Report No
381

सत्यमेव जयते

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, WOMEN, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND SPORTS

THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FIRST REPORT ON

Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Three Hundred and Sixty Fourth Report on Demands for Grants (2025-26) of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education

(Presented to Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 16th June, 2026)
(Forwarded to Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha on 16th June, 2026)

भारतीय संसद, राज्य सभा

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA,
RAJYA SABHA

Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi
June, 2026 / Jyeshtha, 1948, (Saka)

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Hindi version of this publication is also available

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Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi
June, 2026 / Jyeshtha, 1948, (Saka)

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*To be annexed later

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE
(Constituted *w.e.f.* 26th September, 2025)

1. **Shri Digvijaya Singh - Chairman**

RAJYA SABHA
2. %
3. Dr. Sikander Kumar
4. Shri C. Sadanandan Master
5. #
6. @
7. Shrimati Rekha Sharma
8. Dr. Bhim Singh
9. Shri Ghanshyam Tiwari
10. Ms Swati Maliwal*

LOK SABHA
11. Shri Brijmohan Agrawal
12. Dr. Angomcha Bimol Akoijam
13. Shrimati Rachna Banerjee
14. Shrimati Shobhanaben Mahendrasinh Baraiya
15. Shri Darshan Singh Choudhary
16. Shri Jitendra Kumar Dohare
17. Prof. Varsha Eknath Gaikwad
18. Shri Abhijit Gangopadhyay
19. Dr. Hemang Joshi
20. Shri Amar Sharadrao Kale
21. Shri Kalipada Saren Kherwal
22. Adv Dean Kuriakose
23. Dr. Sambit Patra
24. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
25. Dr. D Purandeswari
26. Shri Rajeev Rai
27. Shri Zia Ur Rehman
28. Shri Karan Bhushan Singh
29. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
30. Shri Kamakhya Prasad Tasa
31. Dr. T Sumathy alias Thamizhachi Thangapandian

*Nominated *w.e.f.* 16.10.2025
Vacant *w.e.f.* 05.01.2026
%Vacant *w.e.f* 02.04.2026
@Vacant w.e.f 06.05.2026

SECRETARIAT
Dr. K.S. Somashekhar, Secretary
Shri Vimal Kumar, Joint Secretary
Shri Jayanta Kumar Mallick, Director
Shri Devashish Sen, Deputy Secretary
Shri Dhananjay Singh Yadav, Assistant Committee Officer

PREFACE

I, the Chairman of the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on its behalf, do hereby present this Three Hundred and Eighty First Report of the Committee on the Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations contained in the Three Hundred and Sixty Fourth Report of the Committee on "Demands for Grants (2025-26) of the Department of Higher Education", which was presented to the Rajya Sabha and laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 26th March, 2025.

2. The Action Taken Notes in respect of Recommendations contained in above mentioned Report were received from the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education *vide* their communication dated 16th February, 2026.

3. The Committee considered the draft Report and adopted the same in its meeting held on 1st June, 2026.

NEW DELHI
1st June, 2026
Jyeshtha 11,*1948 (Saka)*

Shri Digvijaya Singh
Chairman
Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports

ACRONYMS

ABC	*Academic Bank of Credit*
AI	*Artificial Intelligence*
AISHE	*All India Survey of Higher Education*
AICTE	*All India Council for Technical Education*
ANRF	*Anusandhan National Research Foundation*
AQIS	*AICTE Quality Improvement Schemes*
ASEAN	*Association of Southeast Asian Nations*
ATN	*Action Taken Note*
AE	*Actual Expenditure*
BE	*Budget Estimates*
B.Ed.	*Bachelor of Education*
BoGs	*Boards of Governance*
BHU	*Banaras Hindu University*
BOAT	*Board of Apprenticeship Training*
BOPT	*Board of Practical Training*
CABE	*Central Advisory Board of Education*
CAG	*Comptroller and Auditor General*
CAGR	*Compound Annual Growth Rate*
CoE	*Centre of Excellence*
CeNSE	*Centre for Nano-Science and Engineering*
CFIs	*Cognitive Funded Institutions*
CFTIs	*Centrally Funded Technical Institutes*
CGFSEL	*Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme For Education Loan*
CIIL	*Central Institute of Indian Languages*
CIT	*Central Institute of Technology*
CMU	*Carnegie Mellon University*
CPWD	*Central Public Works Department*

CS	*Central Sector*
CSIR	*Council of Scientific & Industrial Research*
CSIS	*Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme*
CSR	*Corporate Social Responsibility*
CSSS	*Champion Services Sector Scheme*
CUs	*Central Universities*
CUET	*Common University Entrance Test*
CUHS	*Central University of Himalayan Studies*
DA	*Dearness Allowance*
DBT	*Department of Bio-Technology*
DFG	*Demands for Grants*
DFS	*Department of Financial Services*
DoHE	*Department of Higher Education*
DPIIT	*Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade*
DRDO	*Defence Research and Development Organisation*
DST	*Department of Science and Technology*
DTH	*Direct to Home*
EAP	*Externally Aided Programme*
EWS	*Economically Weaker Section*
FY	*Financial Year*
GER	*Gross Enrolment Ratio*
GFR	*General Financial Rule*
GIAN	*Global Initiative of Academic Network*
GoI	*Government of India*
HEFA	*Higher Education Financing Agency*
HEIs	*Higher Education Institutions*
HESPIS	*Higher Education Statistics and Public Information System*
IGNOU	*Indira Gandhi National Open University*
IIIT	*Indian Institute of Information Technology*

IIM	*Indian Institute of Management*
IISc	*Indian Institute of Science*
IISER	*Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research*
IIT	*Indian Institute of Technology*
IKS	*Indian Knowledge System*
IoE	*Institute of Eminence*
INI	*Institutes of National Importance*
JNU	*Jawaharlal Nehru University*
JRF	*Junior Research Fellowship*
KPI	*Key Performance Indicators*
MERITE	*Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education*
MMTTC	*Malaviya Mission Teachers Training Centres*
MMTTP	*Malaviya Mission Teachers Training Programme*
MoE	*Ministry of Education*
MoU	*Memorandum of Understanding*
MSME	*Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises*
NAAC	*National Assessment and Accreditation Council*
NATS	*National Apprenticeship Training Scheme*
NBA	*National Board of Accreditation*
NCrF	*National Credit Framework*
NDLI	*National Digital Library of India*
NEP	*National Educational Policy*
NERIST	*North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology*
NER	*North-Eastern Region*
NET	*National Eligibility Test*
NIEPA	*National Institute of Education Planning and Administration*
NIFFT	*National Institute of Foundry and Forge Technology*
NIRF	*National Institutional Ranking Framework*

NIT	*National Institute of Technology*
NITTTRs	*National Institutes of Technical Teachers Training & Research*
NKN	*National Knowledge Network*
NMEICT	*National Mission on Education though Information and Communication Technology*
NRF	*National Research Foundation*
NSP	*National Scholarship Portal*
OBC	*Other Backward Classes*
OCE	*Other Central Expenditure*
ONOS	*One Nation One Subscription*
PMMMNMTT	*Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching*
PMRF	*Prime Minister Research Fellowship*
PM-USHA	*Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan*
PM-USP	*Prime Minister - Uchhatar Shiksha Protsahan*
PM-VL	*Pradhan Mantri Vidyalaxmi*
PPPAC	*Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee*
PwD	*Persons with Disabilities*
QHEIs	*Quality Higher Education Institutions*
RE	*Revised Estimates*
RUSA	*Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan*
SII	*Study in India*
SLIET	*Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology*
SPARC	*Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration*
UC	*Utilization Certificate*
UGC	*University Grants Commission*
VGF	*Viability Gap Funding*

REPORT

The Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in its 364th Report on "Demands for Grants (2025-26) of the Department of Higher Education" pertaining to the Ministry of Education, which was presented to the Rajya Sabha and laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 26th March, 2025.

2. The Action Taken Notes in respect of Observations/Recommendations contained in above mentioned Report were received from the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education *vide* their communication received on 16th February, 2026. These have been categorized as follows:

Chapter I:	**Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government**
Paras:	2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, 2.18, 2.20, 2.21, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.3.6, 3.3.7, 3.4.5, 3.4.10, 3.5.4, 3.5.5, 3.6.6, 3.7.2, 3.7.4, 3.7.5, 3.8.2, 3.8.3, 3.9.8, 3.11.1, 3.12.3, 3.12.4, 3.12.5, 3.12.6, 3.12.7, 3.13.3, 3.13.9, 3.13.10, 3.13.11, 3.13.12, 3.14.14, 3.14.15, 3.14.16, 3.14.17, 3.15.5, 3.15.6, 3.16.12, 3.16.13, 3.16.14, 3.16.18, 3.16.19, 3.17.10, 3.17.11, 3.17.12, 3.18.3, 3.18.4, 3.19.1, 3.21.2, 3.21.3, 3.21.4, 3.21.5, 3.22.2, 3.23.2, 3.24.2 Total - 61
Chapter II:	**Observations/Recommendations which the Committee does not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies**
Paras:	2.22, 2.23, 3.3.9, 3.4.4, 3.6.5, 3.7.6, 3.9.10, 3.10.2, 3.13.16, 3.13.17, 3.16.7, 3.16.8, 3.16.11, 3.16.20, 3.17.9, 3.17.13, 3.18.5, 3.19.2, 3.21.1, 3.22.1, 3.22.4, 3.23.3, 3.23.8 Total - 23
Chapter III:	**Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee**
Paras:	3.3.8, 3.3.10, 3.9.9, 3.13.13, 3.13.14, 3.13.15, 3.16.9, 3.16.15, 3.16.16, 3.16.17, 3.18.2, 3.20.1, 3.22.3, 3.23.4, 3.23.5, 3.23.6, 3.23.7, 3.24.1 Total - 18
Chapter-IV:	**Observation/recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government is still awaited**
Paras:	NIL

CHAPTER I

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2025-26) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Recommendation

1. The Committee observes that the percentage increase in the Department of Higher Education's BE 2025-26 vis-à-vis BE allocation 2024-25 is lower than in previous year. The Committee feels that in view of the inflationary trends in the country, the allocation should increase at least 8% to 10% to accommodate inflation, to maintain the existing standards for expenditure by the Department of Higher Education and to avoid decline in actual allocation/expenditure for Higher Education Sector. The current allocations are, therefore, underwhelmed – especially in the context of the need for adequate resources to implement the NEP.

(Para 2.5 ibid)

Action Taken

It is stated that the allocation of funds in the Department is based on the requirements of the respective Bureaus within the overall budget ceiling allotted to the Department by the Ministry of Finance. In case of additional requirement, the provision may be made at RE stage. It is submitted that BE for 2025-26 is Rs. 50,077.95 Cr. However, it is enhanced to Rs. 51,381.67 Cr at RE stage.

Recommendation

2. From the above Table, it is evident that Rs. 47,619.77 Crores has been allocated under BE 2024-25 which has been decreased to Rs. 46,482.35 Crores at RE stage, whereas the Actual Expenditure is Rs. 33,938.88 Crores only (as on 31.12.2024). In this regard, the Committee would like to refer to Rule 56(3) of General Financial Rules (GFR), which states that rush to expenditure particularly in the closing months of financial year shall be regarded as a breach of financial propriety and shall be avoided. As per their guidelines, the last quarter expenditure must be limited to actual procurement of goods and services and reimbursement of expenditure already occurred. Ministry of Finance's instructions seeks to restrict last quarter expenditure to 33 per cent ceiling and last month (March) expenditure to 15 per cent ceiling.

(Para 2.7 ibid)

3. In backdrop of the Actual expenditure by Department of Higher Education during 2024-25 and Rule 56(3) of General Financial Rules (GFR), Ministry of Finance, the Committee recommends the Department to adhere to Rule 56(3) of GFR and to streamline its expenditure during FY 2025-26 to optimize the utilization of funds allocated to it and to avoid piling up of expenditure during the last quarter of the financial year.

(Para 2.8 ibid)

Action Taken

It is stated that the actual expenditure at the end of FY 2024-25 was Rs. 44055.44 Cr. Funds amounting to Rs. 33,938.88 Crores were certified till 31.12.2024. However, actual expenditure as on 31.12.2024 was Rs. 33569.05 Crore. Further, the actual expenditure incurred during the fourth quarter was Rs 10,486.39 Cr, which was within the ceiling of 33 per cent in the last Quarter and 15 per cent in the last month (March) as instructed by MoF. The recommendation/observations of the committee to avoid the rush of expenditure has been respectfully noted.

Recommendation

4. The Committee appreciates the total expenditure on Higher Education as a percentage of GDP during the period 2019 to 2021 vis-a-vis the expenditure of other world, SAARC countries, G-8 and G-20 countries. However, the Gross Enrolment Ratio of Males and Females during the last five years i.e. during the period 2018-2023 (51.4-51.3% for Male & 48.6-48.7% for Female) in the Higher Education Sector has not registered any significant growth for the purpose of employment and optimal development of human resources. The Committee therefore, recommends that the percentage of expenditure should be enhanced further in consonance with the NEP 2020'stargets for the year 2035.

(Para 2.12 ibid)

Recommendation

5. The Committee takes note of the recommendation of NEP 2020 which unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central Government and all the State Governments to reach 6% of GDP. However, the Committee is constrained to note that the total expenditure on education (including all Central Ministries and all States/UTs) as percentage of GDP stands at 4.12% for the year 2021-22, which is far lower than recommendation of NEP 2020. The Committee also notes that SAARC countries like Bhutan and Maldives are spending 7.47% and 4.67% of their GDP respectively in 2022, as against 4.12% spending on Education by India.

(Para 2.13 ibid)

Recommendation

6. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry of Education should make sincere efforts to increase the spending on education in the country to 6% of the GDP as endorsed and recommended by the NEP 2020.The Ministry of Education should sincerely seek additional funds from the Ministry of Finance to make spending on education at 6% of GDP feasible, thereby strengthening and augmenting the public education system from school education to higher education truly world class and accessible to all sections of the society.

(Para 2.14 ibid)

Recommendation

7. The Committee taking note of the figures furnished at Line Graph/Chart 1 above, observes that public spending as percentage of GDP on education has not been consistent. During 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17, total expenditure on education by Centre and States as percentage of GDP has been 4.07%, 4.20% and 4.24% respectively. However, it has decreased to 3.87%, 3.90% and 4.04% of GDP during 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively. It later increased to 4.36% of GDP during 2020-21 and again declined to 4.12 during 2021-22.

Similarly, total spending on education as percentage of GDP has also declined from 1.07%, 1.04% and 1.09% during 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 respectively to 0.97%, 0.96%, 1.01%, 1.04%, and 1.02% of GDP during 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 respectively.

(Para 2.15 ibid)

Recommendation

8. *The Committee recommends that the share as percentage of GDP spending on education should be increased and maintained consistently in expenditure on education by Central Government so as to achieve the target set in NEP 2020.*

(Para 2.16 ibid)

Recommendation

9. *While planning scheme and non-scheme expenditure on higher education, it's important to balance targeted interventions (schemes) with recurring and essential operational costs (non-scheme expenditures). The Scheme expenditures are program-specific investments aimed at improving access, quality, and infrastructure in higher education, whereas the Non-Scheme expenditures are essential costs required for the functioning of higher education institutions. The Committee is of the view that prioritization of scheme expenditure with enhanced allocations for long-term improvements while ensuring adequate non-scheme funding for sustainability is required to ensure efficient use of resources.*

(Para 2.18 ibid)

Recommendation

10. *The Committee observes that there is 5.16%increase in BE 2025-26 in comparison to BE 2024-25. The Department had made projections of Rs. 56,993.56 crores to the Ministry of Finance for 2025-26. However, the actual allocation to the Department is Rs. 50,077.95 Crores which reflects a decrease to the tune of nearly 12% between projections made to the Ministry of Finance and actual allocation made to Department of Higher Education in BE 2025-26.*

(Para 2.20 ibid)

Action Taken

It is stated that total projection for BE is made to M/o Finance by the Finance Division of the Department based on the requirements projected by respective Bureaus of Department.

However, actual allocation (BE) of Department is decided by Ministry of Finance based on the available resources and the same is then distributed among the budget lines of the Department accordingly, keeping in view the requirements and pace of expenditure.

At RE stage, all possible efforts are made by the Department to seek additional funds from Ministry of Finance so that no requirements get hampered due to any curtailment of demands.

It is respectfully submitted that BE for the 2025-26 is Rs. 50,077.95 Cr. However, it is enhanced to Rs. 51,381.67 Cr at RE stage

One of the fundamental principles of NEP 2020 is ‘substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation’. Accordingly, NEP 2020 unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central government and all State Governments to reach 6% of GDP. The Policy also calls for the rejuvenation, active promotion, and support for private philanthropic activity in the education sector. In particular, over and above the public budgetary support which would have been otherwise provided to them, any public institution can take initiatives towards raising private philanthropic funds to enhance educational experiences.

The Centre and the States / UTs work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP. Various schemes/projects/programmes run by Ministry of Education have been aligned with NEP 2020. As far as Central Government is concerned, it has increased its Budget allocation from Rs. 93,224.31 Crore for the year 2021-22 to Rs. 1,04,277.72 Crore for the year 2022-23, to Rs. 1,12,899.47 Cr. for the year 2023-24, to Rs. 1,21,117.77 Crore for the year 2024-25 and Rs. 1,28,650.05 Crore for the year 2025-26.

As per the "Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education 2019-20 to 2021-22", Public Expenditure (Centre and States) on Education in India is 4.12% of GDP in 2021-22, which has grown from 3.84% in 2013-14.

Notwithstanding above, the Department is committed for making available funds from within the available resources and matter is being taken up with the Ministry of Finance from time to time.

In the Budget 2026-27 the overall Budget Allocation in FY 2026-27 is Rs. 55727.22 Cr with an overall increase of Rs. 5649.27 Cr (11.28%) in the Budget Allocation of Department of Higher Education in the FY 2026-27 with respect to FY 2025-26.

Budget announcement for FY 2026-27 includes establishment of 1 girls' hostel in every district through Viability Gap Funding /capital support; and setting up of 5 University Townships in the vicinity of major industrial and logistic corridors.

Recommendation

11. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Department to undertake review of the Projections made to Ministry of Finance and actual allocations to the Department in respect of each scheme run by the Department wherein there is gap between Projections and allocations. The Committee also recommends that the Department monitor the physical and financial progress of the schemes, so that these schemes do not suffer due to shortage of funds. Such an objective review will help the Department to seek additional funds at the RE stage for the FY 2025-26 to facilitate proper and effective implementation of the schemes.

(Para 2.21 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted. In the starting of the year, funds are allocated to the institutes based on expenditure incurred by the institutes in the previous years, demand of the institutes and funds allocated by Ministry of Finance. Subsequently further demands are addressed at the time of revised estimates and 1st & 2nd supplementary grants.

ALL INDIA COUNCIL OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION (AICTE)

Recommendation

12. From the above Table, it is evident that the BE allocations of Rs. 420.00 Crores and Rs.400.00 crores for the FYs 2023-24 and 2024-25 respectively, was reduced to Rs.352.25 Crores and Rs. 214 Crores at the RE stage, whereas the Actual Expenditure is Rs.300.28 Crores and Rs. 147.27 Crores only. In this regard, the Committee would like to refer to Rule 56(3) of General Financial Rules (GFR), which states that rush to expenditure particularly in the closing *months of financial year shall be regarded as a breach of financial propriety and shall be avoided. As per their guidelines, the last quarter expenditure must be limited to the actual procurement of goods and services and reimbursement of expenditure already occurred. Ministry of Finance's instructions seeks to restrict the last quarter expenditure to the 33 per cent ceiling and the last month (March) expenditure to the 15 per cent ceiling. The Committee recommends that the Department adhere to Rule 56(3) of GFR and to streamline its expenditure during FY 2025-26 to optimize the utilization of funds allocated to it and to avoid piling up of expenditure during the last quarter of the financial year.*

(Para 3.2.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted. It is submitted that the expenditure under AICTE Scholarship Schemes has been high during the last quarter of the mentioned financial years, due to the fact that the last date for submission and verification of applications under Pragati, Saksham and Swanath Scholarship Schemes is 15th January each year. Since disbursement of the Scholarships to selected students under these Schemes, were to be completed in the quarter, the actual expenditure increased during the last quarter. For further streamlining the process of disbursal of scholarships the methodologies are being finalized in consultation with the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) team and NICSI.

