Question 14. Does your organization have any special awards, recognitions, or incentive programs to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of women in STEM employees? If so, please provide details.

The Institute actively celebrates the achievements and contributions of women in STEM through various awards, recognitions, fellowships, and institutional incentives. While several awards are common to all faculty, the Institute has made notable progress in establishing women-specific recognitions over the past year.

1. Newly Constituted Women Faculty Excellence Award

In 2024, BITS Pilani formally instituted the **Women Faculty Excellence Award for Research and Teaching**, supported by the alumni batch of 1998. This annual award is specifically designed to recognize and honor professional excellence, innovation, and leadership among women faculty members across all BITS campuses.

- **Award Value:** INR 1 lakh and a certificate of recognition.
- **Eligibility:** Women faculty in STEM disciplines with a minimum of two years of service at BITS Pilani.
- **Selection Criteria:** Demonstrated excellence in research, innovation, publication record, mentorship of female students, implementation of innovative teaching methods, or success of research scholars under their guidance.

This marks a significant step toward institutionalizing gender-sensitive recognition frameworks.

2. Institution-Wide Faculty Awards (Open to Women)

BITS Pilani offers several prestigious faculty awards that are open to all, including women in STEM:

- **Prof. C. R. Mitra Best Faculty Award**
- **Prof. S. S. Ranganathan Memorial Teaching Excellence Award**
- **OPERA Award** (Outstanding Potential for Excellence in Research and Academics): Encourages new faculty to pursue high-quality research and teaching.
- **Chair Professorships:** Recognize senior faculty with outstanding academic and research achievements. Notably, **Late Prof. Suman Kapur**, from the Department of Biological Sciences, was honored as Chair Professor in 2020.

Women faculty have been consistently recognized under these schemes for their outstanding contributions.

3. Professional Growth Incentives

- **University Exposure Abroad (UEA) and Industry Immersion Programs:** Annual programs that provide opportunities to visit top global universities or industries for research and training. Women faculty members regularly avail these awards for professional development.
- **Internal Research Funding and Seed Grants:** Women faculty are encouraged to apply for competitive institutional funding to initiate innovative projects or expand their research portfolios.

4. Recognition of Women Students in STEM

BITS Pilani has introduced **new fellowships and scholarships** at undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels specifically aimed at supporting female students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These efforts aim to encourage young women to pursue higher education and careers in STEM fields.

5. Support for External Nominations

The Institute actively supports the nomination of women faculty for **national and international awards**, such as SERB POWER, INSA Medals, and DST's Women Scientist Schemes, helping boost their visibility and recognition beyond the institute.