

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO-15
ANSWERED ON- 21/07/2025

Quality and Affordability of Higher Education

*15. Shri Amrinder Singh Raja Warring:

Will the Minister of Education be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any survey on rising tuition fees in public and private universities recently, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of steps being taken to ensure equitable access to quality faculty and infrastructure in rural institutions;
- (c) whether there are any guidelines to regulate the cost of online and hybrid degree programs under NEP 2020;
- (d) the number and percentage of students from economically weaker sections having access to Central scholarships in higher education;
- (e) the procedure to monitor employability outcomes of graduates from top public universities;
- (f) whether the Government is planning to review accreditation standards for private colleges; and
- (g) the details and the current status of the proposed Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)?

ANSWER

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (g): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY OF PARTS (A) TO (G) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 15 FOR REPLY ON 21.07.2025 REGARDING QUALITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION ASKED BY SHRI AMRINDER SINGH RAJA WARRING.

(a) to (c): NEP 2020 inter-alia provides that public and private schools are to be assessed and accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, emphasizing online and offline public disclosure and transparency. NEP 2020 also proposes similar standards of audit and disclosure as a 'not-for-profit' entity to all the education institutions. Surplus, if any, will be reinvested in the educational sector. Similarly, in higher education, all HEIs- public and private- shall be treated at par observing common guidelines. Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of education.

The Universities are autonomous bodies which are governed by their respective Acts/ Statutes etc. Based on the type of universities, the criteria for fee structure is administered. In respect of IITs/ IIITs / NITs/ IIST/ IIMs etc, the fee structure is regulated as per the provision of the respective Acts/ Statutes. AICTE has issued instructions that institutions shall not directly or indirectly demand or charge capitation fee or demand any donation by way of consideration for admission to any seat in a course. University Grants Commission (Institutions deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2023 inter-alia stipulates that donation or capitation fee in whatever nomenclature or form, either directly or indirectly, is strictly prohibited. The fee shall be fixed transparently, keeping in view non-profiteering or non-commercial aspects. Fee structure in Private Universities is decided either by the State Government concerned / State Private Universities Regulatory Authority or by the Private University Concerned.

UGC has notified the UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 with inter alia objective to provide opportunities for Higher Education to a larger segment of the population and to promote the educational wellbeing of the community in general, the fee structure shall be devised by the HEIs in such a manner that it is affordable to all the stake holders including students from the deprived sections of society.

To ensure equitable access and to enhance the quality of faculty, the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Program (MMTTP) has been re-envisioned and is being implemented through 144 Malaviya Mission Centres, including premier institutions such as IITs, IIMs, Central Universities, State Universities, and others. These centres are enhancing the capacity and skills of faculty through various training programmes. So far, more than 3,900 programmes have been conducted, benefiting more than 2.5 lakh faculty members.

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at funding specific State government universities and colleges, to improve their quality by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards. Third phase of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) was launched in June 2023 in the form of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), with an outlay of Rs. 12926.10 crore, including the committed liabilities of the earlier phase of RUSA, for the period 2023-24 to 2025-26, to cater to the needs of educationally unserved/ underserved areas. Under the scheme, support for infrastructure strengthening is provided to various States/UTs under various component such as Infrastructure Grants to Strengthen Universities (IGU), Infrastructure Grants to Colleges (IGC), Grants to Strengthen Universities (GSU), Grants to Strengthen Colleges (GSC), New Model degree Colleges (NMDC) etc. Under PM-USHA, all the 615 units have been approved in various States /UTs with a total amount of Rs. 8178.71 Crore under various components.

In a major push to strengthen India's higher education infrastructure, 42 new Central Higher Educational Institutions have been established across the country since 2014. The total number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) increased from 51,534 to 60,380, reflecting a 17% rise. Universities grew from 760 to 1,213, colleges from 38,498 to 46,624, and standalone institutions from 12,276 to 12,543.

Student enrollment rose by 30.5%, from 3.42 crore to 4.46 crore. Female enrollment surged by 38.4%, from 1.57 crore to 2.18 crore. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) improved from 23.7 to 29.5, with female GER rising from 22.9 to 30.2, surpassing male GER for six consecutive years. Enrollment among SC, ST, and OBC students increased by 50.1% (46.06 lakh to 69.13 lakh), 75% (16.41 lakh to 28.72 lakh), and 54.6% (1.13 crore to 1.74 crore) respectively. Female enrollment within these groups saw even higher growth: SC (61.2%), ST (96.3%), and OBC (62.9%). Minority student enrollment rose from 21.8 lakh to 32.9 lakh (50.7%), with female minority enrollment increasing from 10.66 lakh to 16.84 lakh (58%). In the North East, total enrollment grew by 36.3%, from 9.36 lakh to 12.76 lakh, with female enrollment slightly higher at 6.59 lakh compared to 6.17 lakh male students.

These figures underscore a decade of expansion, equity, and enhanced access in India's higher education landscape.

(d): The Central Government is implementing various schemes for providing financial assistance to all categories of students for pursuing their higher studies in the country. In Academic Year 2023-24, more than one crore students were granted scholarships for Post-Matric and Higher Education, which included about 39.3 lakh scholarships for Other Backward Classes (OBC), Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) and Denotified Tribes (DNT) students; about 47 lakh scholarships to Scheduled Castes (SC) students and about 20.5 lakh scholarships for ST students.

(e): The employability outcomes of graduates can be monitored through several indicators such as placement record, alumni network, development of relevant skills and attributes etc. National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) has been established under NEP 2020 to ensure higher education qualifications are transparent, multidisciplinary, integrated with vocational courses, outcomes based and employment oriented. The NHEQF has a set of learning descriptors, the difficulty level of which will increase with each higher qualifications. One of the descriptors to describe the qualification levels is "Employability and job ready skills, entrepreneurship skills and capabilities/qualities and mindset.

(f): In line with the vision of NEP, 2020 it is envisaged to ease accreditation through Binary Accreditation from the present 8-point grading system of NAAC, Shift to Maturity-Based Graded Levels (MBGL) from present accreditation methodology, enabling HEIs to systematically improve their quality from 'Level 1' to 'Level 4' as Institutions of National Excellence, and then to 'Level-5' i.e. Institutions of Global Excellence for Multi-Disciplinary Research and Education with focus on mentoring and incentivizing schemes for raising their participation as well as accreditation levels, towards eminence, significance and global acclaim.

(g): The NEP, 2020, envisions a 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment. The NEP, 2020 further envisions setting up of a Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as an umbrella body with independent verticals to performs distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting. Considering the above vision of NEP 2020, the Ministry is in the process of drafting a HECI Bill.