Recommendation

13. In view of the digital revolution in India and world over, it is pertinent that enhanced focus should be on emerging technologies in order to build up a pool of human resource that are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in the 21st-century workforce. The Committee therefore, recommends that the AICTE prioritize the rapid integration of curriculum related to emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cyber Security, and Quantum Computing that requires regularly updating model curriculums. Further, the Committee recommends that steps should be taken for facilitating faculty training in these new areas of technological advancement along with promoting Industry-Academia collaborations for practical learning through mandatory industry internships and projects for skill development and employability. Training should emphasize how technology can enhance teaching and learning, not just how to use specific tools.

(Para 3.2.3 ibid)

Action Taken

Keeping in view New Education Policy (NEP 2020), AICTE has innovated in its role to transform from a mere regulator to a facilitator and an enabler in the country-

Faculty Development Programme (FDP) of New Emerging Technology

AICTE has launched several training programs and faculty development initiatives to enhance AI education quality through AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy covering topics like AI ethics, Deep Learning, and AI in Industry 4.0.

Following FDPs were conducted during 2023-24 in collaboration with Industry:

- Next Gen Employability Program - It was 5 days of Virtual Training Program covering 4 hours of content each day. This program is designed to strengthen the tech ecosystem and significantly impact the faculty's learning journey. 3556 faculty members participated in the programme.

- Tech Saksham – Joint CSR initiative of Microsoft and SAP 4516 faculty members trained on new emerging IR4.0 Technologies, AI & Cloud computing
- Creators of Metaverse Launched in January 2024, the 'Creators of Metaverse' Faculty Development Program (FDP) provided hands-on training and a deep understanding of Augmented Reality (AR) technologies. 3556 Faculty Members on boarded for the Training Program.
- Hackathons and Competitions: AICTE in association with MoE-MIC organizes hackathons, coding competitions, and innovation challenges to encourage students to explore and apply their skills in solving real-world problems using Industry 4.0 technologies. These events foster creativity, collaboration, and entrepreneurial spirit among youth.
- Faculty Development Programmes. Around 4 lakh faculty members are trained under various training programmes funded by AICTE. In order to enhance the trained manpower in the emerging areas like AI, ML, Data Science, Cyber Security, Quantum Technologies, High-performance computing and many novel emerging areas, the FDPs are more focused mainly in these areas. During the year 2024-25 around 13 emerging areas are covered through the FDP and this year the emerging areas are increased upto 17 and around 1000 FDPs are in pipeline including these emerging areas which are offered in offline and online mode during this academic year 2025-26. Last year more than 90,000 faculty members were trained in various domains including these emerging areas.

Under the National Supercomputing mission, the AICTE in collaboration with the C-DAC trained around 156 master trainers in High-Performance Computing. These master trainers are providing training to other faculties and students under the AICTE SANKALP program to create the work force in the high-performance computing domain.

Further, this year under the National Quantum Mission, AICTE already launched a minor programme in Quantum Technologies and is also planning to conduct FDPs with the support of the Department of Science and Technology in the area of Quantum Technologies.

Focus on Faculty Development: AICTE has launched initiatives for Faculty Development Programs (FDPs) to enhance the quality of teaching in engineering colleges. These programs focus on improving teaching methodologies, technical skills, and research capabilities.

AICTE Teachers Learning(ATAL) Academy has imparted training to more than 3 lakh faculty members on emerging niche areas such as AI, IoT, ML, DL, AR/VR, Robotics, Block Chain Management etc. across 1900 FDPs. The Academy also collaborated and engaged indigenous and foreign resource persons from the industry, academia, research establishments and various leading corporates such as ARM India, Cadence Design Systems, Adobe, Ford Motors, Google, Amazon, Metaverse, Tata Energy, LinkedIn, TCS, Wipro, Infosys, Edu Net etc., and launched 'Tech Saksham' program with Microsoft.

Industry – Academia Mobility

AICTE has prepared guidelines for Industry – Academia Mobility a significant opportunity to bridge gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in technical institutions. These guidelines have been meticulously crafted to promote gender diversity and inclusivity while also facilitating seamless collaboration between academia and industry. The scheme outlines the criteria for the appointment of Professors of Practice as well as giving importance to Women Professor of Practice, ensuring that meritocracy remains at the forefront of the selection process. Additionally, they provide frameworks for industry-academia partnership, encouraging mutually beneficial engagements that enrich both parties.

Collaboration with Industry: All Technical Institutions are supposed to enter into MoUs with at least 5industries for strengthening academia –industry interaction. In view of technological advancement in new emerging areas and meet the requirement of Industry 4.0, elective courses are now being offered to students on new emerging areas such as Data Science and AI, Robotics, Machine learning etc. AICTE is making concerted efforts towards skill development and integration with its technical programs. It is collaborating with various industries and institutes to design skill development courses in online mode that are integrated into the regular curriculum. These courses are aimed at enhancing the practical skills of students and making them more employable. To achieve these objectives, it has entered into MoU with leading organization such as Sales Force, Adobe, CISCO, Microsoft, Youth 4Job, META, AMAZON IBM, CDAC, Bajaj Finserv and WHEEBOX etc. These collaborations are supposed to lead to the development of integrated programs that incorporate real-world applications and industry-relevant skills.

INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE (IoE) SCHEME

Recommendation

14. The Committee notes that many of the country's oldest universities like Allahabad University, Banaras Hindu University, Calcutta University, Delhi University, Bombay University, Dr. Hari Singh Gour University, and Madras University have played a crucial role in shaping national education, scientific progress, and cultural exchange. These institutions therefore, have significant historical significance and continue to be of importance to our intellectual heritage. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry conduct an assessment of India's oldest public universities with historical significance and develop a program to support these universities in continuing their leadership of India's academic and intellectual development. This may be an extension of the Institutes of Eminence scheme, or a separate scheme.

(Para 3.3.6 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted. Among the oldest university, University of Delhi and Banaras Hindu University, given their historical significance, have been granted the status of the Institute of Eminence (IoE).

In alignment with NEP 2020, the Government has launched the 3rd phase of the scheme 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. 12926.10 crore, including the committed liabilities of the earlier phases of RUSA to cater to the needs of educationally unserved/ underserved areas/ The scheme 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, Grants to Strengthen Colleges, New Model Degree Colleges and Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiatives.

The matter regarding funding of these historically significant Universities under the PM-USHA will be taken up with States / UT during the review and further continuation of the scheme.

Recommendation

15. Besides, additional funds may be projected at the Revised Estimates Stage for the Financial Year 2025-26 to ensure that the Scheme does not suffer due to shortage of funds.

(Para 3.3.7 ibid)

Action Taken

Additional funds have been granted in RE for F.Y 2025-26.

STUDY IN INDIA

Recommendation

16. Further, the Committee is concerned that the budgetary allocations both at BE & RE stage from the FYs 2020-21 to 2024-25 is decreasing and even the actual utilisation in 2024-25 is Nil. The Committee recommends that the Department should ensure optimum utilisation of allocations during the FY 2025-26.

(Para 3.4.5 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted.

FY	BE	RE	Amount Released	Actual Utilization
2021-22	25.00	25.00	15.00	19.37
2022-23	25.00	25.00	18.25	15.88
2023-24	25.00	20.00	7.50	12.01
2024-25	20.00	12.00	13.00*	12.96

Rs (In Crores)*Final Grant was Rs. 13 Crores

The budget is decreasing due to less provision under the approved SFC for Study in India Scheme. Further, in 2024-25 the actual utilization is more than the allocated RE 2024-25 (i.e. Rs. 12 crores), 99.69 % of the amount released during FY 2024-25 was actually spent.

SCHEME FOR PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH COLLBORATION (SPARC)

Recommendation

17. The Committee notes the poor utilisation of funds under the SPARC Scheme and observes that there is lot more to be done in popularising the Scheme. The Committee recommends that steps should be taken to increase institutional funding for Open Educational Resources (OER) development to reduce student textbook costs and offer incentives - such as grants or stipends - to encourage faculty to adopt or develop OER. Besides, steps should also be taken to enhance awareness and advocacy through workshops and training sessions and strengthen institutional support and collaboration for efficacy of the scheme.

(Para 3.4.10 ibid)

Action Taken

i. A major chunk (more than 50%) of the expenditure under SPARC goes towards travel/honorarium of foreign faculty, who prefer to visit India during their holiday seasons/semester break. Therefore, the expenditure pattern under SPARC may not be akin to other schemes of GoI, where quarterly disbursements are done. The quarterly review of the expenditure under SPARC may not reveal the true picture, since majority of expenditure depends on the travel of foreign collaborators during the semester break mostly summer break (3 months long) which occurs in a particular cycle. Further, there is a substantial spill over of unspent balance of previous year.

ii. The un-utilized amount of Rs. 93.63 Crores was lying unutilized in CNA (Central Nodal Agency) bank account in different SPARC Institutes across the country (in December 2024). To address the slow pace of utilization of funds, series of meeting with IIT Kharagpur (Central Nodal Agency) and Top 10 Institutes having substantial unspent balance lying in their bank account was held during December, 2024. To increase the fund utilization rate, pro-active measures were taken and repeated reminders were sent to the Sub-agencies of SPARC. Apart from that, an order was issued from the National coordination center of SPARC in IIT Kharagpur and to all the SPARC PIs (Principal Investigators) and the Dean R&D of the SPARC Institute to facilitate fund utilization. The order empowered the PI to continue spending funds in their projects up-to the ceiling of total project budget, without violating the head wise allocation, irrespective of the project-wise allocation of funds done before. Additional funds would be transferred to the participating Institutes, only when their unutilized balance was down to 6.25% in CNA.

iii. As a result of that, the fund utilization rate was increased significantly during FY 2024-2025, total expenditure amounting to Rs. 74,97,84,908/- crores had been incurred and the unspent balance of SPARC reduced to Rs. 40.30 Crores as on 31-03-2025. Similar method will be followed in the current financial year also to speed up the expenditure rate of SPARC.

iv. Further, between December 2024 and March 2025, around 200 SPARC workshops happened in the country across different institutes, all of which were attended physically by the International PI/Co-PI. As many as 80 Indian students also went to the partner Institutes during this period.

v. To popularize the program, measures are being taken to document the success stories of SPARC in the form of reports as well as a book capturing the "Life changing Experience" of Indian students who went abroad based on funding received from SPARC. A major SPARC event involving all NIRF 100 Institutes and many successful SPARC PIs is also being planned later in 2025.

vi. 66 joint projects SPARC with top global Universities including University of Melbourne, Monash University, Imperial College London, Technion University of Israel etc. entailing a budgetary allocation of Rs. 68.52 crores were approved on 4th November 2025.

vii. These projects cover priority themes on Advance Computing (Supercomputing, AI and Quantum Computing); Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change; Health Care & Medtech; Agri & Food Technologies; Smart Cities and Mobility; Semiconductors etc.

PRIME MINISTER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP (PMRF)

Recommendation

18. The Committee notes that in the past, there has been under-utilization of funds under the scheme. If last year's budget on PM Research Fellowship is reviewed, it was Rs 350 crore, but only Rs 282 crore has been spent from it. The budget allocation for the FY 2025-26 is Rs 600 crore, which is almost double when compared to last year. This is because of the recent Budget announcement to provide fellowships for ten thousand students. The Committee recommends that the Department should put specific mechanisms in place to ensure better utilization of allocations made in 2025-26 and ensure smooth distribution of fellowship funds so that the objective of the Scheme, which was designed for improving the quality of research in various higher educational institutions in the country and to attract the best talent into research, is realized and the vision of development through innovation is achieved.

(Para 3.5.4 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendations of the committee are noted. Measures are being taken to ensure better utilization of allocation made in year 2025-26 and smooth distribution of fellowship funds.

Recommendation

19. The Committee was informed that fellowships (JRF/SRF) are to be disbursed on a monthly basis and that to claim the Fellowship, Nodal Officers (makers) of the Universities/HEIs initiate Monthly Payment Confirmation for scholars on the Scholarship Fellowship Management Portal. The claim is then approved by checker nodal officers of the Universities/Institutes and the Fellowship to eligible candidates is paid through DBT mode. The Committee notes the Ministry's statement that the "main reason of delay [in Junior Research Fellowships payments] is attributable to the late submission of claims by the Universities/HEIs." It observes that the current process with its requirement for a monthly submission of claims may be unnecessarily bureaucratic given that most recipients are due a fellowship of two years. It accordingly recommends that the Ministry may further streamline the process by which fellowships are claimed.

(Para 3.5.5 ibid)

Action Taken

As per the Fellowship disbursement process, before monthly payment confirmation, the UGC provides a three-month fellowship advance based on claims submitted by the nodal officer. However, it was observed that some scholars discontinued their fellowship during this period, but the nodal officer did not update the discontinuation status on the Scholarship Fellowship Management Portal. This issue was noted during the audit, indicating that excess funds were being parked unnecessarily.

To address this, the UGC has decided that monthly payment confirmations must be submitted by the nodal officer between the 1st and 8th of every month. Fellowships will then be disbursed at the end of the month. This revised process aims to avoid parking of funds.

The UGC has held meetings/workshops with the nodal officers of the universities for the timely submission of claims, and this has improved the disbursement of fellowships.

The recommendations made by the Committee have been noted for consideration to streamline the process further.

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Recommendation

20. The Committee further recommends that a National Commission for Indian Knowledge Systems may be established for strengthening institutional framework and governance for IKS. This Commission should be an apex body responsible for policy formulation, coordination and implementation of IKS-related initiatives.

(Para 3.6.6 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted.

IKS Division in Ministry has undertaken several initiatives with aim to include knowledge of ancient India, its contributions to modern India in its successes and addressing challenges, with a clear sense of India's future aspirations in the field of education, health, environment etc. A network of 91 IKS Centres has been established to drive original research, education, and dissemination of IKS. So far, 124 IKS courses across domains such as mathematics, astronomy, aesthetics, logic, health, and management have been offered in 12 institutions, while 102 interdisciplinary research projects are underway in areas like ancient metallurgy, town planning, water resource management, and Rasayanshastra.

To enhance student engagement, around 5,527 internships in IKS have been offered, along with 50+ workshops and national/international conferences. Over 8,000 HEIs have started adopting IKS into their curriculum, supported by the digitization of 1.5 lakh books. Faculty capacity building has also been prioritized, with 1,000 faculty members and 200 master trainers already trained by the IKS Division and UGC. In the next phase, training will be expanded to cover 10,000 faculty members and 1,000 research scholars, ensuring large-scale integration of IKS into India's higher education landscape.

PRADHAN MANTRI UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (PM-USHA)

Recommendation

21. The Committee notes that there is an increasing trend of higher education in India being seen in two separate spheres–one is that of private and select Government institutions with better faculty and resources, and the other are the majority of the HEIs which are not able to keep pace with the former. The Committee recommends that the Department must seek to bridge this gap to provide quality and accessible education to all sections of the society.

(Para 3.7.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) aims to provide universal access to education from pre-primary to higher education, ensuring quality early childhood care and education, and introducing a new curricular and pedagogical structure. It emphasizes the importance of multilingualism, the integration of vocational education, and the use of technology in education.

NEP 2020 inter-alia also provides that public and private schools are to 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.

To provide quality and accessible education so that no student is denied education due to financial constraints, Department of Higher Education is implementing Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP) Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Vidyalaxmi (PM-Vidyalaxmi) scheme. The PM-USP has four components, namely, PM-USP Central Sector Interest Subsidy (PM-USP CSIS) on education loans, PM-USP Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Education Loan (PM-USP CGFSEL), PM-USP Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students (PM-USP CSSS) and PM- USP Special Scholarship Scheme for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (PM-USP SSSJKL). All the schemes are available at https://www.education.gov.in/en/scholarships_education_loan. Further, PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme was launched in November 2024 which provides collateral-free and guarantor-free education loans to meritorious students in Quality Higher Education Institutions (QHEIs) beside credit guarantee and interest subvention benefits.

Besides the above, tuition fee is Waived by Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and National Institutes of technology (NITs) whereby the students whose family income is less than a specified level gets full/partial remission of the fee.

To address the issue of language barrier in access to education following are some of the initiatives for empowering Students of Regional Language Medium:-

i. UGC to allow teaching-learning and examination in 22 Indian Languages

ii. UGC to make available books of all subjects in 22 Indian Languages

iii. 100 Books for UG Students for Arts, Science and Humanities launched in 12 Indian Languages by UGC.

iv. 20 Technical Books of the First year translated in 12 Indian Languages by AICTE. 87 Technical Books for 2nd Year in 12 Indian Languages is under translation by AICTE.

v. AICTE has permitted 41 Engineering Institutes across 13 States in 8 regional languages

vi. AICTE has developed Machine Translation Tool namely 'Anuvadini'

vii. MBBS Course has been started in Hindi

viii. Common University Entrance Test conducted in 13 Languages and participated by 242 Universities.

ix. JEE (Mains) and NEET (UG) conducted in 13 languages involving about more than 30 lakhs students

x. Bhartiya Bhasha Sansthan is developing App named "Bhasha Sagar' for language learning [it will include 270 Indian languages]

xi. Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Pariyojana has been announced in Budget 2025-26 to provide digital-form of Indian language books for school and higher education. This aims to help students understand their subjects better. It aims to provide more than 2.5 lakhs textbooks in 22 Scheduled Indian Languages. UGC, in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti (BBS) has identified 23 nodal universities; 1089 authors shortlisted and their training conducted to capacitate them on book writing; 759 book proposals received and the book writing is in progress which will be subsumed under BBPS. A digital dashboard under the ASMITA project has been developed to manage and monitor the process, offering real-time updates and access to all stakeholders.

xii. Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) has compiled 30 lakhs technical and scientific words in 22 Indian Languages - 16 lakhs words already digitized.

xiii. An AI Auto Translation Tool/Portal developed: AICTE has developed an AI based translation App and study material which is being translated into Indian languages.

xiv. An initiative i.e. e-KUMBH (Knowledge Unleashed in Multiple Bhartiya Languages) Portal launched

xv. A repository of Engineering Books in different Indian Languages

xvi. More than 1,06,052 downloads from the portal.

UGC has also approved allowing HEIs to admit students biannually. This allows admissions in July/August and January/February, providing flexibility and opportunities for higher education institutions and students alike.

All these initiatives aim to provide quality and accessible education to all sections of the society.

To improve access, equity and quality of education, the Ministry of Education has launched various digital initiatives under the National Mission for Education through Information & Communication Technology (NMEICT). These initiatives provide access to high-quality digital content created by the premier institutions such as IITs, IIMs and Central Universities etc.

To ensure access of high-quality educational content to every student, Ministry of Education in collaboration with IIT Madras has launched Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM). The platform has Over 16,616 courses delivered, including 4,100 unique courses, have been developed till date.
Swayam Prabha is a 24x7 DTH platform broadcasting 40 channels that deliver high-quality, educational content, aimed at providing inclusive and equitable access to learners, especially in remote and rural regions.

So far more than 90,000 hours of educational content has been broadcast under this initiative.

Additionally, to enhance the quality of education by way of equipping and building capacity of faculty of higher education, Department is implementing the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP), a flagship initiative aimed at enhancing the capacity and efficiency of faculty in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), aligning with the goals of the NEP 2020. It emphasizes comprehensive faculty development to create a motivated and capable teaching workforce. The key components of MMTTP includes National Faculty Leadership Program (NFLP) and Academic Leadership Program (ALP) which aim to foster leadership and effective decision-making in higher education, Capacity building program on Design and Entrepreneurship which encourages creativity and real-world problem-solving, Capacity Building Program on Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) which promotes inclusivity by raising awareness among faculty of HEIs, Capacity Building Program on Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing in HEIs which also builds resilience and support systems for HEI communities, Capacity Building on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cyber Security which equips faculty with cutting-edge skills to stay competitive in a tech- driven world and also prepare them to handle and mitigate digital threats. These initiatives collectively aim to foster innovation, inclusivity, and responsiveness in higher education.

