

## Women in STEM: Challenges and Opportunities in India

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### Introduction:

The report explores the challenges and opportunities for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). It provides a detailed analysis based on data and expert opinions, offering a guide to improve gender equality and boost women's involvement in STEM fields. The findings highlight the need for changes and specific actions to make the future more inclusive and fairer.

### Key Findings

- **Educational Barriers and Participation:** While women make up 42.3% of STEM students, their numbers in engineering are lower at 28.7%. The gap is even wider in higher academic roles, with women being only 14% of STEM faculty and 9% of fellows in top Indian science academies.
- **Workplace Challenges:** Women in STEM careers face many issues like gender bias, lack of mentorship, and difficulty balancing work and family. These problems lead to fewer women staying and advancing in STEM jobs.
- **National and International Initiatives:** Various programs aim to address these issues. Initiatives like SERB POWER, GATI, and the Women Scientist Scheme by the Department of Science and Technology offer research opportunities, financial support, and gender-sensitive policies in STEM education and employment.

### Recommendations:

- **Dynamic Educational Policies:** We need flexible and inclusive educational policies. This means promoting accurate information to dispel myths about gender-specific skills in STEM and raising awareness of programs that support female participation from a young age.
- **Support for Career Breaks:** It's crucial to support women returning to work after breaks. Programs like HCLTech Returnship and Mahindra's 'Back to Mahindra' help women re-enter professional roles and continue their careers smoothly.

**Leadership and Mentorship Programs:** Promoting female role models through mentorship programs, seminars, and workshops can boost women's confidence and aspirations in STEM fields. Increasing women's presence in decision-making roles ensures their perspectives shape policies and practices.

### Conclusion

The report emphasizes the need for flexible policies, strong support systems, and transformative initiatives to close the gender gap in STEM. By implementing these strategies, policymakers and stakeholders can ensure women's contributions to STEM are recognized, valued, and enhanced, driving global progress and innovation.

**Read More:** <https://iwwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Women-in-STEM-Challenges-and-Opportunities-in-India-Report.pdf>

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