

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1204
ANSWERED ON 27/07/2026

Discontinuation of Higher Studies due to Rising Education Costs

†1204. Shri Ram Shiromani Verma:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that a large number of students from economically weaker sections and rural families across the country are compelled to discontinue their studies at graduation level and beyond due to the rising cost of higher education, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to implement any policy or scheme to provide free and quality education up to the graduation level for all students across the country, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Government is formulating any special action plan for the establishment and strengthening of higher education institutions, professional colleges and skill development centres in aspirational and border districts such as Shrivasthi and Balrampur, if so, the details thereof and the timeline fixed for the same?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a) to (c): Education is in the concurrent list. Both Central and State Governments work for the development of education. In the higher education sector, students have multiple options and they choose and migrate from one course or programme or institute/university to another. In line with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has notified the Guidelines for Multiple Entry and Exit in Academic Programmes offered in Higher Education Institutions, facilitating flexible learning pathways and academic mobility through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC). As a result of these initiatives, India's

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education increased from 23.7 in 2014–15 to 30 in 2023–24. The rise in GER has been accompanied by significant growth in student enrolment, with total higher education enrolment increasing from 3.42 crore in 2014–15 to 4.50 crore in 2023–24, adding more than 1.08 crore students to the higher education system.

The Government is implementing various scholarship schemes for providing financial assistance to students for pursuing higher education, subject to extant scheme guidelines. The Post-Matric scholarship schemes for SC, ST, OBC and minority are Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented by States and UTs and administered by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Minority Affairs. Under these scholarship schemes, the benefits are extended to all the students belonging to SC, ST and OBC, subject to their parental income ceiling and as per scheme guidelines.

Department of Higher Education (DHE) implements the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP) Yojana under which students get financial assistance for pursuing higher education in the country, as per Scheme guidelines. In addition, the Government of India has launched the PM-Vidyalaxmi, a new central sector scheme in November 2024, with the objective to ensure that no student is denied the opportunity to pursue higher education due to financial constraints. Under the scheme, collateral-free and guarantor-free education loan is provided to all the students who get merit-based admission in top Quality Higher Education Institutions (QHEIs) and who desire to avail the education loan. Further, for students with annual family income up to ₹ 8 lakh, the scheme provides 3% interest subvention on loans up to ₹ 10 lakhs. Since the launch of this scheme on 6th November, 2024 till 21st July, 2026, 112817 collateral-free and guarantor-free PM Vidyalaxmi education loans have been sanctioned. The amount sanctioned is ₹ 15,634.78 crore.

In 2025-26, about 1.09 crore students were granted scholarships for Post-Matric and Higher Education. This includes about 36 lakh scholarships for Other Backward Classes (OBC), Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) and Denotified Tribes (DNT) students; about 48 lakh scholarships for Scheduled Castes (SC) students; and about 24 lakh scholarships for Scheduled Tribes (ST) students.

Further, to make higher education affordable in institutions like Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and National Institutes of Technology (NITs), relaxations in tuition fee of Under Graduate (UG) program is provided not only to the socially weaker sections but also to the economically backward sections of the society. This includes complete fee waiver for Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes and PwD students & full remission of fee for economically backward students (whose family income is less than ₹ 1 lakh per annum) and also 2/3rd

remission of fee for other economically backward students (whose family income is between ₹ 1 lakh to ₹ 5 lakh per annum).

The Government has taken several measures to strengthen Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in line with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. According to All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)'s portal, number of University/ University Level Institutions, Colleges and Stand-alone Institutions in the Country rose to 1395, 53197 and 16577 respectively. Since 2014, 16 Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT), 8 Central Universities (CU), 8 Indian Institute of Management (IIM), 7 Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), 2 Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), 1 National Institute of Technology (NIT) and 12 new AIIMS have been established. Further, in pursuance of the Budget announcement 2025-26, Government has approved expansion of academic and infrastructure capacity including creation of Research Park of five new IITs which had been established in the State/UT of Andhra Pradesh (IIT Tirupati), Kerala (IIT Palakkad), Chhattisgarh (IIT Bhilai), Jammu & Kashmir (IIT Jammu) and Karnataka (IIT Dharwad) with a total outlay of ₹ 11,828.79 crore, which would facilitate education for additional 6500 students. Besides the above, the Government has approved a total of ₹ 1942 crore for expansion of academic & hostel infrastructure, and development of Research Park for IIT Jodhpur, IIT Patna, IIT Indore through Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA).

To support skill development, the SWAYAM Plus portal has also been launched, focusing on upskilling and reskilling the workforce. More than 500 courses have been developed curated from 89 industry partners across 17 sectors and offered on emerging areas such as AI, Data Analyst etc. So far, more than 6,00,000 students registered on the platform. The National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS) bridges the gap between academic learning and industry requirements by providing structured on-the-job training to graduates and diploma holders.

In alignment with NEP 2020, the Government has launched the third phase of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in June 2023 in the form of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) with an outlay of ₹12926.10 crore including the committed liabilities of the earlier phases of RUSA, to cater to the needs of educationally unserved/underserved areas. 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. The support is provided to States/UTs

for strengthening infrastructure, including construction of hostels, academic and administrative buildings, laboratories and other facilities required for improving access and quality in higher education. Under the scheme, 204 units have been approved in the State of Uttar Pradesh, with total approved amount of ₹1942.27 crore, including support of ₹12 crore each for the establishment of New Model Degree Colleges in Balrampur and Shravasti districts.