Recommendation

22. The Committee is of the view that the PM-USHA is a crucial scheme aimed at improving access, equity, and quality in higher education. The Committee therefore recommends that *robust monitoring mechanisms at the state and national levels should be established to track progress, identify bottlenecks, and ensure timely utilization of funds. Funds should be used to ensure promotion of curriculum reforms that align with industry needs, emerging technologies, and global standards. The Committee further recommends that steps should be taken to simplify fund allocation procedures to reduce delays in financial disbursement and encourage states and institutions to utilize funds effectively by setting clear timelines and utilization guidelines.*

(Para 3.7.4 ibid)

Action Taken

The Ministry acknowledges the Committee's recommendation on critical role of PM-USHA in improving access, equity, and quality in higher education. In line with this, it is being informed that several measures have been undertaken to track progress and ensure timely utilization of funds. These include conducting periodic review meetings with the States/ UTs under the chairpersonship of Secretary /Additional Secretary/ Joint Secretary, etc., regular submission of Monthly Progress Reports by the States/UTs on the PM-USHA Portal, conducting State/ UT visits, etc.

The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has launched the SNA SPARSH model of PFMS, which is a "Just-in-Time" (JIT) cash management system for the flow of funds from Central and State governments to Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), using an integrated framework of the PFMS platform, State Integrated Financial Management Systems (IFMIS), and the RBI's e-Kuber platform. Its goal is to ensure funds are released only when needed, reducing delays and improving fund utilization for CSS projects by providing real-time financial data and monitoring capabilities. During the current financial year, it is stated that under SNA SPARSH, the mother sanction has been issued to 30 States/UTs for a total amount of Rs. 847.83 crore. The next instalment shall be released upon utilization of 75% of the previously allocated fund, along with submission of utilization certificates. Furthermore, a session in New Delhi was recently being organized with participation from all States/UTs to sensitize them on SPARSH model of fund release of the Ministry of Finance & its other related revised instructions.

Recommendation

23. The Committee notes that NEP compliance requires substantial costs on several heads - dual degree, biannual admissions, 4-year degree, and multidisciplinary university. Given that most universities and HEIs are run by State Governments, the expenditure for this compliance is borne by States even as the goals are set by the Union Government. While education is a concurrent subject and therefore constitutionally a shared responsibility, state budgets for higher education are severely constrained due to spending on salaries and pensions, leaving little room for infra and capital expenditure spend. The Union Government, therefore, must enhance support to states for NEP implementation. The Committee notes that PM-USHA Scheme is linked to NEP compliance by states, but that its current allocation is only Rs. 1,815 Crores in FY2025-26. While NEP implementation is flexible and not on a fixed timeline, the goal of achieving 50% GER in higher education by 2035 is time-bound and achievement of this goal requires the funding for this scheme to be several orders of magnitude higher. The Committee recommends that a reasonable increase should be made in the budget of PM-USHA over the next few years with the goals of the NEP in mind. The Committee is of the belief that the long-term economic benefits will offset the initial implementation costs incurred.

(Para 3.7.5 ibid)

Action Taken

The Ministry agrees with the Committee's observation of the constrained budgets of most States/UTs, especially due to recurring expenditure on salaries and pensions. In this respect, it is stated that in the current FY 2025-26, PM-USHA has been allocated a total budget of Rs. 1,815 crore and the Ministry is actively encouraging States/UTs to expedite funds utilization. Furthermore, the Committee's recommendation for increasing the budget allocation of PM-USHA over the next few years has been noted and would be placed before the competent authorities for its consideration and approval.

NATIONAL DIGITAL UNIVERSITY

Recommendation

24. The rapid advancement of technology and the increasing demand for flexible and accessible high quality education necessitates a proactive approach towards establishment of digital universities. The establishment of the National Digital University in the country is a significant initiative in this direction aimed at revolutionizing higher education through digital technologies, as envisioned under National Education Policy 2020, to help bridge the gap between urban and rural learners and enable up-skilling of the workforce. The Committee therefore, recommends that along with establishment of the National Digital University, provision of financial aid, scholarships, and subsidized high-speed internet accessibility for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially in underserved and remote areas, should be given priority. Further, the Committee recommends that the Department should ensure that NDU courses have equivalency with degrees from traditional universities to enhance employability.

(Para 3.8.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The Government of India has framed the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 with a vision to strengthen learner-centric and technology-enabled education. In alignment with this vision, the Government has envisaged the establishment of a Digital University platform to provide flexible, multidisciplinary, and digitally-driven learning.

National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) an Autonomous Scientific Society under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), has launched "NIELIT Digital University (NDU) Platform" in October 2025. "NIELIT Digital University Platform" is a digital learning platform to deliver online and blended skill-based courses in emerging technology sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, Cyber security, Cloud Computing etc. The platform also has Built-in Virtual labs for real-time experimentation in Semiconductor Design, Cyber Security, Cyber Forensics, Industry 4.0 and other emerging domains. The courses on this digital platform are aligned to National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) with credits to be transferred in the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) after successful completion.

As on date, more than 100 courses available on NDU Platform. The current set of offerings includes short-term, modular, and specialization courses, delivered through NIELIT's existing network of 56 centres across the nation.

Further, Ministry of Education, in collaboration with IIT Madras, has launched the SWAYAM Plus platform in February 2024. The platform offers high-quality industry relevant courses in collaboration with industry partners to learners, helping them reskill, upskill, and become employment-ready. As on date, Swayam Plus has signed more than 89 MoUs with the leading industry partners. More than 504 Courses in 15 different sectors are available on the platform, and more than 4.84 lakh learners have enrolled for their Skill augmentation.

Recommendation

25. Further, the Committee recommends that the Department of Higher Education should take up the issue of establishment of a National Skill University with the Ministry of Skill Development and should provide all support required for realizing the establishment of the National Skill University.

(Para 3.8.3 ibid)

Action Taken

The Ministry of Education and its regulatory bodies have taken a number steps to promote skill development and enhance employability of youth. These include, the launch of National Credit Framework (NCrF) to embed skill education within higher education, guidelines on apprenticeship-embedded degree programmes, development of model curricula by AICTE, Internship as a mandatory component of AICTE model curriculum, updation of curricula in light of emerging technologies, enabling industry-academia linkages through Industry Academia Mobility Framework, appointment of Professor of Practice, etc. Further, the Ministry of Education, with IIT Madras and industry partners, launched SWAYAM Plus platform for providing skill enhancement through online courses. As of 480+ courses have been developed across 17 sectors and offered on emerging areas such as AI, Data Analyst etc. So far, more than 4,65,000 students registered on the platform. SWAYAM Plus has 77 MoUs with Industry Partners covering emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Manufacturing, and Healthcare etc. More than 25,000 Internships also offered on the platform covering in collaboration with Internshala. 135+ courses provide credits for learners.

Ministry of Education has written to Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), bringing to their notice, the observation of the Committee on establishment of National Skills University. Ministry of Education will extend all necessary support including inputs for development of curriculum, standardization of credits, extending technical assistance, to MSDE whenever required.

HIGHER EDUCATION STATISTICS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (HESPIS)

Recommendation

26. The Committee notes that as per the NEP 2020, all higher education institutions (HEIs) by 2040 shall aim to become multidisciplinary, autonomous, and self-governing with larger student enrolments (preferably in the thousands). Furthermore, the country aims to target a 50% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education by 2035. Despite improvements in GER in recent years, the country is still far from reaching the target. The Committee is of the view that necessary step should be taken such as leverage technology to provide flexible learning options, reaching students who cannot attend traditional institutions; provide scholarships, grants, and affordable student loans to make higher education more accessible to economically disadvantaged students; actively engage with communities to raise awareness about the benefits of higher education; and increase government spending on education. More importantly, investments in public education at the state and central levels must be enhanced significantly.

(Para 3.9.8 ibid)

Action Taken

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) envisages increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education including vocational education, to 50% by 2035 and the Ministry has taken various measures to increase the GER in Higher Education, which inter-alia include: -

i. Opening of more HEIs: - The number of Universities/University level Institutions registered under AISHE have increased to 1213 in 2022-23 (provisional) from 760 in 2014-15 and number of colleges have increased to 46,624 in 2022-23 (provisional) from 38,498 in 2014-15.
ii. Implementing various Scholarship and Fellowship schemes for providing financial assistance to students, including for SC/ST/OBC and Minority students and underserved regions.
iii. Implementing PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme offering collateral free and guarantor-free education loans is available for all meritorious students who are getting admission in Quality HEI and who are desirous of availing education loans to pursue higher education.
iv. Further Full interest subvention is provided on education loans for students with family annual income up to Rs 4.5 lakh/annum under PM-USP CSIS and 3% interest subvention for students with family income upto Rs 8 lakh/annum under PM-Vidyalaxmi and credit guarantee cover is provided to all education loans under IBA Model Education Loan and PM Vidyalaxm for loans upto Rs 7.5 lakhs under CGFSEL Scheme without any income limit. These provisions make student education loan more affordable and accessible to economically disadvantaged students.
v. 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.
vi. Providing much-needed flexibility and appropriate Exit as well Re-entry options in the Higher Education system, to facilitate students to choose their learning trajectory.
vii. 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.
viii. Conducting JEE, NEET (UG) and Common University Entrance Test (CUET) Exams in 13 languages, to facilitate students and making available Text Books in Indian Languages to facilitate students, particularly from vernacular/rural background.

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central government and all State Governments. The Policy also calls for the rejuvenation, active promotion, and support for private philanthropic activity in the education sector. The Centre and the States work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest. Various schemes/projects/programmes run by Ministry of Education have been aligned with NEP 2020. Accordingly, the Central Government has increased Budget allocation of Ministry of Education (MoE) from Rs. 93,224.31 Crore for the year 2021-22, to Rs. 1,04,277.72 Crore for the year 2022-23 to Rs. 1,12,899.47 Crore for the year 2023-24 and Rs. 1,21,117.87 Crores in the year 2024-25 to Rs. 1,28,650.05 for the year 2025-26 for various activities of the Ministry.

The initiatives of the Government have resulted in increase of GER to 29.5 in 2022-23 (provisional) from 23.7 in 2014-15.

To make higher education affordable in institutions like IITs and NITs, relaxations in tuition fee of Under Graduate (UG) program is provided not only to the socially weaker sections but also to the economically weaker sections of the society. This includes complete fee waiver for SC/ST and PwD students & full remission of fee for economically weaker students (whose family income is less than Rs. 1 lakh per annum) and also 2/3rd remission of fee for other economically weaker students (whose family income is between Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh per annum).

Students are encouraged to, and avail, financial assistance under various Schemes of Central Government and scholarship schemes of other Ministries, like, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, etc.

In addition to this, reservation is provided for admission to various courses both in CF-IIITs and IIITs established under PPP mode. SC/ST students are exempted from paying tuition fees in CF-IIITs. There is an increasing trend in release of funds to CF-IIITs in last 5 years.

Furthermore, select IISERs offer institutional fellowships to I-PhD scholars through their IRG funds. In addition to this, majority of the IISERs provides tuition fee waiver to the students belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST). A few IISERs provide the waiver to PwD students as well. There is an increase in release of funds in IISERs in last 5 years.

To ensure access of high-quality educational content to every student, Ministry of Education in collaboration with IIT Madras has launched Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) platform. The platform hosts content curated by premier Institutions and is available free of cost with the approach of "Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime Learning".

To promote the flexibility in education, the UGC (University Grants Commission) allows universities to offer up to 40% of the total courses in a semester through SWAYAM platform. Further, Universities that accept SWAYAM credit, are allowed take the SWAYAM proctored examination in their own campuses for their students. As on date, a total of 381 Universities have adopted SWAYAM courses for credit.

404 Universities have adopted SWAYAM Courses for Credit Transfer.370+ courses translated to more than 1 language SWAYAM MOOCs have witnessed a cumulative enrolment of more than 5.61 Crore and around 45.24 lakh certifications. Over 16,616 courses delivered, including 4,100 unique courses, have been developed till date.

As far as IGNOU is concerned, in alignment with its mandate and the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) 2030, the University is committed to making higher education accessible, inclusive, and affordable. The University leverages technology-enabled flexible learning through online platforms, LMS, and media channels to reach learners unable to attend traditional institutions.

In IGNOU, there is a provision for fee exemption of SC and ST students in selected undergraduate programmes. This scheme utilizes the DAPSC and DAPST (SCSP/TSP) grants received from the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India. This scheme boosts enrolment from disadvantaged sections and contributes towards achieving objectives of NEP 2020.

PROMOTION OF SANTHALI LANGUAGE

Recommendation

27. The Committee is of the opinion that children have the right to get education in their mother tongue. After the inclusion of Santhali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 2003, Santhali medium of education has been introduced in schools, colleges and universities – however it has not been promoted sufficiently. Therefore, encouraging the use and teaching of the Ol Chiki script, the official writing system of Santhali, is crucial. This includes developing educational materials, textbooks, and resources in Ol Chiki as well as preparation of question papers in UPSC, UGC-NET, SSB examinations etc. in Ol Chiki script to promote the One Language, One Script policy. The syllabus for Santhali medium in higher education should be made with the model of university syllabus guidelines. The Committee also recommends the establishment of the National Council for Promotion of Santhali language like the Urdu language.

(Para 3.11.1 ibid)

Action Taken

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the importance of multilingualism and places strong emphasis on the promotion of all Indian languages. NEP recommends, wherever possible, the use of the mother tongue/local language as the medium of instruction at least up to Class 5, and preferably up to Class 8.

The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru of the Ministry of Education supports the development of educational content in Indian languages and mother tongues, in alignment with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

CIIL has informed that many Santhali books available in CIIL Library use Devnagari script. However CIIL has also adopted and incorporated *Ol Chiki* script in its academic and educational activities, taking into consideration the adoption and acceptance of *Ol* Chiki script.

Educational resources such as the Santhali primer jointly developed by CIIL and NCERT are now available in the Ol Chiki script. Further, the "Constitution of India" in Ol Chiki script, prepared by CIIL, Mysuru, was formally released by the Hon'ble President of India in 2025.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Recommendation

28. A robust research and innovation ecosystem within the higher education institutions (HEIs) is crucial for national development, economic competitiveness, and social progress. The Committee therefore, recommends that budgetary allocations for research grants with an emphasis on interdisciplinary research aligning with national priorities such as sustainable development, healthcare, artificial intelligence, and climate change should be made so that research projects do not suffer due to lack of research infrastructure and facilities.

(Para 3.12.3 ibid)

Recommendation

29. The Committee notes that IISERs have been established as institutions aimed specifically at expanding research in areas of basic sciences, like, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Mathematics, Earth Sciences, etc. An amount of Rs.588.21 Crores has been released to IISERs to support PG and PhD students and the research ecosystem between 2021-22 and 2023-24. It is also noted that Anusandhan National Research Foundation(ANRF) Act, 2023 establishes ANRF as a leading body for strategic guidance in research and innovation across natural sciences, *engineering, health, and social sciences, with a total budget of ₹50,000 Crores. Further, to boost research and innovation in the private sector, the government has also set up a ₹1 lakh crore corpus fund to significantly scale up research and innovation, significantly in the sunrise domains. The Committee however, recommends provision of additional funding for research, particularly in fundamental scientific research.*

(Para 3.12.4 ibid)

Action Taken

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) - established through an Act of Parliament: ANRF Act, 2023, to provide high-level strategic directions for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the fields of natural sciences, including mathematical sciences, engineering and technology, environmental and earth sciences, health and agriculture, and scientific and technological interfaces of humanities and social sciences. ANRF has been established to promote research and development and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout India's Universities, Colleges, Research Institutions, and R&D laboratories. ANRF acts as an apex body to provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research in the country as per recommendations of the National Education Policy. ANRF forges collaborations among the industry, academia, research institutions and government departments.

Further, under Prime Minister Research Fellows (PMRF 2.0), the broad subject areas are also proposed to be in line with national missions/ priorities.

Also, the funds are allocated to the IISERs. From financial year (FY) 2021-22 to 2023-24 total amount of Rs 588.21 Cr has been released to institutes (IISERs) as grants from Ministry of Education to support research ecosystem. In the starting of the year funds are allocated to the institutes based on expenditure Incurred by the institutes in the previous years, demand of the institutes and funds allocated by Ministry of Finance. Subsequently further demands are addressed at the time of revised estimates and 1st & 2nd supplementary grants.

Recommendation

30. The Committee also suggests the introduction of a one HEI, one Industry model. Most districts in the country have existing industries – minerals, agricultural processing (jute, cotton, etc,), handlooms, metalwork, manufacturing, etc. HEIs must work more closely with the industry clusters in their geographic proximity to support research and development in these industries, and to provide technical and managerial expertise to business owners.

(Para 3.12.5 ibid)

Action Taken

AICTE has mandated the approved institutions to sign at least five (5) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with industry.

AICTE has recently issued letter to all the Vice- Chancellors of Technical Universities/ Directors/Principals of AICTE Approved Institutions regarding implementation of Artist(s) in Residence Programme and Immersion Activities with Local Artists under NEP.

Recommendation

31. The Committee notes the placements data shared by the Ministry [refer Annexure 2]. It observes that barring a few institutions like the IIMs, there is an unusual decline in placements in IITs and IIITs between the year 2021-22 and 2023-24.The Committee observes that a similar trend is also visible in the NITs and notes that the data also shows a decline in the average *financial package secured by each student placed between 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Committee noted that there could be various reasons for this decline like students opting for higher education or pursuing start-up ventures. The Committee noted that though the placement is dependent on market trends, the Department should find out ways and take measures to enhance employability accordingly.*

(Para 3.12.6 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted. It is also a fact that students have chosen different career pathways over the years including higher education, entrepreneurship, preparation for the other competitive exams etc. in addition to placements.

Over a period of time, IITs as well as NITs have developed robust ecosystems that promote marketable innovations by updating their curriculum by adding latest topics on industry-driven programmes in consultation with the industry to hone the skills of students passing out of these Institutions.

Regular workshops, training programs, and initiatives such as hackathons, fellowships, and grand challenges are organized to enhance the entrepreneurial mindset among researchers and students.

These activities focus on industry-relevant problems, encouraging faculty and students to engage in research with commercial potential. Strong ties with industry partners have been established to ensure research meets market needs.

Besides above, IITs and NITs also organise career awareness programmes and interactions for final as well as pre-final students with respective branch mentors and student's placement coordinators. These interactions ensure that the students are regularly motivated and their potential is properly channelised into the right direction.

Recommendation

32. The Committee recommends that the Department initiate mandatory faculty development programs to improve teaching methodologies and bridge the industry-academia gap in a structured manner.

(Para 3.12.7 ibid)

Action Taken

To improve teaching methodology, capacity and efficiency of faculty of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and to keep pace with the modern world, a flagship scheme Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP) was conceptualized on 05.09.2023 including some unique and essential components like Nurturing Future Leadership Programme, Academic Leadership Programme, Capacity Building Program for Promoting Positive Mental Health Resilience & Wellbeing in HEIs, Capacity Building on Cyber Security, Capacity Building on Artificial Intelligence, Capacity Building Program on Specific Learning Disabilities, Design and Entrepreneurship, Administrative Staff Training, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) and Science Communication.

MMTTP's flagship programmes like the NFLP and ALP promote acumen for effective decision making in higher education that can have positive cascading effects for the entire system. Capacity building programmes like 'Design and Entrepreneurship', 'Specific Learning Disabilities', 'Mental Health' and 'Artificial Intelligence' are helping pave the way for innovative, contemporary approaches to teaching and learning in higher education along with promoting inclusive, receptive, and more sensitive learning environments.

The design and entrepreneurship program for example, encourages creativity and help in solving real-world problems. The program for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), promotes inclusivity by raising awareness and understanding of SLDs and ensures that those with learning differences receive the support and accommodations they need to thrive. The program for mental health helps develop coping mechanisms and support systems that aid students, staff, and faculty at HEIs. AI is increasingly transforming industries like healthcare, finance, education, and more. By continuing AI programs for faculty, faculty can stay ahead of technological trends, ensuring they remain competitive in the job market. As cyber-attacks become more sophisticated, the program like Cyber-Security is critical for protecting sensitive information and maintaining national and corporate security. These programs help equip the faculty with the tools needed to prevent and mitigate cyber threats.

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) stipulates industry readiness and improved employability of students through active collaborations between institutions and industries. Employability outcomes are expected to be achieved in terms of enhanced apprenticeships, internships, self-employment, wage employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities for the students.

Guidelines for engaging Professors of Practice in Universities and Colleges has been issued on 30.09.2022. It aims bringing industry and other professional expertise into the academic institutions through a new category of positions called “Professor of Practice”. It will enable developing courses and curriculum to meet the industry and societal needs and enable the HEIs to work with industry experts on joint research projects. It will also bring in distinguished experts from various fields. So far 18,272 industry domain experts and 529 HEIs have been registered.

Guidelines on Sustainable and Vibrant University-Industry Linkage System for Indian Universities issued on 09.01.2024. The guideline aims to foster sustainable collaboration between academia and industry, thereby developing a robust ecosystem for research, innovation, knowledge transfer, sharing of facilities and establish strong academic-Industry linkages through creation of R&D Clusters,

Enhancements of Student Internship and Apprenticeship in industries, and enhanced role of HEIs in sustaining industry linkages.

Guidelines for Internship/Research Internship for Undergraduate Students, issued on 02.02.2024, establish a framework to institutionalize internships and research internships at the undergraduate level, in line with NEP-2020. The aim is to enhance practical experience, research aptitude, and employability by involving students in real-world work situations. This includes opportunities with government or private organizations, HEIs, research labs, NGOs, enterprises, and local industries, among others. Currently, 187 universities have Internship Cells offering credit accumulation for internships, apprenticeships, and industry projects.

AICTE - Guidelines for Industry and Academia Mobility - This guideline promotes gender diversity and inclusivity while also facilitating seamless collaboration between academia and industry. It outlines the criteria for the appointment of Professors of Practice (PoP) as well as giving importance to Women Professor of Practice. Additionally, it provides frameworks for industry-academia partnerships, encouraging mutually beneficial engagements that enrich both Academia and Industry.

Regular Industry-Institute engagement is being done to prepare and update curriculum for courses in Emerging Areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI); Information of Technology (IoT); Block chain; Robotics; Quantum Computing; Data Sciences; Cyber Security; 3D Printing & Design; Augmented Reality (AR)/Virtual Reality (VR) etc. MOUs have been signed with leading companies such as Cisco/IBM/Meta/Adobe/Microsoft/Salesforce to create industry-aligned courses.

ACCESSIBILITY TO LOAN FACILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Recommendation

33. The Committee notes that the Compound Annual Growth Rate during the FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24 regarding loans disbursement for Higher Education in respect of Public Sector Banks is 38 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively which is not very satisfactory. On the contrary, the CAGR rate of Private Sector Banks for the corresponding period, which is 102 per cent and 87 per cent, is quite on the higher side. Thus, the difference of CAGR rate between the Public Sector Banks and Private Sector Banks perhaps points towards the aspects of willingness to sanction/disburse the loans as well as the procedural complications for sanctioning/disbursing educational loans. The Committee therefore, recommends that initiatives should be taken by the public sector banks to disburse loans in a timely fashion. The procedural mechanism for loan disbursal should be simplified and the Department should work with the Ministry of Finance to achieve the same.

(Para 3.13.3 ibid)

Action Taken

IBA has issued guidelines to ensure the timely disbursal of education loans under its Model Education Loan Scheme. The guidelines can be seen at:

https://www.iba.org.in/circulars/iba-model-educational-loan-scheme-for-pursuing-higher-education-in-india-andamp-abroad-2022-_1456.html

PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme is offering collateral free and guarantor-free education loans to all meritorious students who are getting admission in Quality HEI and who are desirous of availing education loans to pursue higher education.

To simplify the procedure of education loan application process, a new simplified, digital and student-friendly portal https://pmvidyalaxmi.co.in has been launched on 25th February, 2025. On this portal, Loans are made accessible through a simple, transparent, student-friendly and entirely digital application process, with a simple 2-page application format. Earlier it used to be 7 to 8 pages which is made simplified into 2 pages.

So far, all 12 Public Sector banks, 20 leading private banks, 24 Regional Rural banks and several Cooperative banks have integrated their education loan process with the PM Vidyalaxmi portal.

The DHE and DFS regularly coordinate through the IBA with all banks to reduce turn-around-time (TAT) for loan sanction.

Recommendation

34. The Committee observes that the PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme, specifically concerning student loans for higher education, plays a vital role in empowering students to pursue their academic aspirations and contribute to the nation's progress. However, in order to enhance its reach and impact significantly, there is a need to accommodate students, particularly from economically *weaker sections and rural areas, who struggle to meet the eligibility criteria and provide the required documentation for loans to pursue their higher education. The Committee therefore, recommends that simplification of the documentation process by leveraging digital platforms and integrating with existing government databases e.g., Aadhaar, DigiLocker; introduction of flexible eligibility criteria that consider the socio economic background of the applicant, including family income, educational background, and potential for future employability; reducing the processing time for loan applications and disbursements by establishing clear timelines and accountability mechanisms; expanding the coverage of the Scheme to include loans for vocational training, skill development programs, and entrepreneurship courses; conducting awareness campaigns through various media channels in local languages etc. should be considered for popularizing and enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of the PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme, so that more students have the opportunity to pursue their higher education and professional aspirations. The Committee also recommends that the Vidyalaxmi scheme be extended to students from all HEIs rather than only to QHEIs.*

(Para 3.13.9 ibid)

Action Taken

(a) DoHE has simplified the process of education loan application by introducing a new two-page loan application form for all education loans pan India through the portal https://pmvidyalaxmi.co.in, a unified education loan application portal which started operating from 25th February 2025. This Portal has been developed to allow students to apply for education loans and interest subvention through a simplified application process used by all banks.

(b) The loan application process on PM VIDYALAXMI portal is completely digital journey. Uploading of documents are done in the portal along with the application so the lending bank will receive complete information for sanctioning of education loan. This portal has been developed to allow students to apply for education loans and interest subvention through a simplified application process used by all banks.

(c) Under PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme, a student who is pursuing any degree / diploma course from quality HEIs (QHEIs) and whoseannualfamilyincomeisupto₹8lakhs is also eligible to get 3% interest subvention for education loans up to ₹10 lakhs. All the meritorious students who are desirous of availing the education loan are eligible for this, including students from the economically weaker sections and rural areas. Also, Department of Higher Education is implementing the PM-USP Central Sector Interest Subsidy (PM-USP CSIS) Scheme since2009. Under the PM-USP CSIS scheme, full interest subsidy is provided during the moratorium period on Education Loan availed under Model Education Loan Scheme of Indian Banks' Association (IBA) for pursuing technical/professional courses in India. Students whose annual gross parental/family income is upto ₹4.5lakh are eligible under the scheme. In this scheme, all students including students from economically weaker sections and rural areas satisfying these conditions get interest subvention on education loan.

(d) For clear timeline for sanction and disbursal, IBA has been asked to issue advisory to all Banks. Further, The DHE and DFS regularly coordinate through the IBA with all banks to reduce turn-around-time (TAT) for loan sanction.

(e) Skill Development Programs and Entrepreneurship Courses in India are mainly under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

(f) The PM Vidyalaxmi Portal is for all Public Sector Banks, Private Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative banks**. So far, all 12 Public Sector banks, 20 leading private banks, 24 Regional Rural banks and several Cooperative banks have integrated their education loan process with the PM Vidyalaxmi portal.**

(g) Workshops are being organized with all the Quality Higher Education Institutions in collaboration with the UGC, DFS, IBA and the banks to increase awareness of the QHEIs and students.

(h) Further, DoHE assists in Exhibiting/ Flashing PM VIDYALAXMI PORTAL, PMVIDYALAXMI EDUCATION LOAN SCHEME and PM VIDYALAXMI DIGITALRUPEE APP promotional material on official websites of Higher education institutes and Universities under DoHE, examination conducting agencies for Higher education institutes under DoHE, Regulatory Bodies under DoHE and Member Banks of IBA. Also, banks have been requested to do digital marketing of PM VIDYALAXMI PORTAL, PM VIDYALAXMI EDUCATION LOAN SCHEME and PM VIDYALAXMIDIGITAL RUPEE APP through online channels such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and twitter/X. QHEIs have also been requested to include a paragraph about the scheme in the Brochure/ letter of offer for admission to students, with a view to enhancing awareness and outreach.

(i) The scheme guidelines are displayed on website of Ministry of Education i.e https://www.education.gov.in/scholarships-education-loan-4. Further IBA has also disseminated the scheme guidelines to member Banks.

All these measures aim to create widespread awareness about the scheme and help eligiblestudents, including those from economically weaker sections and rural areas to avail the benefits of PM-USP CSIS and PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme.

Recommendation

35. The Committee notes that the newly implemented Vidyalaxmi scheme is likely to help expand uptake of education loans. However, currently, numerous students, particularly those from low and middle-income families, face significant hurdles in accessing student loans due to eligibility criteria such as high credit scores for co-signers and extensive collateral requirements, complex application process, limited awareness of loan schemes, high interest rates etc. The Committee therefore, recommends that income-based eligibility criteria i.e. prioritizing students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, reduced reliance on co-signer credit scores and collateral requirements, simplified application processes and introduction of government-backed guarantee schemes to mitigate lender risk, development of a centralized online portal for student loan applications, establishment of a dedicated student loan counselling services to assist applicants, enhancement of awareness and outreach, particularly in rural and underserved areas, stronger Public- Private Partnerships, should be considered to enhance the accessibility of student loans for individuals pursuing higher education and to foster a more skilled and educated workforce.

(Para 3.13.10 ibid)

Action Taken

(a) Credit score of a beneficiary is not part of Education loan sanctioning process under PM-Vidyalaxmi Scheme guidelines. As per IBA model education loan policy all loans sanctioned up to a loan limit of Rs.7.5 lakhs are covered under CGFSEL, where credit guarantee upto 75% of outstanding default is provided by the Government of India.

(b) Under PM-Vidyalaxmi Scheme, collateral free and guarantor free education loan is provided to all meritorious students of QHEIs. Through PM VIDYALAXMI portal, Education loan application process has been simplified and can be submitted through a completely digital interface.

(c) A dedicated call centre support has been setup to address the queries of the `students related to operational issues while applying for Education loan and Interest subvention. The dedicated Toll-free number 1800-1031 addresses the queries raised by the students.

(d) Further, DoHE assists in Exhibiting/ Flashing PM VIDYALAXMI PORTAL, PM VIDYALAXMI EDUCATION LOAN SCHEME and PM VIDYALAXMI DIGITAL RUPEE APP promotional material on official websites of Higher education institutes and Universities under DoHE, examination conducting agencies for Higher education institutes under DoHE, Regulatory Bodies under DoHE and Member Banks of IBA. Also, banks have been requested to do digital marketing of PM VIDYALAXMI PORTAL, PM VIDYALAXMI EDUCATION LOAN SCHEME and PM VIDYALAXMI DIGITAL RUPEE APP through online channels such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and twitter/X. QHEIs have also been requested to include a paragraph about the scheme in the Brochure/ letter of offer for admission to students, with a view to enhancing awareness and outreach.

Recommendation

36. The Committee recommends that the Department work with banks and other agencies to track the prevalence of education loans – not just in the states where they are disbursed, but in the state of origin of the beneficiary as well. This will help track the access to and prevalence of student loans in key regions, including the Northeast, where out-migration for higher education is very common.

(Para 3.13.11 ibid)

Action Taken

(a) A new PM VIDYALAXMI portal has been developed for student beneficiaries for a unified experience of loan application submission, tracking of application and subvention claim processing. The portal is designed to get end-to-end insight of education loan journey of students by Ministry, that can be utilised for creating a transparent environment for students.

(b) The data on education loan can be tabulated with respect to both the State of the student as well as the state of the education institution.

Recommendation

37. On the issue of assessment of the impact of fund utilization on the quality of higher education and to devise plans to improve future fund utilization strategies, the Committee appreciates the initiatives taken by the Department of Higher Education. However, many a times, it has been noticed that applicants from the marginalized groups and those from the rural areas as well as underserved areas face challenges in getting their loan sanctioned and disbursed. Even if the loan is sanctioned, disbursement of the loan remains a problem. The Committee is of the view that regular assessment of the working of the loan schemes may be conducted for enhanced efficacy of such schemes and for the benefit of the students who want to pursue their higher studies.

(Para 3.13.12 ibid)

Action Taken

(a) For all the education loans of quality HEIs, there is a portal https://pmvidyalaxmi.co.in for education loan application, which is under the administrative control of the DHE. The portal is designed to get end-to-end insight of education loan journey of students by Ministry, that can be utilised for creating a transparent environment for students and update the schemes as per the reports and observations, to enhance the impact of the education loan schemes. Once the education loan is sanctioned by the banks and disbursed, the banks can update the same in the portal seamlessly. The responsibility of disbursing education loans will be on the respective banks that have sanctioned the loans. The Department of Finance (DFS), Ministry of Finance is also monitoring the loan delivery by the banks.

(b) The Portal is for all Public Sector Banks, Private Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative banks. All these measures aim to create widespread awareness about the scheme and help eligible students, including those from economically weaker sections and rural areas to avail the benefits of PM-USP CSIS and PM- Vidyalaxmi scheme. Workshops are being organised with all the Quality Higher Education Institutions in collaboration with the UGC, DFS, IBA and the banks to increase awareness of the QHEIs and students.

Regular meetings are organised between the Ministry, DFS, IBA and the banks to monitor the progress of the education loan and interest subvention related activities.

VACANCIES IN HEIs

Recommendation

38. The Committee observes that the vacancies of teaching as well as non-teaching officials in almost all the Higher Educational Institutions/Central Universities are very high vis-a-vis the sanctioned strength of both the categories. Moreover, the filing up of these vacancies on contractual/short-term/regular basis should be done in such a way that it does not undermine the Constitutional provision of reservation for SC/ST/OBC/EWS/PwD etc. in Government jobs and weakens academic freedom. The existence of vacancies in Higher Educational Institutions, including technical institutions, impacts the faculty-student ratio and dilutes the quality of teaching in such institutions. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers Cadre) Act introduced by this Government in 2019 made provisions for reservation at the institution level. The Committee also notes that all CHEIs (Central Higher Education Institutions) were requested to undertake special drive to fill backlog vacancies of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Casts (OBCs) in their institutions in Mission Mode. As of December 2024, this has resulted in the filling up of 26,751 vacancies, out of which 15,637 are faculty positions including 1,949 SC, 771 ST and 3,261 OBC-reserved positions. The Committee recommends that the recruitment of faculty positions be expedited further. The Committee also recommends that the Ministry should create a structured plan to phase out excessive contractual employment and recruit qualified faculty into permanent positions with job security and fair wages.

(Para 3.14.14 ibid)

39. Maintaining a robust and efficient workforce is crucial for the effective functioning of higher educational institutions. Timely and strategic filling of vacancies in both teaching and non-teaching positions based on the principles and procedures for a transparent, merit-based, and efficient recruitment process is essential to ensure continuity of academic delivery, administrative efficiency, and overall institutional excellence. The Committee therefore, recommends that the Ministry of Education should direct the concerned stakeholders to conduct *regular workforce analysis to identify current and future staffing requirements, considering factors like student enrolment, program expansion, faculty retirement, and evolving administrative requirements and academic vision. Ensure that all recruitment processes are transparent and merit based, objective, and adhere to principles of equal opportunity and non-discriminatory, along with utilisation of technology to facilitate online applications, screening, and communication to avoid external interference.*

(Para 3.14.15 ibid)

Action Taken

Occurrence of vacancies and filling up of teaching positions is a continuous process. The vacancies keep arising due to retirement, resignation and additional requirements on account of enhancement of students' strength. Besides regular recruitment, the institutions are adopting various measures to address faculty shortages in order to ensure that studies of students are not affected which inter-alia includes hiring through reemployment, appointing Visiting Professor and Professors of Practice from relevant industries.

Shortfall in the teaching and non-teaching workforce, arising of vacancies and filling them up with suitable, qualified candidate(s) is a continuous process. The IIITs have been taking measures to attract quality faculties and non-faculties, which include year-round open advertisements, recruitment through search-cum-selection procedures, special recruitment drive, mission mode recruitment and invitation to alumni/ scientists/ faculty, etc. Special drives are conducted regularly for recruitment of various categories i.e., SC/ST/OBC/EWS/PwD etc. candidates.

IISERs regularly invite applications for faculty & non-faculty positions from the eligible candidates across categories, including PwD, through rolling advertisements throughout the year and also under mission-mode recruitment. In addition, special recruitment drives are also conducted for various categories, including PwD, from time to time.

NITs are Institutions of national importance and having Ph.D. qualification, in engineering, science and technology disciplines, a perquisite to become a faculty, therefore, fresh Ph.D. candidates are inducted as Assistant Professor (Grade-II) at Level-10 on contract basis to enable them acquire three years post Ph.D. teaching experience to become a regular faculty in the system. Further, the newly inducted faculty is provided seed money to take up research activities immediately after joining the NITs to ensure quality teaching and research do not get affected.

NITs follow Four-Tier Flexible Faculty Cadre Structure as provided in Schedule E of the Statutes governing these Institutions. The Flexi cadre, comprises of four cadre of the faculty namely (i) Assistant Professor Grade-II in AGPs of Rs.6000/- (L-10) & Rs.7000/- (L-11) to be appointed on contract basis; (ii) Assistant Professor Grade-I to be appointed on regular basis at AGP of Rs.8000/- (L-12); (iii) Associate Professor in AGP of Rs.9500/-(L-13A2); and (iv) Professor in AGP of Rs.10,500/- (L-14A). Under the Flexi cadre, the number of posts at each position (Pay Level / Grade Pay) is not fixed but flexible which Institute can dynamically allocate within its overall sanctioned strength depending upon its requirement at a given time. Also, there is no rigid formula for distribution of sanctioned posts among the departments and centres. However, the reservation policy as enunciated in the CEI (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019 is being followed in all faculty recruitments even in the contractual appointments at Level-10 and Level-11.

Secretary (HE) vide OM dated 24th August, 2021 and 29th September, 2022 has advised all NITs/IIEST to fill up backlog as well as regular vacancies in time bound manner through Mission mode recruitments. Under the mission mode recruitments, the vacant positions are continuously monitored and the progress is being reviewed regularly by the Ministry.

IIMs follow 'Flexi Cadre System for faculty recruitment' i.e., all Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor are in a single pool and according to requirements/ qualifications/ experience; faculty recruitment is conducted in any of these posts.

IIMs recruit faculty keeping in view the requirement of specialized knowledge/expertise to cater to the wide variety of courses offered under various programmes. IIMs being Institutions of National Importance where a faculty is expected to be able to teach and keep up with the most brilliant students of the country, faculty positions are filled through a rigorous selection process. There have been many occasions when candidates were not found suitable.

In order to attract adequate applications from reserved categories, institutions have provided relaxation in terms of age, experience and number of required research publications, etc. Moreover, some IIMs re-advertise these vacant posts immediately, some IIMs adopt the system of rolling advertisement, organize special drive for filling up the vacant posts under reserved categories, etc. Ministry has been issuing directions, from time to time, to all IIMs to fill up the vacant posts in a Mission Mode. All the IIMs have started the process of recruitment to fill up the vacant posts starting from September 2022 under Mission Recruitment.

Section 10 of the IIM Act states that the Board of Governors of each IIM shall be the principal executive body of that institute. Section 11 of the Act empowers the Board to take decisions on questions of policy relating to the administration and working of the Institute; to create academic, administrative, technical and other posts and to make appointments thereto; to specify by regulations the qualifications, classification, terms of office and method of appointment of the academic, administrative, technical and other staff of the institute etc. The Board of each IIM takes into account student enrolment, program expansion, faculty retirement, evolving administrative requirements and academic vision of the institute while identifying staffing requirement. Recruitment is done in a transparent manner with online advertisement published on the concerned institute's website as well as through other media clearly specifying the qualifications required for the post.

Reservation policy stipulated by the Government of India is followed in the CUs, IITs, IIITs, IIMs, NITs, IIEST Shibpur, IISERs and other CFTIs.

'Rozgar Mela' is one of the steps toward fulfilment of the commitment of the Government to accord highest priority to fill all vacant posts. The Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education is also committed to this cause and has filled 16507 faculty and 11943 non-faculty posts in all the Central Higher Educational Institutions in Mission Mode (From Sept. 2022 to 12.07.2025).

Recommendation

40. The Committee notes that part of the difficulty in filling reserved faculty positions for some communities – such as the ST (Hills) in Assam – is due to the lack of a sustained effort to create a pipeline where students from such communities are encouraged to stay in school from primary education up until PhD. The discontinuation of the National Level Science Talent Search Examination (NSTSE) has dealt a severe blow to the efforts to create such a pipeline. The Committee recommends that the Department should work with other stakeholders, including the

NCERT and the Department of School Education and Literacy, to explore the possibility to restart the NSTSE.

(Para 3.14.16 ibid)

Action Taken

The National Science Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS) renamed as National Talent Search Scheme (NTSS) in 1976, is a flagship initiative of the Government of India designed to identify and nurture exceptionally gifted students at the secondary level. The scheme, implemented by NCERT, provides sustained financial support in the form of scholarships and nurturance, thereby enabling meritorious learners to pursue senior years of schooling and further higher studies. The National Talent Search Examination (NTSE), administered to identify NTSS scholars, was last conducted in 2021. However, scholarships to the existing awardees are disbursed by NCERT continuously.

Concurrently, the scheme guidelines have been under revision to align it with the mandate of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 and the recommendations emanating out of the independent third-party evaluation of the scheme conducted in 2020-21 and ensuing stakeholder consultations, which inter-alia revealed that the existing scheme suffered from several limitations in its design and implementation.

To this end, draft EFC memo for introducing NTSS 2.0 with enhanced scope and features has been circulated for Inter-Ministerial consultations on 24.09.2025.

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted. Necessary instructions are issued to all institutions to follow CEI (Central Educational Institutions) Reservation in Teacher's Cadre, Act, 2019 and all other guidelines issued by Government of India from time to time regarding reservation policies in recruitment.

Recommendation

41. The Committee also welcomes the initiative by IISc Bengaluru to introduce summer internship programs in partnership with Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) to bring students from a wide variety of social and educational backgrounds to stay on the institute's campus and learn about its faculty and their research. The Committee recommends that the Department should take initiatives to institutionalise such an internship scheme across all of the country's premier HEIs to provide inspiration to students at a young age, securing the pipeline for future scholars.

(Para 3.14.17 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation has been duly noted. Wherever applicable, under the existing curriculum structure internship programmes are organised for students from time to time by respective institutions.

Department has issued advisories to the INIs under its jurisdiction to provide internship opportunities to the students.

STUDENT WELL BEING

Recommendation

42. Student well-being in higher education institutions (HEIs) is crucial for academic success, mental health, and overall personal development. As higher education becomes *increasingly demanding, students face challenges such as academic pressure, financial stress, mental health issues, and social isolation. In order to ensure a supportive learning environment, the Committee recommends that all HEIs to establish on-campus counselling centers with trained psychologists and mental health professionals and implement 24/7 helplines and online counselling services for students. Increase government funding for student scholarships and grants, especially for economically disadvantaged students. The Committee further of the view that a holistic approach that combines mental health support, financial assistance, academic guidance, and a safe campus environment will lead to higher retention rates, better academic performance, and a more productive workforce.*

(Para 3.15.5 ibid)

Action Taken

The Department of Higher Education has been actively working to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across India. Through various strategic initiatives - including the introduction of guidelines, capacity building programs, and collaborative workshops - the Ministry aims to foster a culture of mental wellness within academic settings. These efforts are designed to address both the immediate and long-term mental health needs of students, ensuring they have the support required to navigate academic pressures, personal struggles, and social transitions.

Aligned with NEP 2020, the Department of Higher Education launched an integrated approach to promote mental health, resilience, and well-being under the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Program. This capacity building initiative focuses on equipping faculty in higher education institutions with the knowledge and tools necessary to foster a culture of positive mental health practices on campus.

A key aspect of this initiative is the on-going capacity building of faculty across Centrally Funded HEIs. Online sessions are conducted bi-weekly, engaging 10 faculty members each from 10-12 HEIs. So far around 2389 faculties have participated in 35 sessions organised in 168 HEIs from the Month of May 2024 to December 2025. This growing network of professionals is being empowered to support students' mental health and wellbeing, and with continued institutional involvement, the program is poised to establish a robust and sustainable mental health support system throughout the country's higher education sector.

Additionally, around 151 Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centers that are established in HEIs, have been directed by the Department of Higher Education to focus on the aspect of promoting mental wellbeing on campus in their capacity building programs and conduct at least one session on mental health as part of faculty development.

To encourage the adoption of best practices, the initiative also includes Exemplar Visits to institutions with successful mental health and wellbeing support systems. These visits aim to document and replicate effective models across other HEIs. The first visit took place at Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT) Jaipur on 4th August 2024 and the second visit took place on 13th September 2024, to Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). By engaging with these Centers of Excellence, the Department of Higher Education aims to build a repository of best practices that can be shared and adapted by other institutions to strengthen mental health support for students. The exemplar visits along with sharing of best practices through online sessions, throw light not only on counseling cells in HEIs but also on practices such as the 'Student Benevolent Fund' at IIT Kanpur which ensures that students undergoing financial hardships receive grants and scholarships.

In November 2024, the Department in collaboration with IIT Hyderabad organised the first National Wellbeing Conclave. This event provided a platform for HEIs to collaborate in building an ecosystem that prioritizes the mental health and wellbeing of both students and faculty. Hosted by IIT Hyderabad on November 9-10th, 2024, the conclave brought together over 350 stakeholders, including students, faculty members, and institutional leaders from nearly 100 centrally funded HEIs across the country. This two-day event featured expert-led panel discussions, interactive sessions, hands-on workshops and a dedicated exhibition.

Department of Higher Education conducted 2nd National Well-being Conclave at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay on 22nd – 23rd November, 2025. The Conclave brought together nearly 300 faculty and students from 80 Centrally Funded Institutions (CFIs), policymakers, and independent organisations to collectively deliberate upon the wellbeing agenda across higher education institutes. A key highlight was the release of the "Compendium of Emerging Best Practices of Well-being 2.0" which documents replicable models from CFIs. The Conclave included expert led symposiums and panel discussions, workshops, and a wellbeing exhibition showcasing the wellbeing initiatives of participating HEIs. By charting a comprehensive action plan for 2025–26, the conclave reaffirmed the commitment to building a resilient, inclusive, and accountable academic ecosystem that places mental health at the core of India's higher education reforms.

It is also submitted that recently the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has, on 24.03.2025, constituted a National Task Force under the Chairmanship of Justice (Retd.) S. Ravindra Bhat, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India and other experts from various domains as members. The Task Force is to discuss and deliberate the issues related to mental health concerns among students, prevention of commission of the suicides in educational institutions and recommend preventive measures. Ministry accords highest importance to each incident of suicide on campuses of educational Institutions and all appropriate measures will be taken on the suggestions given by the National Task Force.

Considering to the importance of the subject, the Department of Higher Education and University Grants Commission (UGC) has also taken the following initiatives:-

- An advisory was issued on 20.07.2020 to HEIs to participate in the 'Manodarpan' – An initiative launched by the Ministry to provide psychological support to students and teachers and their families during COVID pandemic.
- An Advisory was issued on 06.01.2023 to HEIs regarding the National Suicide Prevention Strategy framed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Guidelines issued on 13.04.2023 for Promotion of Physical Fitness, Sports, Students' Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-Being in HEIs.
- An advisory was Issued to HEIs on 22.05.2023 about the initiative launched by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare regarding Tele MANAS- a toll free mental health helpline to provide support and assistance to people struggling with mental health issue.
- An advisory was issued to HEIs on 04.04.2024 about the initiative launched by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare regarding Landmark initiative of Tele Mental Health Assurance and Networking Across States (Tele-MANAS) and popularizing its logo.
- Issued an advisory on 23-05-2025 to HEIs regarding "Submission of data on initiatives for Students' Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-Being at Higher Education Institutions for the consideration of National Task Force constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India".

- Issued an advisory on 08-08-2025 to HEIs regarding “Compliance of Hon’ble Supreme Court of India order dated 28-07-2025 in the matter of Criminal Appeal No. 1425/2025 @ SLP (Crl) No. 13324/2024 and the subsequent National Task Force constituted by Supreme Court of India”.

Issued an advisory on 04-09-2025 to HEIs regarding “Launch of the Official Website of the National Task Force constituted pursuant to Supreme Court Judgment in Criminal Appeal No.1425/2025@SLP (Crl) No.13324/2024 titled Amit Kumar & Ors Vs. Union of India & Ors.

Recommendation

43. The Committee notes the lack of a regulatory framework at the national level to regulate the proliferating coaching center industry. There are widespread reports of financial fraud in these coaching centers, as well as instances of student suicide, drug abuse, and mental health struggles. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Department should take the lead to bring together all relevant stakeholders and formulate a policy to regulate the coaching center industry.

(Para 3.15.6 ibid)

Action Taken

Ministry of Education has taken cognizance of the fact that the number of unregulated private coaching centers in the country continues to grow. Instances of such centers charging exorbitant fees from students, undue stress on students resulting in students committing suicides, loss of precious lives due to fire and other accidents, and many other malpractices being adopted by these centers widely reported in the media.

The coaching centers are not formally a part of the institutional mechanism under the law /acts/regulations either of the State / UT or Central Government. Majority of these coaching centers spread across the country are commercial entities which are regulated as per the law of the respective States / UTs.

In order to regulate the Private Coaching and tuition classes, a number of States / UTs have brought out legislations like Bihar Coaching Institute (Control & Regulation) Act, 2010, Goa Coaching Classes (Regulation) Act, 2001, Haryana Registration and Regulation of Private Coaching Institutes Act, 2024, Jammu & Kashmir Regulation of Private Tuition Centre Rules, 2010, Uttar Pradesh Regulation of Coaching Act, 2002, the Karnataka Tutorial Institutions (Registration and Regulation) Rules, 2001, Manipur Coaching Institute (Control and Regulation) Act in their respective jurisdiction. Moreover, Government of Rajasthan has issued guidelines on 27.09.2023 for betterment of mental health and stress reduction of coaching students. Recently, Government of Rajasthan has introduced the Coaching Centres (Regulation and Control) Bill, 2025 on March 19, 2025.

While significant steps have been taken by States / UTs to address the issues related to Private Coaching, Ministry of Education has circulated a Guideline for Regulation of Coaching Centers to States/UTs on 16.01.2024 for consideration by way of appropriate legal framework.

The Guidelines encompass several key aspects, including defining coaching centers, specifying conditions and necessary documents for registration, issues related to fees, outlining infrastructure prerequisites for establishing coaching centers, establishing a code of conduct for coaching centers; lay emphasis on significance of mental well-being, advocating for the prioritization of counsellors and psychologists' support within coaching centres; no batch segregation; maintenance of records etc.

The guidelines, inter-alia, stipulate continuous monitoring of activities of the coaching center; introducing a complaint mechanism and disposal thereof; penalties; process for cancellation of registration and appeals etc. The guidelines also provides that the fee charged for courses/curriculum shall be fair and reasonable; under no circumstances the fee shall be increased during the currency of the course; easy exit policy and refund of fee on pro-rata basis; coaching classes for those students who are also studying in institutions/schools shall not be conducted during their institutions/schools' hours, so that their regular attendance in such institutions/schools remains unaffected and also to avoid dummy schools.

The Guidelines provides a framework which the States/UTs can adopt by way of appropriate legal framework, including amendment to the existing Acts/Regulations, if needed.

Secretary, D/o Higher Education vide D.O. letter dated 27.01.2024 requested the Chief Secretaries of all States/ UTs to direct concerned Departments in State/UT for consideration of the Guidelines for Regulation of Coaching Centers and initiating steps for operationalizing the same. A D.O. letter dated 16.07.2024 was also sent to Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs for sharing steps/initiatives taken for implementation of Guidelines for Regulation of Coaching Centers.

Additionally, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has, on 13.11.2024, issued Guidelines for "Prevention of Misleading Advertisement in Coaching Sector" which aims to safeguard students and the public from deceptive marketing practices commonly employed by coaching centers.

Establishing a centralized regulation at this juncture would not be appropriate, as the subject like regulation of coaching centre necessitates a collaborative approach between the State and Central government. Rather than a unilateral imposition of central government directives, a synergistic alignment of State and Central policies would be more conducive to the holistic development of our educational framework.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

Recommendation

44. The Committee notes the importance of a regular, full-time VC in running a University, particularly given their critical role in appointing faculty and non-faculty members and overseeing the implementation of development plans. The NEP 2020 promises that leadership positions in HEIs will not be kept vacant for long periods (as is indeed often the case) and that outgoing and incoming Vice-Chancellors will overlap for some time. The Committee is deeply pained to know that as of December 2024, up to ten Central Universities are running without regular VCs. The position of the Director of Indian Institute of Advanced Studies has been vacant since August 2021. Similarly, Banaras Hindu University's Executive Council, the apex executive body of the University which is in charge of the management and administration of the institution, has been defunct since June 2021 since members nominated by Hon'ble President in his capacity as visitor of University have not been appointed. In the absence of members, the meeting of the EC has not been held for three years, and key functions – including the selection of faculty members – has been left entirely to the VC under his emergency powers. The Committee is deeply anguished by the failure to appoint leadership for these 10 HEIs and recommends that the Department should take necessary action in this regard expeditiously.

(Para 3.16.12 ibid)

Recommendation

45. The Committee notes the importance of a regular, full-time VC in running a University, particularly given their critical role in appointing faculty and non-faculty members and overseeing the implementation of development plans. The NEP 2020 promises that leadership positions in HEIs will not be kept vacant for long periods (as is indeed often the case) and that outgoing and incoming Vice-Chancellors will overlap for some time. The Committee notes that as of December 2024, up to ten Central Universities are running without regular, full- time VCs. The position of the Director of Indian Institute of Advanced Studies has not been occupied by a full-time appointee since August 2021. The Committee notes the delay in appointment of leadership for these 10 HEIs and recommends that the Department should take necessary action in this regard expeditiously.

(Para 3.16.13 ibid)

Action Taken

Occurrence and filling up of the vacancy to the post of Vice Chancellor is a continuous process. To streamline the recruitment process of Vice Chancellor, this Ministry has developed an online portal (SAMARTH) and now applications are received online on this portal. In order to ensure that every University has a regular Vice Chancellor, the process for appointment of Vice Chancellor as per the respective rules, is initiated almost six-nine months before the expiration of the term of incumbent vice chancellor.

From January 2025 to December 2025, Regular Vice Chancellors have been appointed in 11 Central Universities including IGNOU.

Recently, Prof. Himanshu Kumar Chaturvedi, took charge in October 2025, succeeding Prof. Raghavendra Tiwari as Director of Indian Institute of Advanced Studies.

BHU Executive Council has since been constituted.

Recommendation

46. The Committee appreciates that the CUET was brought from the academic year 2022-23 to reduce the burden on students, universities, and the entire education system, and to bring candidates passing out from different boards on an equal footing. However, some members of the Committee are not convinced of the merits of introducing the CUET as the universal admissions method for undergraduate studies. MCQ answers are particularly ill suited for humanities and social sciences disciplines which are definitionally centered on independent, subjective thinking.

The Committee recommends review of the quality of question paper and also design of the CUET exam to ensure that it meets the purpose envisaged in NEP, 2020.

For instance, the JNU system of test administration was designed to ensure that the university was able to fulfil the criterion of socio economic and regional diversity and representation mandated by the JNU Act in its admissions.

The CUET as the sole entrance examination has its merits, but it does not allow for Universities like JNU, with their specific legislative mandates, to meet their specific needs. The Committee resolves to deliberate further on the matter.

(Para 3.16.14 ibid)

Action Taken

The observations of the Committee are duly noted and UGC and NTA have been suitably advised.

In pursuance of the National Education Policy, 2020, the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) is being conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission in Central Universities and other participating institutions from the academic year 2022-23.

Introduction of CUET as a common undergraduate admission test has provided a single application window allowing students to apply once and appear in one examination for admission to multiple universities.

It also reduces exam stress by offering a common syllabus and calendar and has emerged as the second-largest examination in India within two years with 13,54,699 applicants in 2025.

CUET(UG) Structure has been rationalized after experience from first three editions. CUET(UG) 2025 was offered in 37 subjects and the results were declared early by more than three weeks on 2025 than in 2024.

Recommendation

47. The Committee notes that while industry experts can add value as guest lecturers, regular teaching positions may primarily be filled up from qualified academic professionals with appropriate training in pedagogy.

(Para 3.16.18 ibid)

Action Taken

The observations and recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted. The regular teaching positions are primarily filled up from qualified academic professionals with appropriate training in pedagogy as per UGC guidelines. Wherever applicable, the institutions also engage guest faculty on need basis.

Recommendation

48. The Committee recommends that the Department/UGC provide funding to support regional language instruction and research to improve accessibility for non-English- speaking students.

(Para 3.16.19 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee is duly noted. Further, following work is being done for empowering students of regional language medium.

- UGC to allow teaching-learning and examination in 22 Indian Languages
- UGC to make available books of all subjects in 22 Indian Languages
- 100 Books for UG Students for Arts, Science and Humanities launched in 12 Indian Languages by UGC.
- 20 Technical Books of the First year translated in 12 Indian Languages by AICTE. 87 Technical Books for 2nd Year in 12 Indian Languages is under translation by AICTE.
- AICTE has permitted 41 Engineering Institutes across 13 States in 8 regional languages
- AICTE has developed Machine Translation Tool namely ‘Anuvadini’
- MBBS Course has been started in Hindi

- Common University Entrance Test conducted in 13 Languages and participated by 242 Universities.
- JEE (Mains) and NEET (UG) conducted in 13 languages involving about more than 30 lakhs students
- Bhartiya Bhasha Sansthan is developing App named "Bhasha Sagar' for language learning [it will include 270 Indian languages]
- Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Pariyojana is proposed in Budget 2025-26 to provide digital-form Indian language books for school and higher education. This aims to help students understand their subjects better.
- Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) has compiled 30 lakh technical and scientific words in 22 Indian Languages – 16 lakh words already digitized.
- An AI Auto Translation Tool/Portal developed: AICTE has developed an AI based translation App and study material which is being translated into Indian languages.
- An initiative i.e. e-KUMBH (Knowledge Unleashed in Multiple Bhartiya Languages) Portal launched
    - ✓ A repository of Engineering Books in different Indian Languages
    - ✓ More than 1,06,052 downloads from the portal

In accordance with the Budget announcement 2025-26, Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Pariyojana is envisaged to provide textbooks of different subjects being taught at level of School and Higher Education in 22 Indian languages in digital form.

The Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Pariyojana aims to provide more than 2.5 lakhs textbooks in 22 Scheduled Indian Languages.

