Question 19. Has your organization collaborated with Government research / technology linked programmes specific on Women in STEM workforce?

The Institute has consistently collaborated with government research and technology-linked programmes aligned with national priorities to enhance the participation of women in the STEM workforce.

Over the past five years, BITS Pilani has advanced an institutional agenda of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship to promote and support women scientists across its campuses — Pilani, Goa, Hyderabad, and Dubai. This spans all academic tiers — First Degree, Higher Degree, and PhD — with a strong emphasis on sponsored research and consulting.

The Institute's commitment to gender equity is longstanding — The Centre for Women's Studies was established in 2005 with sponsorship from the University Grants Commission (UGC), serving as a foundation for sustained efforts in women's empowerment and gender-inclusive policies.

Women faculty and researchers are actively engaged in government-supported projects funded by prestigious agencies such as DST, SERB, DBT, ICMR, and CSIR, contributing significantly to frontier science and societal advancement. Faculty members have also benefitted from women-centric research funding programmes, including:

- SERB–POWER Fellowships and Research Grants
- DST–WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) initiative
- DST–WOS-A (Women Scientist Scheme–A)
- CSIR–ASPIRE (Augmenting Writing Skills for Articulating Research)

Notable Government-Linked Research Projects Led by Women Faculty:

1. Development of Bioinoculant-Based Formulation for Enhanced Phytoremediation of PCB-Contaminated Soil
   Researcher: Prof. Monika Sandhu, Dept. of Biological Sciences
   Focus: Sustainable remediation of environmental pollutants.
   Government Link: Environmental sustainability programmes.
2. Assessment of Sulfur-Centered Halogen Bonding Interactions Using Matrix Isolation Infrared Spectroscopy
   Researcher: Prof. Amrita Chakraborty, Dept. of Chemistry
   Focus: Advanced material science and bonding studies.
   Government Link: National materials and energy research initiatives.
3. TNF-Alpha Mediated Alternative Splicing in Type 2 Diabetes: A Genome-Wide Approach
   Researcher: Dr. Indrani Talukdar, Dept. of Biological Sciences
   Focus: Disease mechanisms supporting precision medicine.
   Government Link: Health research initiatives under ICMR/DBT.
   Institutional Collaboration – DST GATI Program

BITS Pilani was selected by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for the GATI (Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions) pilot under the WISE-KIRAN Division. As one of 30 institutions in India (with UK partners), BITS developed a gender equity framework and conducted institutional audits/reforms to enhance gender inclusion in STEM. In 2023, the Institute received the "GATI Achiever" recognition from DST.

Support through Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Pilani Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Society (PIEDS), BITS Pilani's incubation arm, is supported by government schemes such as:

- NIDHI-SSS, NIDHI-PRAYAS, NIDHI-EiR
- Startup India Seed Fund Scheme
- TIDE Scheme

These programmes are open to women entrepreneurs and co-founders, offering funding support from INR 4 Lakhs to INR 1 Crore. Several women-led startups have benefitted through PIEDS.

Summary

These collaborations and recognitions demonstrate BITS Pilani's strong commitment to enhancing women's participation and leadership in STEM — not only through government-funded research grants and fellowships (SERB–POWER, DST–WISE, DST–WOS-A, CSIR–ASPIRE, etc.) but also by creating an enabling ecosystem for women scientists, researchers, and entrepreneurs to thrive.