



Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Awards

For Prelims: [Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Awards](#), [Padma](#) and other national awards, Vigyan Ratna Awards, Vigyan Shri Awards, Vigyan Team Awards, Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB).

For Mains: Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Awards, Achievements of Indians in science & technology.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Science and Technology has announced '**Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar**' (RVP) at par with the **Padma** and other national awards.

What is Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP)?

▪ Included Awards:

- **Vigyan Ratna Awards:** These awards will recognise lifetime achievements & contributions made in any field of science and technology.
- **Vigyan Shri Awards:** These awards will recognise distinguished contributions to any field of science and technology.
- **Vigyan Team Awards:** These awards are to be given to a team comprising three or more scientists/researchers/innovators who have made an exceptional contribution working in a team in any field of science and technology.
- **Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB):** These awards are the highest multidisciplinary science awards in India for the young scientists (maximum 45 years).
 - They are named after **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar**, the founder and director of the [Council of Scientific & Industrial Research \(CSIR\)](#), who was also a renowned chemist and visionary.

▪ Criteria:

- The awards encompass diverse criteria, incorporating technology-led innovations and collaborative team efforts.
- Unlike previous awards, the **RVP does not enforce age restrictions except for the Vigyan Yuva-SSB award**, aligning with calls to address ageism and gender biases.
- The nominations for this bouquet of awards will be invited every year on **14th January** which would remain open till **28th February (National Science Day) every year**.
 - These awards shall be announced on **11th May (National Technology Day)** every year. The Award Ceremony for all categories of awards will be held on **23rd August (National Space Day)**.

▪ Significance:

- It **acknowledges and encourages** participation from [Persons of Indian Origin abroad](#), recognizing the global influence of Indian scientific talent.
- The new awards will be open to an expanded group of "scientists, technologists and innovators (or teams) working in government, private sector organisations or individuals **working outside any organisation**."

- The new awards will also have expanded eligibility criteria, including technology-led innovations or products, in addition to discovery-based research. The RVP also includes a set of team awards (Vigyan Team), to acknowledge the increasingly collaborative, cross-disciplinary, translational and intersectional nature of scientific research.
- Importantly, **with the exception of the Vigyan Yuva-SSB award** – for scientists up to the age of 45 years – **the other RVP awards don't have an age limit**, while explicitly committing to ensure equitable gender representation.

How Can the RVP Enhance Inclusivity While Overcoming Past Limitations?

- **Clear Criteria for Exceptional Contributions:**
 - To ensure that the RVP system recognises only truly **“notable and inspiring contributions”**, the awards' descriptions must include a statement that the contributions are over and above the **standard job description of a scientist/technologist**, not merely incremental work or work integral to their appointment.
- **Incorporating Diverse Scientific Engagement:**
 - The RVP awards should acknowledge **scientists' contributions beyond research** by including categories or considering **teaching, mentoring, science communication, and leadership**.
 - These efforts, often additional to primary roles, merit recognition within the awards structure during selection.
- **Revision of Age Limits and Gender Parity:**
 - The age limit of **45 for the Vigyan Yuva-SSB** poses a gender parity challenge, hindering **women with family obligations**.
 - To ensure fairness, redefining 'young scientist' based on career independence or offering eligibility extensions **considering personal circumstances is crucial to avoid erecting barriers** against gender parity.
- **Transparent Selection Procedures:**
 - When the RVP award process is implemented, the selection process must adhere to the predetermined timelines, provide a public list of shortlisted applicants, and include gender-balanced and diverse selection committees, international jury members, and a non-partisan jury member – a non-scientist, preferably – to make sure the selection is fair.
- **Embracing Diversity and Socioeconomic Representation:**
 - The new award system **must pledge to consciously seek to ensure, in addition to gender parity**, the proper socioeconomic and demographic representation among awardees, and account for contributions made in the face of serious systemic social challenges and/or constraints and considerations related to the workplace.
- **Continuous Evaluation for Improvement:**
 - Despite debates on the necessity of scientist awards, India lacks sufficient data for a decision. However, ongoing assessment of the award system's impact on scientific progress, field growth, role models, diversity, and the country's scientific culture is crucial for informed decisions.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. For outstanding contribution to which one of the following fields is Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize given? (2009)

- (a) Literature
- (b) Performing Arts
- (c) Science
- (d) Social Service

Ans: (c)

