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 accreditating 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

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering