

## Gender Equity in Science

### Why in news?

The draft **Science, Technology and Innovation Policy** aims to increase the participation of women in science.

### What is current status of women representation in science?

- In the 2018 **Global Gender Gap report**, India is ranked 108 out of 149 countries.
- According to DST figures, the share of women involved in scientific R&D increased from 13% to 29% from 2000-2001 to 2014-15 & it decreased to 14.71% in 2015-16.
- It is found that women are either not promoted or often dropped out during their mid-career to attend to their families.
- Hence pilot programme-**Gender Advancement through Transforming Institutions**- similar to Athena SWAN will be launched in India to address the issue.

### What is Athena SWAN(Scientific Women's Academic Network)?

- It is an evaluation and accreditation programme in started by UK in 2005 to enhance gender equity in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).
- Participating Institutes are graded depending on the enrolment of women and the advancement of the careers of women faculty and scientists.
- Institutions develop action plans to improve gender equity & are recognised by accrediting them with bronze, silver or gold medal.
- In 2019, Ortus Economic Research in partnership with Loughborough University reveals that 93% of participants believed the programme had a positive impact on gender issues, 78% said it had impacted equality and diversity issues positively, and 78% noted a positive impact on the career progression of women.

### How it can be implemented in India?

- Since most of the universities, barring IITs and NITs, are runned and funded by the government, DST has to negotiate with them to bring changes in

institutional policies, recruitment & promotions.

- The DST has tied up with NAAC to push gender equity through it.
- It is planning for an intensive gender sensitisation programmes among the top leaders of institutions.
- It aims to increase women members in selection committees during recruitment processes.
- In the future, the DST is likely to consider policy changes such as providing financial incentives through grants to institutes based on their performance which is similar to UK.

### **What will the pilot programme be launched?**

- Firstly 25 institutes will be shortlisted to carry out self-assessment on gender equity in their departments.
- Then British Council will assist DST and facilitate collaboration between selected institutions under GATI with Athena SWAN-accredited institutions in the UK, with each institute here having a partner institute in the UK for guidance.

**Source: Indian Express**