

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF
THE INSPIRE MANAK
SCHEME IN JAMMU AND
KASHMIR**

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Abstract

This study explores how the INSPIRE (Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research) MANAK Scheme encourages creativity and scientific curiosity among Jammu and Kashmiri school-children. Through an assessment of student engagement, innovations, and achievements at the district, state, and national levels, this report evaluates the scheme's impact by emphasizing important initiatives and their socioeconomic effects. The study, which focuses on 2021–2022, emphasizes how the program supports scientific temper and meets societal requirements while highlighting how it aligns with the New Education Policy 2020.

Keywords

MANAK Scheme, Jammu and Kashmir, school, education

1. Introduction

In order to find, support, and highlight grassroots inventions made by schoolchildren, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) launched the **INSPIRE Awards - MANAK** (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspirations and Knowledge) program. The program encourages ideas from children in grades 6–10, with a focus on underserved regions, and is in line with India's larger

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goals of promoting scientific temper and innovation under the NEP 2020.

The program has become a shining example for young talent in Jammu and Kashmir, an area characterized by distinct geological and sociopolitical obstacles. This study examines how well it stimulates scientific thought and how it might be used to solve local problems.

This paper examines the scheme's impact on local youth and its ability to improve socioeconomic development in Jammu and Kashmir throughout its implementation in 2021–2022. The program helps pupils tackle real-world problems by encouraging creativity, which advances the larger objective of national self-reliance.

2. Methodology

Using a qualitative methodology, the study examines primary data from competitions at the district, state, and national levels, bolstered by secondary data from publications and official documents. Participation rates, the caliber of innovations, and their applicability to society are examples of key performance metrics.

2.1 Data Collection

Official documents, project documentation, and competition reports from SCERT and related nodal officers in Jammu and Kashmir are used in the study. To obtain qualitative information, a few interviews with participants, instructors, and nodal officials were carried out.

2.2 Analysis

To identify trends in innovation, projects were grouped according to their areas of interest, such as technology, healthcare, and the environment. Trends in participation were examined by school type, location, and gender.

Karnataka is the top-performing state with 41 selections, followed closely by Maharashtra (39) and Andhra Pradesh (38), according to data on State/UT-wise awardees in the 1st to 9th National Level Exhibition and Project Competitions (NLEPC) of the INSPIRE-

Awards MANAK from 2009-10 to 2022-23. Despite having only ten selections, Jammu & Kashmir is a region with enormous potential and is becoming more and more visible in national scientific innovation venues such as the INSPIRE Awards-MANAK. This demonstrates the area's developing expertise and innovative approaches to problem-solving (see Fig.1).

