

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 68
ANSWERED ON 20.07.2026

Expansion of Higher Education Ecosystem under NEP, 2020

68. Thiru Dr. S Jagathratchakan:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the progress made in expansion of the higher education ecosystem in the country in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 particularly with regard to higher enrolment, improved access and enhanced educational opportunities, with specific reference to the State of Tamil Nadu;
- (b) the details of the key findings emerging from the current distribution of universities and colleges, including regional disparities, infrastructure deficiencies and gaps in access to higher education facilities across different parts of the country;
- (c) the developments observed in efforts to improve availability of higher education institutions and strengthen educational infrastructure in underserved regions; and
- (d) the course of action proposed by the Government for ensuring balanced expansion and equitable access to higher education institutions across all regions of the country?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): Education is in Concurrent List of the Constitution and majority of the Higher Education Institutions are in the domain of the respective States. The Centre and States together endeavor to uplift the educational status of the students of the country, especially in the under-served areas and the disadvantaged communities.

As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), enrolment in higher education has increased to 4.5 crore in 2023-24 from 3.42 crore in 2014-15 (an increase of 31.5%). Overall GER has reached to 30 in 2023-24 from 23.7 in 2014-15.

In the State of Tamil Nadu, enrolment has increased to 35.77 lakh in 2023-24 from 33.53 lakh in 2014-15. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has increased to 52.3 in 2023-24 from 44.6 in 2014-15.

To cater to needs of educationally unserved/ underserved areas, the Ministry of Education has been implementing the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) scheme, which envisages improvement in access, equity and excellence in State Higher Education system through support under various components viz., Multi- Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU), Grants to Strengthen Universities (Accredited & Unaccredited Universities), Grants to Strengthen Colleges (Accredited & Unaccredited Colleges), New Model Degree Colleges and Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiatives. 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 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, 613 units have been approved with a total amount of Rs.8,168.51 crore.

Union Cabinet in its meeting held in May, 2025 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 Rs. 11,828.79 crore. The government has also approved a total of Rs. 1,942 Crore for expansion of academic & hostel infrastructure, and development of Research Park for IIT Jodhpur, IIT Patna and IIT Indore through Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA).

As per AISHE, the total number of registered Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) has increased to 64,756 in 2023-24 from 51,534 in 2014-15.

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), also strive towards enhancing access and equity to higher education through distance mode. It pays special attention to disadvantaged sections of the society and regions by establishing study centres in the backward areas and districts.

Union Budget 2026-27 has announced setting up of 5 University Townships in the vicinity of major industrial and logistic corridors and 1 girls' hostel in every district through Viability Gap Funding /capital support to encourage enrolment of girls in STEM institutes/ courses.

Setting up of higher education institutions is an ongoing process. Depending on the need, educational institutions are opened from time to time. The Central Higher Education Institutions/Universities are envisaged as pace setting institutions to provide academic leadership to other institutions in the region.
