

Higher Education Schemes, UPSC Notes

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What are the various government initiatives for higher education in India?

India has made significant strides in the field of higher education, with a number of government initiatives aimed at improving access, quality, and relevance of higher education. These initiatives have been designed to promote innovation, research, and internationalization and address issues such as skill development and employability. The significant initiatives are as follows:

EQUIP

- The **Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Program (EQUIP)** is an initiative of the **Department of Higher Education** that aims to enhance **access, inclusion, quality, excellence, and employability**.
- It intends to bring about significant improvements in the **10 critical areas** by implementing strategic interventions.
- **Objectives**

- Double the **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** and resolve the geographically and socially skewed access.
- Upgrade the **quality** of education to **global standards**.
- Position at least **50** Indian institutions among the **top 1,000 global universities**.
- **Accreditation** of all institutions as an assurance of quality.

TEQIP

- “**Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme of Government of India (TEQIP)**” aims to upscale and support ongoing efforts in improving the quality of **technical education**.
- The Programme was conceived and designed as a long-term project to be implemented in **10-12 years** in **3 phases**.
- Phase I was implemented with the assistance of the **World Bank** as a Centrally coordinated Central and State Sector Project.
- Phase 2 of the project is for the duration of 4 years, covering about 200 institutions based on competitive funding from 2010-2011.
- Phase 3 is fully integrated with the Twelfth Five-year Plan objectives for Technical Education as a key component for improving the quality of Engineering Education. Special consideration is for existing institutions for Low Income States and Special Category States (SCS).

Institute of Eminence (IoE)

- Institutions of Eminence scheme has been launched to empower Higher Educational Institutions and to help them become world-class teaching and research institutions.
- **Tenpublic** and **tenprivate** institutions are identified as IoE to emerge as world-class Teaching and Research Institutions.
- The institutes would enjoy the freedom of determining course structure, recruiting faculty, determining fees, etc.
- The public institutions under the IoE tag will receive a government grant of Rs.**1,000 crores**.
- The **Empowered Expert Committee**, tasked with the selection of 20 Institutions and further monitoring and reviewing their implementation plans.
- Some of the selected institutions are
 - **Public Institutions:** Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University, etc.
 - **Private Institutions:** VIT Vellore, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, etc.

Funding and Financing

- **Higher Education Financing Agency**
 - Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) is a joint venture company of **Canara Bank** and the **Ministry of Education**.
 - HEFA provides financial assistance for the creation of educational infrastructure and R&D in India's premier educational Institutions.
- **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)**

- Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), aimed at providing **strategic funding** to eligible state higher educational institutions.
- The central funding (in the ratio of **60:40** for general category States, **90:10** for special category states, and 100% for union territories) would be norm-based and outcome dependent.

Research and Development

• Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF)

- The Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) Scheme has been designed to improve the **quality of research** in various higher educational institutions in the country.
- The institutes which can offer PMRF include **all the IITs, all the IISERs, the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and some of the top Central Universities and NITs** that offer science or technology degrees.
- With attractive fellowships, the scheme seeks to attract the best talent into research, thereby realizing the vision of development through innovation.

• National Research Professorship (NRP)

- The Government of India had instituted the scheme of National Research Professorship in 1949 to honor distinguished academics and scholars in recognition of their contribution to knowledge.
- Persons of real eminence, who have attained the age of 65 years and have made outstanding contributions in their respective fields and are still capable of productive research, are considered for appointment as National Research Professors.

• SPARC

- The Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (**SPARC**) is a Ministry of Education initiative that aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's Higher Educational Institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world.

• Other Initiatives

- Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (**IMPRINT**) for the technology domains.
- Impactful Research in Social Sciences (**IMPRESS**) for the social sciences,
- Scheme for Translational Research in Sciences (**STARS**) for the fundamental sciences.
- Scheme for Transdisciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (**STRIDE**) for interdisciplinary research in humanities and SPARC for cross-border research.

Technology and E-Governance

• National Educational Alliance for Technology

- National Education Alliance for Technology (NEAT) is a Public-Private Partnership model between the Government and the Education Technology companies of India.
- Implementing Agency is the **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**
- Primary objective of the scheme is to provide technology solutions using Artificial Intelligence for customized learning or e-content in niche areas having highly employable skills.

• National Academic Depository

- National Academic Depository (NAD) is an online storehouse of all academic awards, **certificates, diplomas, degrees, mark sheets**, etc., duly digitized and lodged by academic institutions and boards.
- NAD ensures easy access to and retrieval of an academic award and also validates and guarantees its authenticity and safe storage.

- **e-PG Pathshala**

- e-PG Pathshala is an initiative under its **National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT)** being executed by the **UGC**.
- High quality, curriculum-based, interactive e-content in 70 subjects across all disciplines of social sciences, arts, fine arts and humanities, and natural & mathematical sciences is provided under the initiative.

Surveys and Ranking

- **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**

- The NIRF framework outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country.
- The broad parameters for ranking various universities and institutes are-
 - Teaching, Learning and Resources
 - Research and Professional Practices
 - Graduation Outcomes
 - Outreach and Inclusivity
 - Perception

- **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)**

- The Ministry of Education has endeavored to conduct an annual web-based All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) since 2010-11.
- The survey covers all the Institutions in the country engaged in imparting higher education.
- Data is being collected on several parameters such as teachers, student enrolment, programmes, examination results, education finance, and infrastructure.

Vocational Education

- **National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS)**

- The National Apprenticeship Training Scheme in India is a one-year program equipping technically qualified youth with the practical knowledge and skills required in their field of work. The Apprentices are imparted training by the organizations at their place of work.

- **SHREYAS Program**

- Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) is a central government scheme for providing industry apprenticeship opportunities to general graduates through the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).

International outreach

- The **Study in India** program launched in 2018 has identified the best 100 institutions in the country that have come forward and offered more than 20,000 seats for international students.
- The Indian government is planning to hold the **IIT-Joint Entrance Exam** (IIT-JEE) in **25 countries**. The countries where the examinations will be conducted are the USA, Australia, South Africa, Singapore, China, Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE, among others.
- The Indian Institutes of Technology (**IITs**), are set to branch into **other countries** after a government-appointed committee to facilitate the development of overseas campuses for IITs recommended seven possible locations abroad, which include the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Scholarships:

- Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students.
- National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Students.
- Merit Cum Means Scholarship For Professional and Technical Courses CS (Minorities).
- Pragati Scholarship for Girls.
- Special Scholarship Scheme for North Eastern Region.

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