

Kashmir University wins ‘GATI Achiever’ award, secures top position in academic institutions category

Srinagar, June 11: The University of Kashmir has been selected for the ‘GATI Achievers’ award by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, securing top position in the ‘Academic Institutions’ category for its contributions in upholding its commitment towards gender equity and promotion of women in all spheres of sciences, especially in the STEMM disciplines.

The DST, which announced the results on June 10, 2023, has been piloting the prestigious Gender Advancement in Transforming Institutions (GATI) programme in partnership with the British Council for 30 top research institutions, institutions of national importance and academic institutions of the country.

All these institutions were selected for the programme in August 2021 through a rigorous screening process for which around 190 institutions were invited to submit the Expression of Interest (EoI) applications.

Under the programme, the University of Kashmir is committed to the key charter principles of the programme which draws inspiration from the Athena SWAN (Scientific Women’s Academic Network) framework of the UK Advance Higher Education, which has been successfully engaging in gender equity programmes in research and academia in several countries including UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Notably, Vice-Chancellor, University of Kashmir Prof Nilofer Khan—the first woman Vice-Chancellor of the University—has been keenly monitoring the programme and has approved several key action plans to be implemented during the current phase of the programme.

The University has successfully worked towards the objectives of this programme which mainly deal with creating a database of gender status over the previous five years in University’s various sectors ranging from UG/PG programmes, research and postdoctoral programmes, teaching and research faculty, non-teaching staff, officers and leadership positions at various hierarchal levels. It also includes highlighting important measures and best practices prevalent in terms of gender equity and identifying the gaps across its main and satellite campuses. The University has constituted a high-level committee—GSAT (GATI Self Assessment Team)—that plays a pivotal role in improving the gender progression and promotion in tune with the requirements of the programme.

“The GATI Achiever award is a great milestone achieved. We look forward to attaining the objectives of this flagship programme and create a robust gender climate in our University and beyond,” Prof Nilofer said, congratulating the GATI team of the University for the achievement.

Registrar KU, Dr Nisar A Mir, also complimented GATI team for working towards realising the GATI objectives with new initiatives and plans.

Prof Rabia Hamid, Head, Department of Nanotechnology, KU, is the Nodal officer of the programme. Recently, she also represented the University as part of a national delegation led by DST’s WISE KIRAN Division head, Dr Nisha Mendiratta on an invited visit by British Council to UK Higher education and research institutions, for knowledge exchange between GATI participant members and Athena Swan UK members.

With GATI Achievers award to its credit, the University of Kashmir—apart from working towards the implementation of the GATI action plans—may also now see a wider role beyond the Pilot programme, as a torchbearer institute for other

academic institutions of the country in general and the UT of J&K in particular, to bring gender advancement measures within their policy frameworks.

Pertinently, the National Education Policy-2020 envisages gender equality and inclusivity in educational institutions as paramount, while gender equity is also an important focal area under India's G-20 Presidency. The University of Kashmir is already actively engaged in several activities in this regard and will be playing a key role in promoting gender equity in areas of research and development, not only at national but international level as well, with the GATI Achievers award.

The DST in partnership with British Council has graded institutions on basis of recognized need of work to achieve Gender Equality in STEMM, Acceptance of GATI Charter, High-level of commitment to promote Gender Advancement with evidence etc., along with Self-Assessment Application and Action plans against the identified gap areas to be implemented within institutions. In all these parameters, the University of Kashmir has performed exceptionally well as is indicative of its figuring in the 'GATI Achievers' list of awardees with a top rank among all academic institutions in the Pilot.