepreneurship**” in the country.**BIRAC-TiEWInER** (Women In Entrepreneurial Research)Award: BIRAC has a dedicated award to promote and recognize woman entrepreneurs in Biotech sector. This award is in partnership with TiE-Delhi NCR. Under this national annual award program, 15 women entrepreneurs working on ideas that impact large sections of the society are awarded INR 5 lakhs each along with mentoring, handholding, an opportunity to participate in an intensive accelerator programme. After the accelerator program, the 15 contestantscompete through Business Pitching for the award of INR 25 lakhs each to 3 final winners. So far, in the three editions of WInER Award 46women entrepreneur awardees have been felicitated. BIRAC has also supported two Bioincubators, which provides incubation space and mentoring (business, IP, legal) specifically to women students/scientists/entrepreneurs. These include Golden Jubilee Biotech Park, Chennai and Sri Padmavati MahilaVisvavidyalayam, Tirupati.

The **annual Women Leaders in Global Health (WLGH)** conference is being co-hosted by the Department and WLGH in India during June – July 2021 to bring together established and emerging leaders from across the global and national health community to **advance gender equity in health leadership**. As part of a larger initiative hosted by Stanford University, the annual conference builds momentum, connection and ownership across societal influencers, institutions and change-agents focusing on women.

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## Source

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