

Challenges Faced By the PM Internship Scheme - Explained

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PM Internship Scheme Latest News

- The Prime Minister's Internship Scheme has come under scrutiny after government data revealed that only one in five selected candidates accepted the internship offer, and 20% of those who joined quit before completing the programme.

Overview of the PM Internship Scheme

- The Prime Minister's Internship Scheme is a government initiative **aimed at providing young graduates with hands-on exposure to the functioning of Central Ministries, Departments, and public sector institutions.**
- The scheme is designed to help students understand policy implementation, administrative processes, and grassroots governance.

- Interns are **selected through a national-level application process** that assesses academic merit, motivation, and interest in public policy.
- They are placed in various government offices to work on research, data analysis, field studies, project tracking, and documentation tasks.
- The scheme offers a stipend and a structured internship duration, though it does not guarantee a government job.

Key Findings: Low Acceptance and Premature Dropouts

- Recent data shows that only 20% of shortlisted candidates actually accepted the offer, despite rigorous screening and shortlisting processes.
- Even more concerning is that around 20% of those who joined exited early, signalling deeper structural issues.
- **Possible Reasons for Low Offer Acceptance**
 - **Low Stipend or Financial Constraints:** Many candidates felt the stipend did not sufficiently cover relocation and living expenses in major cities.
 - **Better Private Sector Opportunities:** Graduates often receive higher-paying corporate offers, reducing the attractiveness of government internships.
 - **Limited Career Pathway:** The internship does not guarantee government employment, making it less appealing for students seeking stable career prospects.
 - **Geographical Mismatch:** Many postings required interns to work in distant states or field settings.
- **Reasons for Early Dropouts**
 - Mismatch between job expectations and actual tasks
 - Lack of mentorship or structured learning
 - Limited exposure to decision-making processes
 - Logistical and accommodation difficulties
- These issues collectively hinder the scheme's objective of building youth capacity in public governance.

Government Response and Planned Improvements

- The government has acknowledged these challenges and is evaluating ways to improve the scheme. Proposed measures include:
- **Enhancing Stipend Support**
 - There are discussions about revised stipends, especially for postings in Tier-1 cities where expenses are higher.
- **Better Orientation and Mentorship**
 - A more robust orientation module and structured mentorship framework are being considered to ensure interns gain meaningful exposure.
- **Improved Matching Between Interns and Departments**
 - The government aims to streamline the process so interns are placed in departments aligned with their academic background and career interests.
- **Strengthening Monitoring Mechanisms**

- Digital tracking of intern performance, attendance, and learning milestones could offer more accountability and clarity.
- **Exploring Hybrid or Remote Internship Models**
 - To widen participation, hybrid internship models, allowing remote work for certain tasks, may be evaluated.
- These reforms could potentially make the internship more attractive and reduce early dropout rates.

Broader Significance: Youth Engagement in Governance

- Internships in public administration play a crucial role in strengthening democratic participation.
- With India's vast demographic dividend, where over 65% of the population is below 35 years, programmes like the PM Internship Scheme can bridge the gap between young citizens and the institutional processes that shape policy.
- A more successful internship model can benefit the government by:
 - Creating a pipeline of trained young professionals
 - Encouraging innovative thinking and technological adoption in ministries
 - Enhancing citizen-centric governance
 - Improving transparency through data-driven interns' work
- For youth, the benefits include exposure to real-world challenges, development of policy skills, and insights into governance mechanisms.

Challenges Ahead

- Despite its goals, the scheme faces systemic challenges:
 - Perceptions of limited growth opportunities
 - Competition from private sector internships
 - Difficulty attracting talent from rural or low-income backgrounds
 - Need for structured learning outcomes and certifications
- Unless these concerns are addressed comprehensively, the scheme may continue to face participation constraints.

Source: TH | PIB

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/pm-internship-scheme-explained/>

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