

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 175
ANSWERED ON 20.07.2026**

Integration of Skill Development into Higher Education Curriculum

†175. Shri Buntty Vivek Sahu:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to integrate skill development into the higher education curriculum, promote research and improve the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) under the National Education Policy (NEP 2020);
- (b) the financial and infrastructural support provided by the Government to ensure equal access to higher education for students from disadvantaged and tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh; and
- (c) whether the Government is working on any special scheme to connect the youth of tribal/remote areas of Chhindwara district with vocational courses and to increase the facilities of multidisciplinary education and accreditation at the local level and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a): The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 envisages integration of skill development and vocational education with mainstream higher education to enhance employability, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning. UGC has notified the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF), aligned with the National Credit Framework (NCrF), to enable integration of general, vocational and experiential learning. The National Credit Framework facilitates credit accumulation and transfer across academic, vocational and skill education, while the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) supports seamless academic mobility. UGC has also issued Guidelines for Internship/Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (IEDP), enabling undergraduate students to acquire industry-relevant skills through structured internships and apprenticeships integrated with their degree programmes.

AICTE is actively strengthening skill development by embedding it into technical education. It partners with industries and institutions to offer online skill courses aligned with the regular curriculum, along with skill-focused programmes, compulsory internships, and vocational degrees such as Bachelor of Vocation (B.Voc). These initiatives are designed to build students' practical abilities and improve employability. Additionally, AICTE has signed MoUs with leading industries and organisations to support internships, skill-building, and faculty upskilling, including hands-on exposure to Industry 4.0 technologies.

Employability Skill module has been included as a part of Job Roles/SWAYAM courses in the curriculum which includes Communication Skills, Self-Management Skills, Information and Communication Technology Skills, Entrepreneurship Skills, and Green Skills.

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. The Scheme promotes industry-integrated education through Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (AEDP), supports apprenticeships in emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), and facilitates academic credit integration through the NATS Assessment and Creditisation Framework. During the last five financial years, over 12.94 lakh apprentices have been engaged under the Scheme. The NATS 2.0 Portal, launched on 30.07.2024, has further strengthened the apprenticeship ecosystem by enabling participation of over 11,355 Higher Education Institutions and more than 15,840 establishments.

To boost research and innovation, the Government has established the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), which seeks to harness the research potential of universities and colleges, support academic research, and facilitate translational research in emerging technologies and national priority areas. Other initiatives such as the Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF), Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC), IMPRINT, Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY) and Institutions of Eminence (IoE) continue to enhance research capacity, innovation and collaboration between academia, industry and international institutions.

The Government has taken various measures to increase the GER in Higher Education, which inter-alia includes, Setting up of more Higher Education Institutions; Implementing various Scholarship and Fellowship schemes for providing financial assistance to students, including for SC/ST/OBC and Minority students and underserved regions; Allowing well performing HEIs (based on NAAC and NIRF ranking) by University Grants Commission (UGC) to offer full Open Distance Learning/Online Programmes based on quality parameters; Providing much-needed flexibility and appropriate Exit as well as entry options in the Higher Education system, to facilitate students to choose their learning trajectory; Allow pursuing two Academic Programmes simultaneously; Permitting HEIs for two admission cycles in an academic year; Providing anytime, anywhere learning opportunities for all learners through Study Webs for Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) platform, which provides high quality structured online courses in multiple disciplines; Permitting up to 40% credits in regular courses using SWAYAM platform; and Conducting JEE, NEET (UG) and Common University Entrance Test (CUET) Exams in 13 languages, and making available Text Books in Indian Languages to facilitate students, particularly from vernacular/rural background. As a result of these initiatives, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has increased to 30% in 2023-24.

(b): In order to provide equity in access for disadvantaged groups, the Central Government implements various scholarship and financial assistance schemes to support students belonging to marginalised sections across country including Madhya Pradesh. Department of Higher Education (DHE) implements the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP) Yojana under which students pursuing higher education in India, including SC, ST, OBC and minority students get scholarships as per Scheme guidelines.

In addition, the Government of India has launched the PM-Vidyalaxmi, a new central sector scheme in November 2024 to facilitate access to collateral-free and guarantor-free education loans for meritorious students pursuing higher education.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs is also implementing two Central Sector Schemes- National Fellowship for Higher Education for ST students and National Scholarship for Higher Education for ST students (Top Class).

Further, National Overseas Scholarship for ST students is implemented through the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the funds are released to ST students studying abroad through Embassies. Ministry of Tribal Affairs further reimburse the funds to MEA.

The Department of Higher Education, Government of India is implementing Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at funding specific State government universities and colleges, so as to improve their quality by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards. In alignment with National Education Policy (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) for the period 2023-24 to 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs. 12,926.10 crore, including the committed liabilities of the earlier phases of RUSA, to cater to the needs of educationally unserved/underserved areas. The scheme has been further extended till 31st March, 2028. 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 district etc. Under the scheme, the State of Madhya Pradesh have been approved a total of 142 units amounting to Rs. 1128.17 crore.

(c): The 142 units approved for Madhya Pradesh include approval of 4 units *vis* Govt. Science College, Pandhurna, Govt Autonomous PG College, Rajmata Scindia, Govt. Girls PG college and Govt. Pench Valley PG College Parasia amounting to Rs. 11 crore in the Chhindwara district. Under the scheme, States/UTs are supported to promote industry-academia collaboration through start-up incubation centres, internships and apprenticeships, skill-based and vocational courses, placement and certification programmes, and targeted skilling initiatives for women, transgender persons and other underserved groups.

The Government has undertaken several measures to promote multidisciplinary and flexible higher education—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).

Under Skill India Program (SIP), the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) delivers skill, re-skill and up-skill training through an extensive network of skill development centres under three sub-schemes, viz. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), and National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) to all the sections of the society across the country. SIP aims at enabling youth of India to get future ready and equipped with industry relevant skills.

To strengthen the quality of higher education, institutions are encouraged to obtain accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), and reforms are being undertaken to expand accreditation coverage and strengthen the accreditation ecosystem. NAAC evaluates institutions on various parameters including teaching-learning, research, infrastructure, governance and institutional best practices, and awards accreditation grades based on their performance. The accreditation process promotes quality assurance, accountability, research and innovation, and serves as an important benchmark for institutional excellence and continuous improvement in higher education. Currently around 497 Universities and 7,566 HEIs across the country are accredited including 21 Universities and 225 Colleges from Madhya Pradesh.