Implementation Strategy:

- Decentralized Approach: Led by UGC, AICTE, INIs, and NSDC to support original writing and translation
- AI Translation Tools: Institutions encouraged to use Anuvadini, Udaan, and Bhashini
- Quality Assurance: Translations vetted through dedicated review systems
- Centralized Monitoring: Digital platforms enable distribution and tracking, with guidance from Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti and NETF

UGC, in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti (BBS) has identified 23 nodal universities; 1089 authors shortlisted and their training conducted to capacitate them on book writing; 759 book proposals received and the book writing is in progress which will be subsumed under BBPS.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCING AGENCY (HEFA)

Recommendations

49. The Committee notes that this was partly because HEFA's initial capitalisation was only 10,000 crores, with the goal of leveraging the fund from market borrowings, Govt guaranteed bonds, and CSR donations. This has not panned out the way it was intended – the capitalisation is currently only Rs. 5,393.75 Crore. Additionally, the Department has noted that due to the non-availability of Government guarantee, HEFA has not raised any funding through Government guaranteed bonds. Therefore, there is need to capacitate HEFA to meet the 1 lakh crores target that the Department set.

(Para 3.17.10 ibid)

Action Taken

Department has noted the observation of the committee.

Recommendation

50. The Committee notes that as per Revitalizing Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) by 2022, introduced in the Union Budget 2018-19, the objectives of HEFA include the "shift from a system of block budgetary grants to a project-based approach." However, as the report commissioned by the Department from the NIPFP to review the scheme has noted, "the move from block grants to project-based financing was accompanied by a simultaneous shift towards loan financing." Given that loan financing through HEFA has fallen far short of its own targets (nearing about 43% of its 2022 target of investment worth 1 lakh crores three years after the date), there is a need to supplement investment in public education through Govt. grants, philanthropy, and PPP initiatives.

(Para 3.17.11 ibid)

Action Taken

In addition to HEFA funding, the Department of Higher Education also funds creation of infrastructure through Government Grant. The Department has also taken the initiative for the first time to develop the project in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in PPP Mode under Viability Gap Funding (VGF).

Three projects worth Rs. 585 crores of IIT Madras, IIM Udaipur and IIIT Nagpur have been approved by the PPPAC.

It is also mentioned that for institutions having lower IRG, substantial part of the principal repayment is met through Government Grant. For example, in case of Central University, 90% of principal repayment and full interest is borne by the Government.

Recommendation

51. The Committee notes that the Department entrusted the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy to review HEFA. The Report found some very important revelations –

- *The NIPFP report shows that on average, 78% of internal revenue raised by institutes that took HEFA loans is from student fees; in some institutions it is 100%. The Report further mentioned that some institutions told the NIPFP that the Department asked them to raise their fees to repay the loans. The Committee is deeply pained to learn that HEFA is directly contributing to the increase in fees for students – and that this is happening with the full permission of the Department of Higher Education.*
- *The report recommended keeping all institutions under 15 years old out of the purview of HEFA, and spreading the loan repayment burden across 15-20 years without prepayment penalty. The Committee endorses this recommendation.*
- *The report identified the need to reconfigure the HEFA windows. For example, established IITs and NITs are both eligible for HEFA loans under Repayment Window 1, wherein they are liable to repay 100% of principal and 10% of interest. Older IITs however have double the IRG of older NITs on average, making the grouping of both institutions in one window unviable. The Committee also notes that Window 4 of HEFA for IIITs and IIMs appears to be financially unviable, which is reflected in its low uptake*

of only two loans. The Committee recommends a rationalization of the windows, including the moving of institutions in Window 4 to Window 3.

The HEFA's loan repayment system is aligned with the sanctioning and not disbursement, which happens only when the borrowing institution starts a project and raises a demand. The Committee strongly recommends that HEFA change to a model aligned with disbursement rather than sanctioning to avoid institutes having to make payments before borrowing funds.

(Para 3.17.12 ibid)

Action Taken

Creation of additional infrastructure through HEFA significantly enhances institutional capacity by enabling the development of modern academic, residential, and research facilities. Construction of new academic blocks, laboratories, hostels, and faculty residences, directly increases the physical and functional capacity of institutions to accommodate more students, faculty, and research scholars.

HEFA Windows have been created considering the revenue generation capacity of the institutions. A special window has been created for IIITs (PPP) and IIMs. The demand from these institutions is increasing.

The recommendations of the Committee regarding repayment aligned with the disbursement have been implemented.

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY (NTA)

Recommendation

52. The Committee notes that several firms involved in paper setting, administration, and correction have been blacklisted by one organisation/state government but that this is not impeding their securing of contracts from other states or organisations. The Committee therefore recommends that the Department compile a nationwide list of blacklisted firms so as to bring clarity in this regard.

(Para 3.18.3 ibid)

Action Taken

The Observation of the Committee is noted. It is submitted that core activities of NTA i.e. paper setting and correction are not outsourced, as they are crucial to maintain integrity of examination process. Further, the NTA maintains records of penalized vendors including terminations, blacklisting, and contract cessations and does not engage vendors that have been blacklisted by NTA itself. The procurement process adopted by NTA incorporates mandatory self-disclosure clauses regarding blacklisting of the bidder by any government agency.

Recommendation

53. The Committee notes that the NTA collected an estimated ₹3,512.98 Crores while it spent ₹3,064.77 Crores on the conduct of examinations – it therefore netted a surplus of Rs. 448 Crores in the last six years. It recommends that this corpus be used to build the agency's capabilities to conduct tests itself, or to strengthen regulatory and monitoring capabilities for its vendors.

(Para 3.18.4 ibid)

Action Taken

The Observation of the Committee is noted. However, it is submitted that preparations for exams begin much before the fee collection starts. NTA is a self-sustained organization and doesn't get government funding. At the beginning of the year, NTA needs funds for booking centres, paying experts, software, and security etc. The income and expenditure trend of NTA shows that on an average, 74.5 crores remain every year after incurring all expenses. The income remained unspent in the current Financial year is utilized for preparatory activities for next Financial Year. However, any surplus after budgeting for next year's activities can be appropriately utilized.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT COUNCIL (NAAC)

Recommendation

54. The Committee believes that the NAAC's accreditation process for HEIs needs to be streamlined. The current process is long and bureaucratic, with five yearly re-accreditation and yearly reports that demand considerable time from University administrators. The process also involves site visits by the accreditation team, which is cumbersome.

(Para 3.19.1 ibid)

Action Taken

As per vision of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, a robust system of graded accreditation shall be established, which will specify phased benchmarks for all HEIs to achieve set levels of quality, self-governance, and autonomy.

For strengthening the Assessment and Accreditation of HEIs, the Government of lndia constituted a High-Level Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, the then Chairperson, Board of Governors, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur & Chairperson, Standing Committee of IIT Council. This Committee considered the introduction of strategic reforms consistent with the vision of the NEP, 2020 and the need for adopting a simple, trust based, objective and rationalized system for approval, accreditation and ranking of HEIs through technology-driven systems. It also considered global best practices on accreditation. The recommendations made by the Committee have been approved by the Ministry. The report of this Committee is available at http://naac.gov.in/images/docs/DrRadhakrishnanCommittee-FinalReport.pdf

All HEIs will aim, through their Institutional Development Plans (IDPs), to attain the highest level of accreditation over the next 15 years, and thereby eventually aim to function as self-governing degree-granting institutions/clusters. In the long run, accreditation will become a binary process, as per the extant global practice.

Based on the accepted recommendations, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous organization under the UGC, is implementing the reforms in two phases- Introduction of Basic/ Binary Accreditation followed by Maturity Based Graded Levels (MBGLs). NAAC has held outreach programmes and focused consultations with State Higher Education authorities to sensitize them about the new accreditation methodology for HEIs.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH (ICHR)

Recommendation

55. The Committee observes that the budget for the ICHR is not encouraging, which creates a severe constraint on what the Council is able to achieve. The ICHR currently sponsors only 80 Junior Research Fellowships and 10 post-doctoral Fellowships across the whole country, which is pitifully inadequate. Given the unique nature of history where scholars only improve their capabilities with time, ICHR also needs to provide more support for retired Professors, which will require additional resourcing.

(Para 3.21.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendations of the Committee has been respectfully noted. It is the concerted effort of the Government to enhance the financial support to ICHR subject to availability of overall financial resources.

Recommendation

56. The Committee observes that there is no national database of archives and historical sources across the country. The compilation of such a task would be a worthy endeavour for the ICHR, and the Committee recommends that the Council consider the same.

(Para 3.21.3 ibid)

Action Taken

ICHR is in process to sign Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with different repositories of historical sources viz: National Archives of India, Central Secretariat Library, State Archives, private repositories and libraries of professional bodies etc. and to upload /share their webpage/links at ICHR's website for easy access of the scholars.

Recommendation

57. The Committee observes that ICHR has the opportunity to collaborate more with other organisations, including the ICSSR. Given that this is the 75th year of the Republic, it would be appropriate for the ICHR to embark on a joint research project with the ICSSR on the Indian Constitution.

(Para 3.21.4 ibid)

Action Taken

The ICHR will initiate a Project on Indian Constitution in joint collaboration with Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR).

Recommendation

58. The Committee observes that scholars need to face fewer bureaucratic hurdles after getting grants from the ICHR. They should not be burdened with copious requirements of proving expenditure, providing receipts, etc. The process should be streamlined accordingly. The Committee notes that the ICHR recently brought out a book on Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh through the ages and recommends that the ICHR also devote some resources to studying coastal history, including that of the Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

(Para 3.21.5 ibid)

Action Taken

ICHR follows a well-defined and duly approved procedure for the award and disbursement of grants under its various research schemes, strictly in accordance with the provisions laid down in its Research Funding Rules.

The ICHR will also initiate Research Projects on studying coastal history like Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep etc as per rules following due procedure.

ONE NATION ONE SUBSCRIPTION

Recommendation

59. The Department of Higher Education has informed the Committee that its analysis shows that the per user cost for journals subscribed through ONOS has substantially reduced due to introduction of the scheme. The per institution cost has gone down to ₹ 29 lakh per institution after ONOS from ₹ 37 lakh per institution before ONOS. Per user cost has gone down to ₹ 1,031 after ONOS from ₹ 1,545 before ONOS. The Government of India is centrally paying for all the government higher education institutions for journals published by these 30 publishers. Therefore, state governments need not spend any amount which they were spending earlier for these subscriptions. The Committee notes and appreciates this.

(Para 3.22.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The Department has respectfully noted the Committee's observations.

INDIAN INSTITUTES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IIITs)

Recommendation

60. The Committee notes that IIITs must follow all the regulations that other institutions do. For instance, the implementation of the Eight Pay Commission will significantly increase the salary burden on these institutions, and the contracting of CPWD for construction often involves higher costs. However, these IIITs receive none of the support that other technical Government HEIs do.

(Para 3.23.2 ibid)

Action Taken

Department has noted the observation of the committee.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHEAST

Recommendation

61. The Committee also notes that higher education in the Northeast faces unique challenges which the Department does not appear to have responded to sufficiently. For instance, the capital costs of setting up HEIs in the Northeast is reportedly twice as high as the rest of the country due to the transportation costs of building material, and the high-water table which requires land fillings to be fit for construction. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Department should work with the Department of North Eastern Regional Development to create a separate fund to support the capital costs of HEIs in the North East.

(Para 3.24.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted for compliance. IIM (Amendment) Act, 2025 has approved the establishment of IIM Guwahati as India's 22nd IIM, marking the second IIM in the north-east after IIM Shillong. Rs 555 Crore has been allocated for Infrastructure development of IIM Assam.

The necessary support from the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region will be sought to extend the support to the North Eastern States.

CHAPTER II
RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

The following recommendations are not being pursued further in view of the replies furnished by the Department of Higher Education:

Recommendation

1. *The Committee notes the issue of delayed submission of Utilisation Certificates by grantees/institutions needs to be addressed by putting in place a mechanism that makes it possible to fix accountability of the officers concerned. The Committee recommends that the reasons given by grantees/institutions in response to delay in submission also needs to be properly scrutinized and verified. The Committee also recommends that the Department should take proactive steps for highlighting the status of each grantee/institution and pendency of Utilisation Certificates against it on a public platform or through regular reminders to ensure that this requirement gets fulfilled and to check any laxity on their part and proper utilisation the allocated funds.*

(Para 2.22 ibid)

Action Taken

Department is making consistent efforts to reduce the pendency of outstanding Utilization Certificates. Further, computerized software has been developed and implemented to monitor the status of Utilization Certificate for Grant in Aid released by Ministry.

Utilisation Certificate Cell (UCC), under the Pr.CCA has cleared 75,210 out of 75,793 Utilization Certificates [from 2007-08 to 2023-24]. At present only 583 UC are pending, which are due for clearance. Department is taking concrete efforts to reduce the pending UCs with coordination of the Programme Divisions. Reminders are being issued by this office to the Programme Divisions for furnishing the pending UCs on priority. An updated list of outstanding UCs is also being published every month on the website of the Ministry of Education.

Recommendation

2. *Further, while scrutinizing the information submitted by the Department on the Audit observations that have been made by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the various matters relating to the Department for the years 2022-23 & 2023-24 and the action taken thereon, the Committee notes the various Audit observations that have been made by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CA&G) in respect of various matters relating to the Department and Institutions under its control have raised points towards over/inadmissible/excess payment. The Committee is of the view that while handling the various Audit Paras and responding/resolving them, the Department should issue strict guidelines/protocol to be followed in such cases.*

(Para 2.23 ibid)

Action Taken

It is stated that all efforts are made by the department to ensure that the expenditure is within the allocated budget. All excess expenditure is incurred only after approval of necessary re-appropriations by MoF.

All pending Audit Paras and PAC Paras are reviewed in every Senior Officers Meeting (SOM) held under the chairmanship of Secretary (HE) from time to time.

During these meetings, instructions are issued for timely updating of Action Taken Notes for all paras, and strict guidelines/protocols are also laid down to address and resolve such pending cases.

INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE (IoE) SCHEME

Recommendation

3. The Committee notes that the autonomy envisioned for IoEs needs to be extended to constituent colleges of the IoEs. The Committee also notes that rather than being granted autonomy, constituent colleges of IoEs such as DU have been caught up in protracted issues with the University management over basic functions like the recruitment and promotion of faculty. For instance, the Committee has been informed that at St Stephens College within DU, recruitment and promotion processes have been stalled since 2022, despite more than 30 vacancies in faculty positions. The matter, which involves the appointment of the Principal, is now sub-judice. The Committee recommends that the litigation may be resolved at the earliest.

(Para 3.3.9 ibid)

Action Taken

St. Stephen's College is one of India's most prestigious institutions of higher education which is a constituent college of the University of Delhi and is renowned for its strong academic culture and notable alumni. The college offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Arts and Sciences, combining academic rigor with a vibrant extracurricular environment. It holds the status of a minority institution under Article 30(1) of the Indian Constitution and reserves of its seats for Christian students.

In so far as, the issue with regard to holding of recruitment and promotion processes of St. Stephen College is concerned, the University of Delhi has proactively been writing to the Colleges including St. Stephen's College to fill up all the vacant teaching posts and to process the cases of teaching staff from AGP to the next higher AGP following due processes and procedures laid down in this behalf. In most of the Colleges, the process regarding filling up the vacant teaching posts and promotions of faculty have been accomplished in compliance with the directives of the University issued by it from time to time.

Accordingly, as per the procedure given under clause 7(4)(5) of Ordinance XVIII of the University of Delhi St. Stephen's College has been asked to get its advertisement(s) approved by the University before publication. After screening of applications received against the advertisement by the College as per the guidelines prescribed by the University, the College seeks panel of experts to proceed further with the recruitment process. The University has provided the names of experts for convening the meetings of Selection Committee for direct recruitment of Assistant Professor in all subjects for which request has been received from St. Stephen's College.

The promotion of teachers in colleges under CAS (Career Advancement Scheme) is made as per the provisions of prevailing UGC Regulations i.e. UGC Regulations 2018. As per the prescribed procedure the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the respective Colleges screen the applications of the eligible candidates of the Colleges. After screening the College requests the University for nomination of experts for the screening/selection Committees. Delhi University has provided the subject experts for promotion of existing faculty members under

CAS. The pay fixation in respect of newly promoted faculty members of the St Stephen's College had been vetted by the internal audit of the University and the same had been communicated to the college.

The continuation of Prof. John Varghese as Principal, St. Stephen’s College for second term is in contravention of UGC regulations 2018/ Clause 7(2)(d) of Ordinance XVIII of the University. The University of Delhi has constantly been writing to the authorities of St. Stephen’s College either to advertise the post of Principal in letter and spirit of revised model template circulated to all the Colleges vide letter dated 23.08.2019 keeping in line with the UGC Regulations adopted by the University or the College must seek ex-post-facto approval of the University in extending the term of Prof. John Varghese as Principal, St. Stephen’s College for the second term in consonance with the UGC Regulations, 2018 incorporated under clause 7(2)(d) of Ordinance XVIII of the University. Instead of complying with the procedure as laid down in UGC regulations 2018/ Clause 7(2)(d) of Ordinance XVIII of the University, the college administration has approached Hon’ble Delhi High Court by filing a writ petition.

The matter relating to the continuation of Prof. John Varghese as Principal, St. Stephen’s College for second term is *sub-judice* before the Hon’ble High Court of Delhi at New Delhi.

STUDY IN INDIA

Recommendation

4. The Committee notes that in recent years, there has been a notable trend of foreign universities establishing campuses in India which is driven by India's vast student market and the government's efforts to increase collaborations and joint degrees. However, India is yet to secure a campus from any of the leading global universities (the Ivy Leagues, NYU, CMU, etc.). The Committee recommends that the Department should make efforts to secure the same to enable greater access to the best of global resources for students within the country.

(Para 3.4.4 ibid)

Action Taken

As part of the transformative reforms envisioned under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, foreign universities have now been permitted to establish International Branch Campuses in India. This marks a significant step toward internationalizing Indian higher education and making world-class education more accessible to Indian students. Currently, foreign universities can set up campuses under two frameworks: the University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations and the GIFT City IFSCA Regulations.

The UGC has notified the University Grants Commission (Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations, 2023, which aim to give an international dimension to higher education by facilitating foreign institutions to offer their degrees in India at affordable costs. This will not only benefit Indian students but also promote India as a global study destination.

Fourteen Letter of Intents (LOIs) issued to thirteen Foreign Universities - University of Southampton (UoS), UK, Campuses in Gurugram, NCR; University of Liverpool, to set-up Campuses in Bengaluru; University of York, University of Aberdeen, Illinois Institute of Technology, and Instituto Europeo Di Design (IED), Italy to set-up Campuses in Mumbai; University of Western Australia in (Mumbai & Chennai); Victoria University (Australia) in Noida; Western Sydney University (Australia) in Greater Noida, and La Trobe University

(Australia) in Bengaluru; University of Bristol (United Kingdom) in Mumbai; Lancaster University & University of New South Wales, Australia in Bengaluru.

In addition, D/o Higher Education is making all out efforts in popularising the UGC/GIFT City regulations across all international platforms as well as during meetings at bilateral and multilateral levels. DHE is also taking special efforts to reach the top universities in potential counties like USA, U.K., Italy, Australia etc. Under International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) Regulations 2022, approvals have been accorded to 5 universities from UK, Australia and Northern Ireland for operating offshore branch campuses in GIFT City SEZ, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Among these 5 universities, Deakin University & University of Wollongong have commenced its courses in July and November, 2024 respectively.

Branch campuses of Southampton (UoS) in India also commenced classes in their campus.

A facilitation Committee for FHEIs has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. M Jagadesh Kumar, former Chairman, UGC.

