

Published Date:	28 Nov 2023	Publication:	The Economic Times [Bangalore]
Journalist:	Bureau	Page No:	8

HUL Launches 'Women in STEM Fellowship'

Our Bureau

Bengaluru: FMCG major Hindustan Unilever (HUL) on Monday launched the HUL Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Fellowship, designed to support top women scholars from leading Indian institutes pursuing their Ph.D., partnering with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) for its first year. The new batch of five fellows will receive ₹10 lakh a year for five years as stipend and for their expenses, HUL's executive director of R&D Vibhav Sanzgiri told ET.

"We are benchmarking the grant to the Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF). The fellows will be able to connect with senior mentors from Unilever and HUL's External Ecosystem, given that often women in STEM face challenges around the lack of role models and mentorship," he said. The company would be approaching other institutes from next year for the new batch of fellows, although the association with IISc fellows would continue.



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HUL managing director Rohit Jawa called the fellowship a catalyst for transformative change, inspiring the next generation of top Indian women scientists, engineers, and innovators.

"These fellows were chosen by an independent selection panel comprising academicians from relevant departments at IISc. Applications were assessed based on the criteria of the research proposal, research impact and academic achievements," he said.

The company announced the first cadre of winners at an event at parent company Unilever's R&D centre in Bengaluru. The newly-minted fellows — Amrapali Datta, Ananya Sarkar, Rasmi Mohan T, Sonali Tadge, and Tejaswini Somnath — are all pursuing Ph.Ds from IISc Bangalore in areas aligning with Sustainable Development Goals.

The event had a panel discussion with eminent women in STEM on the challenges women face in the field. The panelists included former director of ISRO VR Lalithambika, Professor of Microbiology at Vellore's Christian Medical College Gagandeep Kang, Dean of Academics at International Centre for Theoretical Scientists Rama Govindrajan and founder of the non-profit Arman Aparna Hegde.

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