

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2194  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02/08/2023**

**VAJRA SCHEME**

**2194. SHRI SUNIL DATTATRAY TATKARE:**

**Will the Minister of SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government is implementing VAJRA scheme and if so, the details and the aims and objective thereof;**
- (b) the details of the eligibility criteria fixed and the nature and duration of support under the scheme;**
- (c) whether the scheme will help build strong international connect to the R&D ecosystem of India, if so, the details thereof;**
- (d) the challenges faced by the Government in the implementation of the VAJRA scheme;**
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to overcome the difficulties in the implementation of the scheme;**
- (f) whether there is any improvement in the related indices after the implementation of the scheme and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (g) whether the Government is undertaking any other policies for promoting participation of NRIs and overseas scientific community in research and development in India and if so, the details thereof?**

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)  
OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)**

विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी राज्यमंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)

(डॉ. जितेंद्र सिंह)

**(a) Yes Sir, the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) is implementing the Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme with the aim to bring a strong international connection to the R&D ecosystem of India. The scheme offers adjunct/visiting faculty assignments to overseas scientists, faculty members and R&D professionals including Non-resident Indians (NRI) and Overseas**

**Citizens of India (OCI) to undertake high-quality collaborative research in academic and research Institutions of India. The objective of the scheme is engagement of VAJRA faculty in collaborative research in cutting-edge areas of science and technology including interdisciplinary areas of priority with one or more Indian collaborator.**

**(b) The eligibility criteria to apply for VAJRA Faculty Scheme is as follows:**

**(i) The overseas scientist/faculty should be an active researcher working in an academic / research / industrial organization with a proven track record of research and development.**

**(ii) Indian Collaborator(s) should be a regular faculty/researcher in academic/research institutions in the country.**

**Nature and Duration of Support are given below:**

**(i) The residency period of VAJRA Faculty in India would be for a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 3 months.**

**(ii) VAJRA Faculty will be provided US\$ 15000 in the first month of engagement and US\$ 10000 p.m. in the subsequent two months.**

**(iii) One research visit by the Indian host to the Institute of the VAJRA Faculty for a period not less than a week and not exceeding 30 days will also be supported. Board will provide return economy airfare, not exceeding Rs. 1.5 lakh, per-diem and accommodation allowance as per the norms of the Board.**

**(iv) Collaborative research visits of not more than 2 research students after 2 years of engagement from the research group of Indian hosts to the Institute of the VAJRA Faculty for a duration of three to six months will be supported. Board will provide a return economy airfare, one-time contingency grant of Rs. 60,000/- and fellowship equivalent to the norms of the Board.**

**(v) Rs. 5.0 lakh per year of research visit per VAJRA Faculty to the Indian host is provided to meet expenses related to the collaborative research.**

**(vi) Support to VAJRA Faculty to the tune of Rs. 1.0 lakh per year to give lectures in his/her area of expertise in the host Institute will be provided.**

**(c) Yes Sir, VAJRA Faculty scheme facilitates NRI'S / OCI's visits to the host Institutions in India, resulting in collaborative researches and joint publications which paves the way for future collaborations and strong international connect to the R&D ecosystem of India.**

**(d) and (e) Visiting VAJRA Faculties have been allowed to undertake the visit in many stints so as to overcome the practical difficulties experienced in implementation of the scheme.**

**(f) VAJRA Faculty positions has been offered to more than 80 foreign faculties including NRI'S / OCI, who have undertaken multiple visits to the host Institutions in India. Faculty from 71 international institutes/universities around the globe spanning 18 countries have undertaken collaborative research in 33 host Indian institutes including universities, national labs, etc. so far under the scheme.**

**(g) The Department of Science and Technology (DST) for promoting participation of NRI's and overseas scientific community in R&D in India has implemented the VAishwik BHArtiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) Fellowship Program. The VAIBHAV Fellowships envisages a collaboration between scientists of Indian Diaspora with Indian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), Universities and/ or public funded Scientific Institutions. The VAIBHAV Fellow would identify an Indian Institution for collaboration and may spend up to maximum two months in a year for 3 years.**

**Department of Biotechnology (DBT) implements DBT-TWAS Fellowship Program jointly with The World Academy of Sciences, Italy and also Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship which encourage scientists (Indian Nationals) working outside the country in Biotechnology Research.**

**Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has developed PRABHASS, "Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark", a National Digital Portal with support from different Ministries/Departments of GOI (DST, DBT, CSIR, ICMR, ICAR, DAE, DOS, MoES and MEA) to engage Global Indian S&T community through a virtual platform for addressing Indian research/societal challenges/problems, PRABHASS has connected several diaspora with Indian S&T community for different interactions, guidance and collaborative R&D. CSIR also encourages the participation of NRI and the Overseas scientific community for the position of 'Distinguished Scientists' in order to engage them in its effort focussed on shaping a new S&T landscape to address global scientific challenges.**

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