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Recommendation

5. The Committee notes that the interdisciplinary knowledge domains benefitting from the IKS Programme could be useful for the country's social and economic development. The planned utilization of its funds is another aspect where the Committee is very much interested as it would help in research and knowledge expansion and capabilities of the human resources of the country. The Committee recommends that researching the possibility of using ancient Indian wisdom to address contemporary concerns, including people leadership and health and wellness. As the allocation in BE is i.e. Rs. 50 Crores is less than the amount projected to the Ministry of Finance, the Department may ask for more allocations at the RE stage so that the Scheme does not suffer due to shortage of funds.

(Para 3.6.5 ibid)

Action Taken

The Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, through its Central Sector Scheme i.e., Indian Knowledge System (IKS), is promoting research, curriculum integration, and capacity building in India's traditional knowledge systems. The scheme has implemented several programmes to promote IKS in education system such as IKS Minors Programme, IKS Interdisciplinary Research through IKS Research for Proposals Program and IKS Research Centre Proposals Program, IKS textbook and course material writing programme, IKS Institutional Internships, IKS Panchatantra Project, Faculty Development Programmes and workshops, Digitization & Bhāratīya Jñāna Saritā and IKS Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (IKS-TKDL) Workshop.

Scheme at an initial stage of implementation requires undergoing activities such as proposal evaluation, expert consultations, curriculum development, capacity building etc.

The BE allocation for IKS is made after assessing the requirements of the IKS for the financial year 2025-26.

PRADHAN MANTRI UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (PM USHA)

Recommendation

6. The Committee notes that Dhanmanjuri University in Manipur, set up under RUSA in 2017, has not achieved recognition under 12 (B) of the UGC Act 1956 and NAAC accreditation *under 2(f). Notably, both NAAC accreditation under 2(f) and UGC recognition under 12(B) were accorded to the five constituent colleges of Dhanmanjuri University when they were earlier affiliated to Manipur University as colleges. However, the lack of recognition and accreditation as a University has made fellowships, funding, grants, and scholarships difficult for the University. The Committee recommends that such cases be expedited to minimize the bureaucratic hurdles faced by universities.*

(Para 3.7.6 ibid)

Action Taken

The Ministry acknowledges the Committee's concern regarding lack of UGC recognition under Section 12(B) of the UGC Act 1956 and NAAC accreditation under Section 2(f) for Dhanmanjuri University in Manipur, which impedes the University's access to fellowships, funding, grants etc. In this respect, it is being informed that as the subject matter pertains to the respective institutions, the States/UTs are being encouraged through regular review meetings to actively pursue recognition and accreditation of their institutions under UGC and NAAC frameworks, and the Ministry continues to provide the necessary guidance to States/UTs to expedite the processes.

Dhanamanjuri University (DM University) has come into existence under "The Dhanamanjuri University Act, 2017 "which came into force on the 6th of April, 2018 through a notification in Manipur Gazette published by the Department of Higher and Technical Education, Government of Manipur.

The University was established under the National Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). As the University was instituted in 2017 and came into existence in 2018, the institution was eligible to apply for NAAC accreditation under Revised Accreditation Framework. However, Dhanamanjuri University has not volunteered for NAAC accreditation. The five colleges which are presently the constituent colleges of the Dhanamanjuri University can independently volunteer for NAAC Accreditation as per existing guidelines.

After establishment of Dhanamanjuri University, Imphal, Manipur, the name of the University has been included in the list of universities established as per Section 2(f) of the UGC Act, 1956, as maintained by UGC. The lists of all UGC recognized Higher Education Institutions (Universities and Colleges) are uploaded on the UGC website https://www.ugc.gov.in and may be accessed at the tab HEIs.

The University has submitted a proposal to UGC for grants of 12-B Status. The proposal was examined, and it has been observed that the University is not accredited by NAAC so far, which is a mandatory condition for the grant of 12-B status.

In this regard, UGC has written a letter dated 08.05.2023 to the University and requested that to get the NAAC accreditation and provide a copy of the NAAC accreditation certificate of the University so that further necessary action may be taken.

HIGHER EDUCATION STATISTICS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (HESPIS)

Recommendation

7. The Committee notes that the data presented by private universities in its study visit to Bengaluru, as well as extant data collected through AISHE, shows that there is severe underrepresentation of SC/STs in particular and OBCs as well in private universities and HEIs. The Committee believes that the provision of equitable opportunities to all sections of society is a *fundamental duty of all HEIs, private or public, and is in keeping with the Constitutional value of fraternity and justice. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Department should take initiatives to draft a new legislation to implement Article 15(5) of the Indian Constitution and make provisions for reservations for underrepresented groups in private institutions as well.*

(Para 3.9.10 ibid)

Action Taken

For implementation of reservation in the Central Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), the Central Government has notified the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006 for reservation in admission of the students belonging to the SCs, STs and OBCs. Further, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act 2019, on 17th January 2019 the Department of Higher Education has issued instructions to provide reservation for EWSs for admission in Central Educational Institutions.

Education is a subject in the concurrent list of the Indian Constitution with – 85.88% students enrolled in State Public and Private HEIs [source: All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) – provisional - 2022-23]. State (Public/Private) Universities are established under Acts passed by the relevant State legislatures and are governed as per the Acts, Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, and Regulations approved by the respective State Governments. It is thus also the responsibility of the State Governments to make suitable legislative provisions for providing reservation in the HEIs established by them.

Some States have enacted Acts for providing reservation in admissions in the State Private Universities e.g. Maharashtra Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Act, 2023; Karnataka Act No. 15 of 2023; the Uttar Pradesh Private Universities Act, 2019; the Bihar Private Universities Act, 2013; the Apex Professional University (Amendment) Act, 2022 of Arunachal Pradesh.

PROVISION OF GIRL'S HOSTEL

Recommendation

8. As per the budgetary allocations for the Financial Year 2025-26, only Rs. 2 crore has been allocated under the head "Girls' Hostel". The meagre amount allocated under the Head is insufficient to maintain the existing Girls Hostels. Further, the Committee is aware that there are many issues being faced by the girl's hostels like infrastructure, salaries to the staff, security, etc. which will remain unaddressed given this existing budget allocation. Besides, the Committee also concerned about the disturbing incidents of suicides which have to be addressed by the DoHE. The Committee therefore, recommends that the Department should allocate substantial funds for the construction of new girls' hostels, prioritizing locations near universities and colleges, especially in semi-urban and underserved regions. The Department should also expand existing hostels to accommodate a larger number of students. The Department may consider the utilisation of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to accelerate the development of hostel infrastructure should be explored. For enhanced safety and security, implementation of robust security measures, including 24/7 security personnel, CCTV surveillance, and controlled access systems may be considered to check the cases of suicide and support female enrolment in higher educational institutions. The Department may consider allocation of more funds under the Head for the purpose at the time of Revised Estimates during the FY 2025-26.

(Para 3.10.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The Prime Minister's Girls' Hostel is a Central Sector Scheme formulated for construction of seven girl's hostels at designated places for accommodating girl students in the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir under the Prime Minister's Development Package–2015. Construction of seven Girls' Hostels [located at Government Degree Colleges in Bhadarwah, Rajouri and Paloura (Jammu Division); Bemina, Pulwama and Kupwara (Kashmir Division) and Kargil (Ladakh Division)] has been sanctioned under this scheme at an estimated cost of Rs. 52.01 crores. Funds amounting to Rs. 38.56 crores have been released under this scheme to UGC for further disbursement to concerned District authorities in the State during different Financial Years (i.e. Rs. 10.00 crores, Rs.20.00 crores, Rs.3.25 crores, Rs. 1.3125 crore, Rs. 2.00 crore and Rs. 2.00 crores during the Financial Years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 respectively). The funds were released to UGC based on the status of construction of Girls Hostels and requirement of funds by them. Further funds would be released as and when the requirement from UGC is received and also the submission of UCs for the previous grants released to them under the Scheme.

Further, under the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PMUSHA), under various components of the scheme, the HEIs can undertake various infrastructural activities including construction of girls' hostel, etc. The "Nirbhaya Fund" has also been created for implementing the initiatives aimed at improving the security and safety of women.

ACCESSIBILITY TO LOAN FACILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Recommendation

9. The Committee notes that up to 18% GST is being imposed on several educational goods and services, contributing to the financial inaccessibility of education for students. The Committee was disappointed to learn that the Department, in its response to the Committee noted that it did not collect data on taxes on educational goods and services, a fact which precludes it from taking on any initiative to lower the tax rate on these goods and services. The Committee, therefore, recommends that a study of GST and other taxes on educational goods and services should be conducted by the DoHE. The Department should proactively take up the issue of making tuition fees and textbooks GST-free with the Ministry of Finance/GST Council within the next three months and apprise the Committee of the developments and outcome thereof in a time bound manner.

(Para 3.13.16 ibid)

Recommendation

10. The Committee also notes that in addition to GST on educational goods and services, HEIs are also facing high rates of GST on goods and services being procured by them. This includes the 18% GST on the construction of buildings, and GST on equipment and chemicals for laboratory research. Similarly, the Committee notes that the cost of equipment for scientific research and laboratories has increased many folds due to the increase in custom duties on lab chemicals from 10% to 150%. The Committee recommends that the Department should work with the Ministry of Finance to develop a system for tax rebates to HEIs on the procurement of such goods and services.

(Para 3.13.17 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendations of the Committee have been noted. The subject matter is related to GST Council, the same is being taken up through Ministry of Finance.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (UGC)

Recommendation

11. The Committee notes that of the 1100 Universities and University-level institutions in the country, only about 239 are in the central domain. The Department of Higher Education is one of the stakeholders in higher education in the country, and this should reflect in the Department's consultative processes. The Committee noted that before being issued, the UGC's draft Regulations (2025) were presented to the Vice Chancellors of Central Universities, the members of the UGC, and the Secretary (HE) and officials of the Ministry of Education. However, the Department noted that "it could not discuss the draft regulations with the CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education)." The Committee advises the Department to consider if any stakeholders are left and to include them in the consultation process in the future.

(Para 3.16.7 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted.

Recommendation

12. The Committee notes that Central and State Universities are established and governed under specific Acts passed by the Parliament and state legislatures respectively. UGC, being the statutory body, should review the draft UGC regulations (2025) and ensure that they do not transgress the exclusive jurisdiction of respective legislatures, and the Acts passed by them to govern the Central and State Universities.

(Para 3.16.8 ibid)

Action Taken

The Draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025 have been framed under the UGC Act, 1956 to maintain standards and were put in the public domain for feedback/suggestions from various stakeholders and also circulated to IITs, IISc, NITs, IISERs, industry bodies, statutory bodies, the Principal Secretaries of State Governments, Chancellors of all State Universities, Chairpersons of all State Higher Education Councils, other regulatory bodies and industry bodies for feedback. The received feedback is being looked into by the expert committee and the Regulations shall be finalized accordingly. The observation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee is noted and shall be put up before the expert committee.

- To implement the recommendations relevant to teachers' recruitment and promotion of the National Education Policy 2020, UGC reviewed the existing UGC regulations notified in 2018.
- The draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations 2025, thus developed, were **uploaded in the public domain on 6th January 2025** with 5th February 2025 as the last date.

- Later, considering the request for extending the time limit from stakeholders, UGC extended the date **till 28th February 2025.**

- Total Feedback Received - 15, 066
- From State Governments - 10
- From Association/Federation/Society - 92
- From Universities/Colleges - 52
- National Commission for Minorities
- All India Council for Technical Education
- Association of Indian Universities

Feedback received from State Governments

1. Government of Haryana
2. Government of Kerala
3. Government of West Bengal
4. Government of Punjab
5. Government of Karnataka
6. Government of Tamil Nadu
7. Government of Uttarakhand
8. Government of Jharkhand
9. Government of Telangana
10. Government of Himachal Pradesh

The draft regulations of 2025 have been developed with an aim to support the vision of transforming higher education in India to meet global standards. Furthermore, the UGC Draft Regulations 2025 strongly uphold and reinforce India's federal structure by striking a balance between national standards and state autonomy in higher education. These regulations are designed to ensure academic excellence while respecting the diverse educational frameworks of different states.

The draft UGC regulations 2025 provide greater autonomy to states and higher education institutions (HEIs). The direct recruitment to the posts of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor in colleges coming under their purview, State governments/Union Territories, shall be either as per the UGC regulations or as per the rules of the State Government by following the minimum qualifications as given in the UGC draft regulations.

The regulations establish minimum standards but permit state universities to formulate their own additional criteria beyond the minimum standards for faculty appointments and promotions, thereby preserving the autonomy of these institutions.

Provisions in the draft regulations for promoting regional languages, Indian Knowledge Systems, and community engagement structures ensure that state- specific priorities are protected.

UGC convened a series of consultative meetings to discuss the draft regulations, as given below:

Sr No.	Presentation of Draft Regulations	Date
1	Before the Vice Chancellors of Central Universities	12.9.2024 and 1.10.2024
2	Before the Commission Members	13.11.2024
3	Before the Secretary (HE) and officials of the DHE, MoE	24.10.2024

Recommendation

13. The Committee notes the recently issued draft UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations 2025 which replace regulations from 2012. The Committee notes that the UGC has delayed finalising regulations since 2023, when it started drafting these new norms, and that it was only the intervention of the Supreme Court that forced it to issue these regulations in time. The Committee observes that these regulations are currently in the draft stage and open to public comments; it recommends that the UGC should consult the Committee on these regulations before finalising them. The Committee also notes that the UGC has been asked by the Supreme Court to provide detailed data on the functioning of equal opportunity cells (EOCs) in universities and their adherence to 2012 equity regulations. It directs the UGC to submit a copy of the data to the Committee as well.

(Para 3.16.11 ibid)

Action Taken

University Grants Commission (UGC) in the light of NEP 2020, notified the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026 on 13.01.2026. The Regulations supersede the earlier UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012. These Regulations were notified in the backdrop of WP(C) 1149/2019 in the Hon'ble Supreme Court, where hearings on this issue are ongoing.

Vide Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 29.01.2026 in WP(C) 101/2026, these 2026 Regulations have been kept in abeyance.

Recommendation

14. The Committee recommends that the UGC provide greater guidance and mentorship to HEIs outside the IITs and IIMs to facilitate the seeking and receipt of alumni donations.

(Para 3.16.20 ibid)

Action Taken

In this regard, it is submitted that to receipt the alumni donations, UGC vide its letter dated 05.05.2025 has again issued advisory to Central Universities to explore the details of Alumni Endowment Fund on their website mentioning the possibility of availing the incentive under Section 80G(2)(f) of Income Tax Act and exemption under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) to facilitate and encourage the prospective donors from India & Abroad.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCING AGENCY (HEFA)

Recommendation

15. The Committee notes that the uptake of HEFA has been much more limited than expected. HEFA has fallen far short of meeting its initial targets of supporting 1 lakh Crores in investment by 2022. As of 31.12.2024, HEFA has sanctioned loans worth Rs. 43,028.243 crores and achieved disbursement of loans worth only Rs. 21, 590.59 Crores. The Committee observes that three years after the lapse of the deadline, HEFA has still met only about 21.5% of its initial target.

(Para 3.17.9 ibid)

Action Taken

HEFA is a non- profit company under Section-8 of Companies Act 2013 and registered as Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) with RBI.

Being a relatively new instrument for financing higher education infrastructure, HEFA initially required some time for higher educational institutions to fully understand its operational modalities and processes. With increasing familiarity, the uptake and utilization of HEFA funding are now showing upward trend. The uptake of HEFA has been increasing and projects worth Rs. 47,028 crores have been sanctioned as on 23.12.2025.

HEFA has made significant contributions towards creation of quality infrastructure in higher educational institutions.

Recommendation

16. The Committee notes that the reliance on market mechanisms like HEFA is not a substitute but a supplement to grant-financed investments. It therefore recommends that the Department continue to finance capital expansion by Central HEIs through grants, with the additional option to borrow through HEFA.

(Para 3.17.13 ibid)

Action Taken

In addition to HEFA funding, the Department of Higher Education also funds creation of infrastructure through Government Grant.

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY (NTA)

Recommendation

17. The Committee notes that the NTA only has audited financial statements but no Annual Reports that have been submitted to Parliament or to the Committee, despite a request from the Committee to do so. Since the NTA is an agency that has been vested with enormously significant responsibilities under the NEP, the Committee strongly recommends that the NTA issue and present Annual Reports every year to the Parliament.

(Para 3.18.5 ibid)

Action Taken

NTA is a self-sustaining organization, and as per GFR provisions, Annual Reports of NTA are to be submitted to the Ministry.

It is informed that Audit of Accounts of NTA have been entrusted to Comptroller and Auditor General of India under Section 20(I) of the CA&AG's (DPC) Act, 1971. Further, NTA's activities are subject to the control and oversight of Parliament through the established mechanisms of accountability.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT COUNCIL (NAAC)

Recommendation

18. The Committee also observes that recent NAAC Bribery Scandal is deeply concerning. A full investigation must be considered into the scandal, the background of the members of the accused NAAC team, the process by which these members were chosen to be part of the NAAC, and all previous institutions for whose accreditation process any of the accused may have been involved in.

(Para 3.19.2 ibid)

Action Taken

Matter is under investigation with the CBI.

Further, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has taken significant measures to tighten its Assessment and Accreditation (A&A) protocols and has implemented a series of corrective and preventive measures designed to enhance credibility, secure data handling, and ensure ethical conduct throughout the assessment process. These include finalizing peer teams 15 days to a month before visits instead of 2–3 months in advance, making the visits online for colleges and hybrid for universities and recording the proceedings of meetings, scrutinizing and re-confirming the results of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) by NAAC etc. Further, based upon the recommendations of the Dr. K. Radhakrishnan High Level Committee, constituted by the Ministry for strengthening the Assessment and Accreditation of HEIs (referred to in para 3.19.1 (para 82 above), , NAAC is implementing the reforms in two phases- Introduction of Basic/ Binary Accreditation followed by Maturity Based Graded Levels (MBGLs).

INDIAN COUNCIL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH (ICHR)

Recommendation

19. The Committee observes that ICHR regional centres need to be better leveraged. Space is a key constraint, with at least one of the regional centres having no land or building of its own. A dedicated building will enable the development of library facilities, which can support local scholars. Furthermore, these regional centres need greater resources for multi media centres, ability to conduct training workshops in regional languages, and providing cross-language support to facilitate inter-state learning by scholars.

(Para 3.21.1 ibid)

Action Taken

All three Regional Centres—namely the North-Eastern Regional Centre (NERC), Guwahati; the Western Regional Centre (WRC), Pune; and the Southern Regional Centre (SRC), Bengaluru—are presently functioning from premises located within the host university campuses. The Centres are equipped with well-stocked libraries, including a substantial collection of books and reference materials in regional languages. While the Centres currently possess basic multimedia facilities, the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) has been continuously initiating systematic efforts to strengthen research infrastructures in these centres to better facilitate and support scholars and academic activities.

ONE NATION ONE SUBSCRIPTION (ONOS)

Recommendation

20. The Committee welcomes the ONOS scheme and appreciates the Department's vision to democratise access to knowledge for all Indians. However the Committee has some concerns about the scheme –

- *The Committee notes that the Cost Negotiation Committee was tasked with negotiating with 70 publishers – whose contents were already being subscribed to by various institutions of higher education and research orgs. However, the Cabinet has approved an ONOS which involves only 30 journal publishers. This means that at least 40 publishers – which the Govt already subscribes to – are outside the ambit of the ONOS but continues to be funded by the Government. The Department has stated that the Union Government's estimated spend through its consortia and individual HEIs under its supervision was Rs. 850 Crores in FY23-24. This is slated to nearly double to Rs 1,625.14 crore in the upcoming Financial Year, despite the fact that the scheme being* *limited to only 30 publishers. The Committee seeks clarity on whether individual HEIs and consortia will continue to be subscribing to the remaining 40 publishers and what their estimated spend will be.*

(Para 3.22.1 ibid)

Action Taken

The negotiation regarding providing access to scholarly research articles to government Higher Education Institutions started with 70 publishers. Subsequently, it was decided that ONOS will be covering scholarly journal subscriptions. ONOS will not cover bibliographic & citation databases and standards, e-books, economic and databases, etc. Therefore, out of these 70 publishers, 36 publishers who publish full-text journals, and are subscribed by at least one of the 10 library consortia participating in ONOS or self-subscribed by the government HEIs who were part of these 10 consortia were selected to be brought under ONOS. Of them, 30 publishers agreed to the key terms of access, namely, access to all journals published by the publisher, back files access during the period of subscription and perpetual access of the articles published during period of contract. The 30 publishers included in ONOS agreed to these terms and conditions and provided their quotes. The remaining did not provide the same despite repeated reminders. The Core Committee to oversee the implementation of ONOS under the Chairpersonship of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, decided that no funds from the grants-in-aid provided by Government of India should be spent on for scholarly journal subscription from any publisher who were invited for ONOS negotiation but they did not become a part of ONOS. The Ministry of Education has conveyed the same to all the Central Government Ministries.