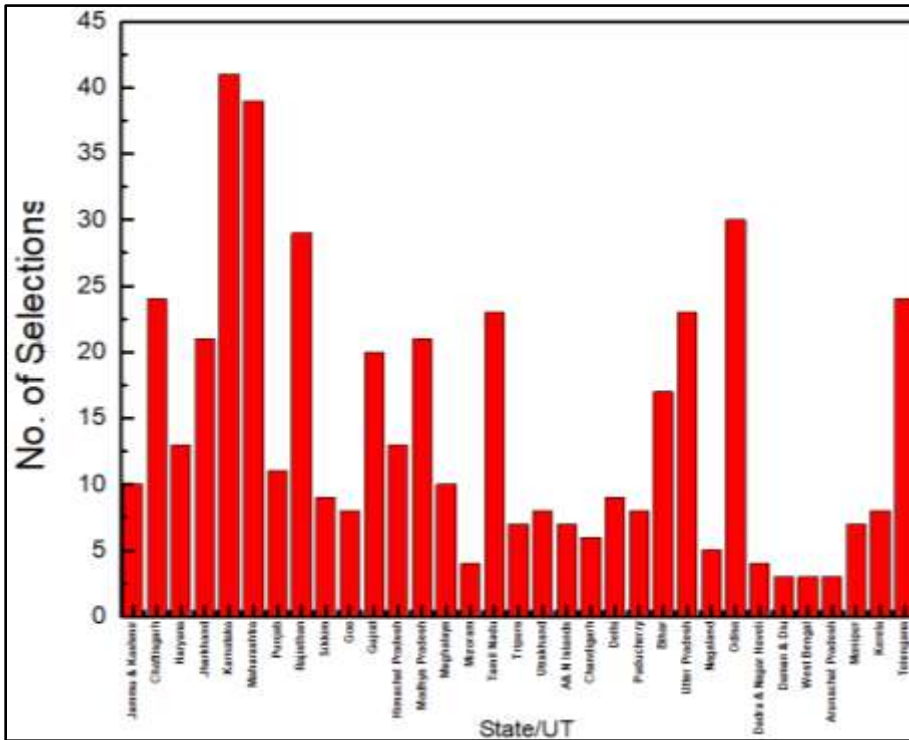


Fig.1.
State/UT-wise awardees in the 1st to 9th National Level Exhibition and Project Competitions (NLEPC) of the INSPIRE-Awards MANAK from 2009-10 to 2022-23

Furthermore, for the past 14 years, Jammu and Kashmir's performance in the INSPIRE MANAK Scheme has been up to par. With 24,906 schools included in the program, Jammu and Kashmir shows a significant influence on scientific temperament at the local level. Despite having fewer schools than states like Maharashtra (141,763) and Karnataka (185,211), Jammu and Kashmir has received a sizable portion of NLEPC awards. This

demonstrates how effectively the region fosters creativity in each school and how well the INSPIRE MANAK initiative fits in with regional teaching methods (see Fig. 2).

The program has built a strong basis in J&K by encouraging students' scientific curiosity and inventiveness, guaranteeing efficient use of the resources at hand. The region is well-positioned to enhance its contribution to national innovation by cultivating talent at the grassroots level if sustained efforts are made to keep up this pace.

