

News Release

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BASF and Pune Knowledge Cluster (PKC) of The Principal Scientific Advisor's Office celebrate four years of WEnyan

- **43 scholars from two graduating cohorts honoured and 2025-26 compendium unveiled at the WEnyan Showcase 2026**
- **New CSR initiative 'WESER' reinforces BASF's commitment to advancing women in science and engineering**

Mumbai, India: BASF Chemicals India Private Limited (BCIPL), in collaboration with the Pune Knowledge Cluster (PKC) of PSA's office, successfully celebrated the completion of four impactful years of the WEnyan (Women in Education and Knowledge) program. The event, held at the BASF Innovation Campus, marked a key milestone in the journey of WEnyan—a research scholarship program for women from disadvantaged communities in Maharashtra.

Over the past four years, it has supported women in STEM through financial aid, mentorship, and community engagement, with a strong focus on inclusion. During the event, **43 scholars from two graduating cohorts** were felicitated in recognition of their academic and research achievements. The event also saw the release of the **WEnyan Compendium 2025–26** and was graced by **Dr. Ashish Lele, Director of CSIR–National Chemical Laboratory, Pune (CSIR-NCL)**, as Guest of Honour, and **Dr. Shailaja Donempudi, Distinguished Scientist and Head of the Business Development Group at Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**.

Building on the success of WEnyan, BCIPL further strengthened its commitment to advancing diversity in science with the launch of **WESER – Women Empowered for Science and Engineering Research**, a postdoctoral fellowship initiative introduced earlier this year. The program is designed to support talented women researchers, particularly those from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), by providing financial assistance, structured mentorship, and access to high-quality research opportunities. A key highlight of WESER is the opportunity for fellows to work closely with leading faculty at premier institutions such as Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT Bombay), Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune (IISER Pune), and CSIR-National Chemical

Laboratory, Pune (CSIR-NCL) gaining exposure to cutting-edge research environments and industry-relevant innovation. By bridging gaps in funding, mentorship, and institutional access, the program aims to address the persistent underrepresentation of women in advanced research roles.

Alexander Gerding, Managing Director, BASF India Limited & Head – BASF Group Companies in India, said, “We are proud to see how the WEnyan program has grown into a meaningful platform that empowers women in science and engineering. The achievements of the students over the past four years reflect the strength of collaboration between industry and academia. Initiatives like WEnyan and our newly launched WESER program reaffirm BASF’s commitment to fostering diversity, innovation, and inclusive growth in India’s scientific ecosystem.”

Dr. Avinash Kumbhar, CEO, Pune Knowledge Cluster (PKC) of The Principal Scientific Advisor’s Office, added, “The WEnyan Scholarship Program, sponsored by BASF and implemented by the Pune Knowledge Cluster, has evolved into a transformative platform that nurtures talent, fosters mentorship, and empowers women scholars to emerge as confident leaders and innovators. In doing so, it exemplifies the Pune Knowledge Cluster’s vision of building a future-ready, skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and societal progress.”

Pratiksha Santosh Nigade, WEnyan Scholarship awardee 2025-26 batch pursuing Master’s degree from Kolhapur, said “The WEnyan Scholarship has been much more than financial support. It has given me confidence, motivation, and access to learning opportunities that are not easily available at my college. Through the program, I have gained valuable exposure, interacted with experts, and developed both personally and professionally. I am sincerely grateful to BASF and the Pune Knowledge Cluster for creating such a meaningful platform that empowers women scholars and supports their academic and professional growth.”

With its continued success and growing impact, the WEnyan program will now be supported by BASF India Limited (BIL) going forward, ensuring sustained momentum and expansion of opportunities for women in STEM.

About Pune Knowledge Cluster (PKC)

The Pune Knowledge Cluster is an initiative under the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, aimed at fostering collaboration across academia, industry, and government to advance science and innovation.

About BASF in India

BASF has successfully partnered India’s progress for more than 130 years. As of the end of 2025, BASF had 2,455 employees in India with 8 production sites and 45 offices throughout the country. The Innovation Campus Mumbai and the Coatings Technical Center in Mangalore are both part of BASF’s global technology platform. In 2025, BASF registered sales of approximately €2.2 billion to customers in India. Further information is available on www.basf.com/in.