

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE CABINET
REPORT ON
MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES
OF
WOMEN SCIENTISTS AND TECHNOLOGISTS

Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SAC-C) in its meeting held on 13th April 2000 inter alia took a note of multi-facet role of woman scientists and technologists. It was brought to the notice of the Committee that the 60 to 70% women scientists are lost to the system due to interruptions in their careers due to marriage, childbirth etc. It was felt that there were several items to be attended to for enabling woman scientists to have productive careers. To name a few, these range from contract appointments to removal of restrictions such as overage etc.

A Sub-Committee under Dr. Manju Sharma, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology was therefore constituted by the SAC-C to undertake an in-depth study into the possibilities on maximum utilization of human resources of woman Scientists and Technologists. The Sub-Committee undertook the exercise and submitted its report.

The report of the Sub-Committee was discussed in the Second meeting of the SAC-C held on 3rd November 2000. The SAC –C while generally agreeing with the report of the Sub-Committee has made certain modifications keeping in view the applicability of the recommendations to all scientific and technological establishment of the Government of India.

The final recommendations of the SAC-C on maximum utilization of the human resources of women scientists and technologists are given in the succeeding paragraphs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Relaxation of age for recruitment of women scientists and technologists by 5 years to allow them to rejoin and restart.
2. Provision of availing of longer leave after expiry of 135 days maternity leave, may be sympathetically considered by the management for women scientists whenever they ask for it after availing maternity leave and the existing provision of leave such as Earned Leave (EL) may be used liberally. In addition, women could have flexible working hours during pregnancy and child rearing up to two children. This means that the full normal day work but which could be adjusted in such a way so that women scientists would be available for core time. Each institute may fix this core period for itself and for women employees.
3. Facilities for a good effectively managed crèche be made available within the campus for infants up to the age of five years.
4. If a women scientist choose to leave her professional career for a short period of up to 5 years, a provision to be made for her re-entry at an appropriate time subject to the following :
 - a) An age relaxation of 5 years to be given to allow her to compete in the open selection for a permanent job.
 - b) Re-entry fellowships/grants to be instituted which may be granted on merit basis as per the decision of the Expert Committee.

- c) Contract appointments may be offered based on academic excellence to be decided by an Expert Committee.
5. Post-doctoral trainee associateships to be instituted for a period of 5 years subject to annual review. The important feature for these fellowships should be that they should allow flexible working hours, usually amounting to not more than half the normal number of hours. A stipend should be fixed proportionately.
 6. For such women scientists/ technologists over the age of 35 years, a system of competitive renewable national fellowship could be instituted. A first appointment under this scheme would carry a seed grant for research expenditure as well as a fellowship stipend approaching the scale to emoluments of an entry-level independent scientist, and would be for a period of five years subject to a midcourse review. Candidates holding these fellowships would be eligible to apply for renewals, which would be given in three-year slots if found appropriate upon review and while the stipendiary scales would be set proportionately higher based on experience, the research expenditure component would decrease since candidates would be expected to bring in competitive extramural grants on their own.