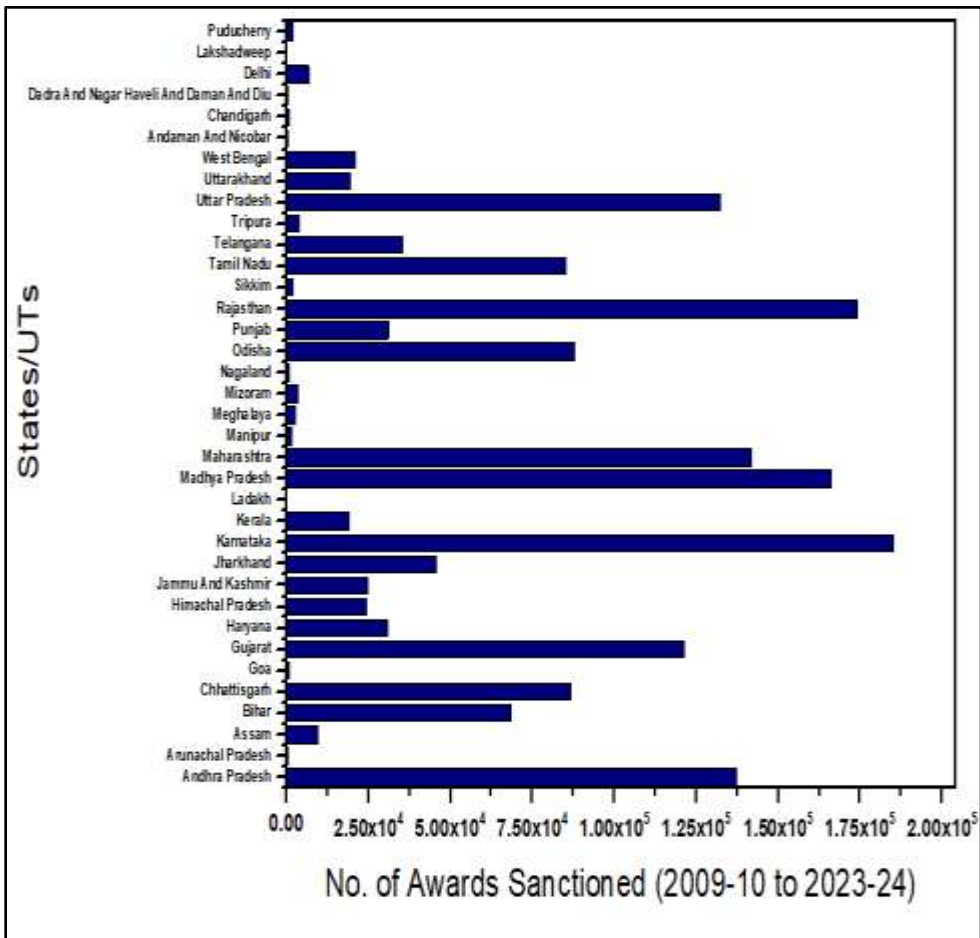


Fig.2.:
State/UT-wise awardees in the 1st to 9th National Level Exhibition and Project Competitions (NLEPC) of the INSPIRE-Awards MANAK

3. Findings

3.1 Participation Trends

About 1,000 student entries were submitted in Jammu and Kashmir's District Level Exhibition and Project Competition (DLEPC) between 2021 and 2022; 95 of these concepts advanced to the State Level (SLEPC). At the National Level (NLEPC), 17 of these students represented UT. This indicates a consistent increase in involvement, which is indicative of growing interest and awareness among instructors and students.

3.2 Diversity of Projects

The projects displayed ingenuity, addressing regional challenges such as accessibility, safety, and sustainability:

- **Smart Electric Pole:** A solution to prevent electrocution, showcasing practical safety applications.
- **Self-Tea Pouring Samovar:** Merging tradition with modernity by automating a Kashmiri cultural artifact.
- **Adjustable Patient-Friendly Toilet:** Improving accessibility for individuals with disabilities, particularly relevant to the elderly population.

3.3 Social and Economic Impact

Projects like the **Hydraulic Bridge Blocker** and **Wonder Liquid (Ink Remover)** demonstrate scalability and potential for commercialization. Moreover, the focus on cost-effective and environmentally friendly solutions aligns with regional needs.

3.4 Alignment with NEP 2020

The scheme's emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving is in line with the NEP's goals. It fosters early exposure to scientific methods, positioning students as problem solvers rather than passive learners.

4. Discussion

4.1 Catalyzing Grassroots Innovation

By giving students a chance to interact with real-world problems, the INSPIRE MANAK Scheme has fostered an innovative and inquisitive culture. Students are further empowered to turn their

ideas into workable solutions by the mentorship and financing (₹10,000 via DBT).

4.2 Challenges

- **Geographical Barriers:** Many rural schools face logistical challenges in participating.
- **Awareness Gaps:** Some schools remain unaware of the scheme or lack trained personnel to guide students effectively.

4.3 Opportunities

By utilizing digital platforms, the plan can reach a wider audience. Furthermore, establishing regional incubators for exceptional ventures might help close the gap between conception and execution.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Jammu and Kashmir has benefited greatly from the INSPIRE MANAK Scheme, which has fostered a new generation of creative thinkers. Students in the area have shown resiliency, inventiveness, and a dedication to making significant contributions via their projects. In addition to addressing regional issues, regional projects support national objectives for technical advancement and sustainable development. The program's capacity to spur innovation will be further strengthened as it develops and becomes more in line with grassroots demands and national goals.

Recommendations

- **Capacity Building:** Regular training workshops for teachers to mentor students effectively.
- **Infrastructure Support:** Establishing district-level hubs for prototyping and testing.
- **Recognition and Scaling:** Facilitating partnerships with industries to scale viable projects.
- **Digital Platforms:** Leveraging technology for remote participation and idea sharing.

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