

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 20
ANSWERED ON 20.07.2026

**ENROLMENT OF GIRL STUDENTS FROM RURAL AREAS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION**

†*20 SHRI AJAY BHATT:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of steps taken by the Government during the last three years to encourage girl students in villages and rural areas enrol for higher education in the country, year and State-wise including Uttarakhand;
- (b) whether any Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) has been entrusted the task of giving adequate publicity through social media in various States to encourage girl students to enrol for higher education; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.20 FOR ANSWER ON 20.07.2026 ASKED BY SHRI
AJAY BHATT, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT REGARDING
ENROLMENT OF GIRL STUDENTS FROM RURAL AREAS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION**

(a) to (c): Education is subject of concurrent list and both Central and State government work collaboratively to ensure comprehensive, and progressive enhancement of overall quality and growth within the education sector. Various schemes/ projects/ programmes run by the Ministry have been aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. NEP 2020 aims to ensure that no child loses opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. It has taken into account the concerns of the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) which inter-alia includes geographical identities such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts and other categories. This policy aims at bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes.

The Ministry has launched the third phase of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) as Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) in June 2023 with an outlay of Rs. 12926.10 crore, including the committed liabilities of the earlier phases to cater to needs of educationally unserved/ underserved areas. The scheme has been further extended till 31st March, 2028 for completion of PM-USHA projects and for additional 6 months (i.e till 30th September, 2026) for completion of ongoing RUSA projects. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at funding specific State government universities and colleges, including in the rural areas, so as to improve their quality by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards. Under PM-USHA, priority is given to Focus Districts which are identified by the concerned States/ UTs based on various criteria including low Gross Enrolment Ratio, Gender Parity, population proportion and enrolment proportion for females, transgenders, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, Aspirational/ Border Area/ Left Wing Extremism prone district, etc. In particular, the Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiatives (GIEI) component of PM-USHA inter-alia also envisages to improve girls' enrolment in higher education, particularly in focus districts, by promoting their greater participation in STEM, vocational and other professional courses.

The Central Government has taken various measures to promote higher education among the students across the nation including women, such as fee reductions, establishment of more institutes, scholarships, priority access to national level scholarships to aid students with poor financial backgrounds to pursue their education.

University Grants Commission (UGC) is implementing scholarship scheme "National Scholarship for Post Graduate Studies (NSPG)" to provide scholarship to students pursuing Post Graduate Programs. UGC is also providing fellowships to pursue Ph.D. in all disciplines including STEM education, under UGC NET-Junior Research Fellowship and Savitribai Jyoti Rao Phule Single Girl Child Fellowship.

Apart from this, UGC is implementing the scheme of “Development of Women’s Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges”. This scheme provides funds for setting up Women Studies Centers (WSCs) in universities and colleges, focusing on teaching, research, curriculum development, training and outreach activities. The objectives of the scheme are to provide financial support in advancing Women’s Studies through teaching, research and practical work.

Similarly, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) also offers various scholarships like AICTE Pragati Scholarship Scheme for Women (Degree & Diploma), AICTE PG scholarship Scheme, AICTE Doctoral Fellowship (ADF), AICTE Saksham Scholarship Scheme (Degree & Diploma) and AICTE Swanath Scholarship Scheme (Degree & Diploma). AICTE has also launched the AICTE Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF) scheme in June 2024 from the academic year 2024-25 for girls and boys of AICTE approved Institutions.

Further, with a view to improve female enrolment in the Undergraduate Programmes in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and National Institutes of Technology (NITs), supernumerary seats were created which increased the female enrolment from less than 10% to more than 20%. Women constitute around 43% of enrolment in STEM education, one of the highest in the world.

Budget announcement 2026-27 envisages establishment of one girls’ hostel in every district to support women’s participation in STEM as in higher education STEM Institutions prolonged hours of study and laboratory work pose some challenges for girl students.

As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE): 2023-24, the female enrolment in higher education has increased in the country over the last three years, rising from 2.06 crore in 2021-22 to 2.23 crore in 2023-24. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for females increased from 28.5 in 2021-22 to 31.2 in 2023-24. Throughout this period, the female GER consistently remained higher than the male GER, resulting in a Gender Parity Index (GPI) greater than 1. This indicates that female participation in higher education has surpassed male participation during these years.

For the State of Uttarakhand, female enrolment increased from 2.82 lakh in 2021-22 to 3.24 lakh in 2023-24. The GER for females in Uttarakhand increased from 43.7 in 2021-22 to 51.7 in 2023-24 which is significantly higher than the All-India female GER (31.2) in 2023-24. The GPI remained above 1 throughout the last three years reflecting higher participation of females than males in higher education in the State.