Recommendation

21. Some members of the Committee noted that the ONOS is yet to reach about 4,000 of the 7,008 target institutions, but that the budgeted costs of the scheme are quite significant. The Committee encourages the Department to take all actions necessary to expedite the uptake of this scheme, and explore whether the payment to journal publishers for these institutes may be made from the date of registration with ONOS rather than the date of the scheme's roll-out.

(Para 3.22.4 ibid)

Action Taken

The price negotiated with the 30 journal publishers is for the calendar years 2025, 2026 and 2027. The Union government negotiated with all 30 publishers to provide access to their respective journals based on several rounds of discussions. The negotiation was for providing access to about 6,300 central and state government HEIs and R&D Institutions of the central government. Active users have crossed 5,600 such institutions. The terms of the MoU signed by INFLIBNET with the publishers is based on payment to be made by a certain cut-off date and not based on the date on which institutions gain access to journals under the scheme.

INDIAN INSTITUTES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IIITs)

Recommendation

22. The Committee notes that IIIT students are also ineligible for the PM Research Fellowships and Junior Research Fellowships, causing difficulty for these institutions in recruiting postgraduate students.

(Para 3.23.3 ibid)

Action Taken

At present, the PMRF scheme is offered at all IITs, all IISERs, and IISc Bengaluru, as well as at Central Universities and NITs offering science and/or technology programs that are ranked within the top 25 in the NIRF overall rankings.

Recommendation

23. The Committee further notes the Ministry's statement that in "IIITDM Jabalpur, where the institute's sanctioned strength was increased from 84 to 204 in 2021… recruitment was stalled for nearly two years due to the absence of a regular Director." The Ministry had also noted that "[I]n the case of IIIT Allahabad, for example, 116 new faculty positions were created towards the end of 2023. Thereafter, for some administrative reason, the institute could not proceed with recruitment process…the process would also be hindered by the fact that the institute does not have a Chairperson, Board of Governors (BoG), in place, as the BoG is the approving/appointing authority." However, wherever an institution does not have a regular Chairperson or Director, the Ministry takes measures to ensure administrative continuity in the institutions by assigning the charge of Chairperson/Director to the Chairperson/Director of any nearby institution. The Committee notes this delay in identifying and appointing a full-time regular Director at IITDM Jabalpur and a Chairperson for the Board of Governors at IIIT Allahabad.

(Para 3.23.8 ibid)

Action Taken

In the IIITs, whenever there is a vacancy in the position of Director, the Ministry ensures administrative and financial continuity by appointing an interim arrangement, such as a Director In-charge or Officiating Director. Typically, this responsibility is assigned to the Director of an Institute of National Importance (INI).

Previously, the Statutes allowed the Director of the respective IIIT to perform the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of a regular appointee. However, this provision has since been amended. Under the revised Statutes, the Chairperson of an INI is now entrusted with the additional charge, ensuring more consistent governance and oversight.

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE (IoE) SCHEME

Recommendation

1. The Committee notes that nearly eight years after the program was launched, the Department has been able to notify only twelve of the twenty institutes that it has been mandated to notify as Institutions of Eminence. The Committee recommends that the process of notifying the remaining universities as IoEs should be expedited.

(Para 3.3.8 ibid)

Action Taken

The observation of the Committee is duly noted. Institution of Eminence (IoE) Scheme, also known as World Class Institutions Scheme, was launched in 2017, with a provision of declaring ten public and ten private institutions to emerge as World Class Teaching and Research Institution, along with the provision for providing financial support to selected ten public institutions. The regulatory framework of the scheme envisions a great deal of autonomy to the institutions in academic, administrative and financial matters. As per the regulatory provisions of the scheme, an Empowered Experts Committee (EEC) examines the application of institutions desirous of getting the status of IoE and forwards its recommendation to the University Grants Commission (UGC). The UGC then recommends the names of institutions to the Ministry which signs the MoU with the institute and issues the necessary notification thereon.

Recommendation

2. The Committee notes that several key institutions - such as Jawaharlal Nehru University which is widely regarded as among the world's foremost centers for research in social sciences, humanities, and development studies – have been excluded from the IoE's ambit. The Committee recommends that further expansion of the Institutes of Eminence Scheme should be considered to incorporate these institutions.

(Para 3.3.10 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted. Institution of Eminence (IoE) Scheme, also known as World Class Institutions Scheme, was launched in 2017, with a provision of declaring ten public and ten private institutions to emerge as World Class Teaching and Research Institution, along with the provision for providing financial support to selected ten public institutions. The regulatory framework of the scheme envisions a great deal of autonomy to the institutions in academic, administrative and financial matters. As per the regulatory provisions of the scheme, an Empowered Experts Committee (EEC) examines the application of institutions desirous of getting the status of IoE and forwards its recommendation to the University Grants Commission (UGC). The UGC then recommends the names of institutions to the Ministry which signs the MoU with the institute and issues the necessary notification thereon.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes that the reply in the above recommendations is merely a repetition of the procedural framework of the IoE Scheme and does not address the concerns raised by the Committee. On the first issue, the Committee notes that even eight years after the launch of the scheme, only twelve out of the mandated twenty Institutions of Eminence have been notified. On the second issue, the Committee's recommendation regarding expansion of the Scheme to include globally recognised institutions of the country excelling in social sciences, humanities and developmental studies, such as Jawaharlal Nehru University has not been addressed by the Department. The Committee recommends that the Department should set a time-bound roadmap for identifying and notifying the remaining eight IoEs and also to conduct a feasibility study on expanding the Scheme's ambit.

HIGHER EDUCATION STATISTICS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (HESPIS)

Recommendation

3. The Committee notes that unlike the School Education and Literacy Department's UDISE+ which has successfully made the transition from collecting data at the student-level rather than the institution-level, the AISHE still collects data at the institution-level. The switch to individual-level data in UDISE+ significantly enhanced transparency and ensured de-duplication of students in UDISE+ records. The figures for SC/ST/OBC enrolment and faculty provided by the Ministry (attached in Annexure 1) are somewhat unreliable given their discrepancies – for instance, it claims that Anna University has only 1 faculty member. Accordingly, the Committee strongly recommends that AISHE too begin collecting student level data as soon as possible. The Committee also notes that AISHE is an annual survey but that it has not been released since Academic Year 2021-2022. It urges the Ministry to expedite the process of publication for future years, and strongly recommends that no such delays occur in the future.

(Para 3.9.9 ibid)

Action Taken

Data collection for AISHE 2022-23, 2023-24 survey has been completed and is under the data processing. Data collection for AISHE 2024-25 survey has completed and data scrutiny process is going on. These reports will be released together. Efforts are being made to process of preparation of the AISHE Reports to make it a single and authentic source for all data of Higher Education.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee takes note of the response of the Department regarding AISHE 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 data collection. However, it expresses concern that three years' reports still remain unpublished and are to be released together, which defeats the purpose of an annual survey. The Committee reiterates that student-level data collection be adopted at the earliest. It further recommends that the Department should establish a fixed annual timeline for AISHE publication as any delay in access to data undermines evidence-based policymaking in higher education, particularly concerning SC/ST/OBC/EWS enrolment monitoring.

ACCESSIBILITY TO LOAN FACILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Recommendation

4. *The Committee notes that the Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) Scheme is available only for students in technical/professional courses with annual family income up to ₹4.5 lakh. PM-Vidyalaxmi covers students from families in other courses (non-technical and professional courses) with family income up to Rs 4.5 lakh. The Committee recommends that the annual family income criteria may be uniformly enhanced to ₹8 lakh for all students being admitted to any type of course (Technical/Professional/Others) in any institution to increase the coverage of beneficiaries and to rationalise Government policy regarding which families constitute economically weaker sections of society.*

(Para 3.13.13 ibid)

Action Taken

Under PM-USP Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme (PM-USP CSIS) full interest subsidy is provided during the moratorium period on Education Loan availed under Model Education Loan Scheme of Indian Banks' Association (IBA) for pursuing technical/professional courses in India. Students whose annual gross parental/ family income is up to Rs.4.5 lakh are eligible under the scheme. In this scheme, all students including students from economically weaker sections, such as SCs, STs and OBC's satisfying these conditions get interest subvention on education loan.

Further, for meritorious students of listed QHEIs whose annual family income is up to ₹ 8 lakhs and who are pursuing any course from quality HEIs (list of QHEIs can be accessed at https://dashboard.aishe.gov.in) are eligible to get 3% interest subvention for education loans up to ₹10 lakhs.

Recommendation

5. The Committee notes that education loans with limit of up to ₹20 lakh are being categorised as Priority Sector Lending (PSL) from 04.09.2020. However, in view of the increased cost of education and the sanction of loans without collateral under the PM Vidyalaxmi scheme, the Committee believes that education loans of up to a limit of ₹50 lakh may be considered as PSL. The Committee recommends that the Department should coordinate with the Ministry of Finance and other stakeholders to achieve the same.

(Para 3.13.14)

Action Taken

The Reserve Bank of India has increased the limit for education loans under Priority Sector Lending (PSL) from 20 lakhs to 25 lakhs, which may be seen at https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/notification/PDFs/128MD66C4DDCB167C4DC9A5BD913570CB3D47.PDF

Recommendation

6. The Committee notes that the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Education Loans (CGFSEL) introduced in September 2015 provides guarantee cover of 75% for Education loans with limit of up to ₹7.5 lakh. However, the Committee believes that in view of the increased cost of education and the requirement for collateral free loans, the guarantee cover may be enhanced to ₹20 lakh.

(Para 3.13.15 ibid)

Action Taken

Recommendations have been noted. Any change in the ceiling will be taken up during appraisal of the scheme during its renewal.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes the responses of the Department on the education loan support framework and observes that a systemic inadequacy exists in the financial assistance architecture for students pursuing higher education. On the issue of interest subvention, the Committee acknowledges the extension of 3% interest subvention up to ₹8 lakh family income under PM-Vidyalaxmi. However, since this benefit is provided only to students of Quality HEIs, as a result, a vast majority of students enrolled in non-QHEIs continue to be excluded.

Further, the income ceiling of ₹4.5 lakh under PM-USP CSIS remains inadequate given the prevailing economic realities. The Committee therefore, reiterates that the family income ceiling must be uniformly enhanced to ₹8 lakh across all schemes, all types of courses, and all institutions, without any conditionality based on institutional quality rankings.

On the Priority Sector Lending limit, the Committee acknowledges the RBI's revision from ₹20 lakh to ₹25 lakh as a step in the right direction. However, this falls considerably short of the Committee's recommended limit of ₹50 lakh. Given the escalating cost of higher education and the availability of collateral-free loans under PM Vidyalaxmi, the revised limit remains insufficient. The Committee therefore reiterates its recommendation that the Department actively pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance and the RBI to raise the PSL limit to ₹50 lakh.

On the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Education Loans (CGFSEL), the Committee would like to highlight that the guarantee cover ceiling of ₹7.5 lakh has remained unchanged since 2015 despite a decade of significant inflation in education costs. A general assurance of revisiting the ceiling during scheme renewal is not convincing. The Committee therefore, urges the Government to enhance the guarantee cover to ₹20 lakh forthwith.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

Recommendation

7. The Committee also discussed the qualifications fixed for the recruitment of Assistant Professors and for the promotion of faculty. Some members of the Committee have noted increasing reports of cases where recruitments are being made of poor-quality faculty, and that these faculty members often get promoted without any research papers or a track record of quality classroom teaching. Additionally, promotions that are due to Professors are also not being made regularly. For instance, at Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Chairman of the Committee was given to understand that about 50 faculty eligible for Professorship are still Associate Professor, about 30 faculty eligible for Professorship are still Assistant Professor, and 30 faculty eligible for Associate Professorship are still Assistant Professors. The Department is recommended to look into such instances and take expeditious action to resolve the same.

(Para 3.16.9 ibid)

Action Taken

All the recruitment at the University is done in strict compliance of UGC Regulations/Guidelines and as per the provisions outlined in the University Statute. All the recruitments are made on recommendation of the duly constituted Selection Committee and approval of the same by EC of the University. Laid down process is meticulously followed for ensuring the competence of candidates for being appointed as faculty members.

Further, continuous efforts are being made by the Universities to ensure timely promotion of the faculty members.

In order to ensure expeditious processing of CAS promotion cases of the faculty members and clearance of backlog cases in near future all the necessary efforts are being made. Necessary instructions are issued to all institutions to follow CEI (Central Educational Institutions) Reservation in Teacher's Cadre, Act, 2019 and all other guidelines issued by Government of India from time to time regarding reservation policies in recruitment.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes that the response only talks about general procedures and rules but disregards the specific issue raised about Jawaharlal Nehru University, where many eligible faculty members have not been promoted despite the same being due for years. The Committee therefore reiterates its earlier recommendation to the Department that it should look into such specific cases and take expeditious action so that a qualified and deserving candidate gets his or her promotion on time.

Recommendation

8. The Committee recommends that annual admissions reports outlining gender, caste, social, ethnic, rural-urban, national, and class background of students be submitted by all centrally funded institutions, including JNU, to the respective University's Academic and Executive Council.

(Para 3.16.15 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted.

Recommendation

9. The Committee recommends additional support for professors in research, particularly in the sciences. Discretionary funds need to be made available to these professors to protect their academic freedom, since the need to seek regular approvals from University authorities for clearing small and medium payments for research labs threatens their independent intellectual expression.

(Para 3.16.16 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted.

Recommendation

10. The Committee notes that the CABE is the highest advisory body for Central and State Governments in the field of education. Since it comprises Ministers for Education in both the Union and State Governments, it functions as a key coordinating mechanism for unified thinking on education policy, which is critical given education's status as a concurrent subject. The NEP 2020 had explicitly called for 'strengthening' and 'empowering" the CABE and the general practice of the CABE in previous years has been to convene once a year at the minimum. The Committee recommends that CABE meetings be called regularly.

(Para 3.16.17 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes that replies furnished by the Department in response to the observations contained in Paras 8 to 10 above lack specificity. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Department that replies should be comprehensive and should not be inconclusive or in general terms. In this regard, a detailed reply to the observations as contained in Paras 8 to 10 above in Chapter-III may be provided at the earliest for consideration of the Committee.

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY (NTA)

Recommendation

11. The Committee endorses the Education Minister's acknowledgment of 16th June, 2024 that "a lot of improvement is needed in the NTA." It recommends that the NTA expedite the implementation of the R Radhakrishnan Committee's recommendations. The Committee also recommends that the Department and the NTA conduct additional widespread consultations with all stakeholders to adopt a protocol for the foolproof administration of nationwide competitive examinations.

(Para 3.18.2 ibid)

Action Taken

The National Testing Agency (NTA) was established in 2018 as a specialized organization to conduct examinations for Admission/Fellowship in Higher Education Institutions. Since its inception in 2018, NTA has successfully conducted over 250 examinations involving over 5.5 crore candidates.

In order to suggest effective measures for transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations by National Testing Agency (NTA), the Ministry of Education constituted a High-Level Committee of Experts (HLCE) on 22.06.2024 for making recommendations on Reforms in mechanism of examination process, Improvement in Data Security protocols and Structure and functioning of NTA. The HLCE has submitted its Report to the Ministry on 21.10.2024. The HLCE has recommended Reformation of National Common Entrance Testing including strengthening of NTA, institutional linkage with States, involvement of Test Indenting Agencies as Knowledge and Examinations partner etc.

A High-Powered Steering Committee headed by Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, former Chairman ISRO has already been constituted to monitor the implementation of recommendations of HLCE on NTA.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes the steps taken by the Ministry, including the constitution of the High-Powered Steering Committee headed by Dr. K. Radhakrishnan to monitor the implementation of recommendations of HLCE. However, despite these measures, the paper irregularities are still happening leading to the cancellation of the examinations thereby causing a lot of anxiety among students. The Committee reiterates its recommendations as contained in its 371st Report on this issue. The Committee also recommends the Department to publish a time-bound implementation roadmap for the HLCE recommendations at the earliest.

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH (ICSSR)

Recommendation

12. The Committee observes that at a time when the Eight Pay Commission is underway, the Seventh Pay Commission has still not been implemented in all ICSSR affiliated research *institutes and regional centers. The Committee recommends the immediate implementation of the Seventh Pay Commission in the ICSSR affiliated research institutes and regional centers, and the implementation of the Eight Pay Commission at the appropriate time as well. Moreover, the ICSSR affiliated research institutions should try to generate their own revenue and seek funds from ICSSR through project mode, against defined outcomes of these funds.*

(Para 3.20.1 ibid)

Action Taken

In order to promote social science research in India, 24 Research Institutes across the country, created either by a group of individuals under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, or as a public trust, or created by an act of State Legislature, are being assisted through grant-in-aid by ICSSR, New Delhi, under the Rules of Grant-in-Aid to Societies and Institutes across research in the field of Social Sciences, 1971, revised from time to time, provided that they fulfil all procedures and conditions laid down in the rules.

As regards implementation of 6th& 7th CPC in Regional Centres, a comprehensive proposal for the regularization of the posts and implementation of 6th & 7th CPC in Regional Centres has been sent to the Ministry of Finance for concurrence/approval. However, the DoE has returned the file with certain observations. The file would again be sent to DoE with proper reply.

As regards Research Institute, a three-member committee under chairmanship of Secretary (UGC) was constituted to review and examine the proposal regarding enhancement of grants to the Research Institutes. The report of the Committee is still awaited.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes the continuing delay in implementation of the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations in ICSSR affiliated research institutes and regional centres. This matter has been flagged by the Committee in its 364th Report and reiterated in its subsequent 371st Report. This delay is affecting the ability of these institutes to attract and retain quality researchers. The Committee is of the view that the Department should pro-actively take up this issue with the Ministry of Finance and implement the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations without any further delay.

ONE NATION ONE SUBSCRIPTION

Recommendation

13. The Committee notes that several of the ONOS beneficiaries are specialized institutions – for instance, the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) which focuses on the transportation sector. Although the Ministry is paying for the institution's access to all 13,000 journals, it is not prima facie evident that specialized research institutions such as CRRI need access to these journals or have the in-house expertise to utilize them effectively. INFLIBNET's Infistats portal, which tracks the usage statistics of journals provided through the scheme, must be used to evaluate whether beneficiary institutions are leveraging this expanded access to journals provided through the ONOS scheme effectively and periodic changes to the scheme structure must be undertaken accordingly to save costs.

(Para 3.22.3 ibid)

Action Taken

Department has noted the observation of the committee.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes that replies furnished by the Department in response to the observations contained in Para 13 above in Chapter-III lack specificity. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Department that replies should be comprehensive and should not be inconclusive or in general terms. Accordingly, a detailed reply to the observations as contained in Para 13 above in Chapter-III may be provided at the earliest for consideration of the Committee.

INDIAN INSTITUTES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IIITs)

Recommendations

14. The Committee notes that as per the Cabinet approval, the capital cost of each IIIT (PPP) was to be contributed in the ratio of 50:35:15 by the Central Government, the State Government, and the industry partner, respectively. In the North-Eastern states, the ratio changes, with industry partner contributing 7.5% and the Central Government contributing 57.50%. Once the stakeholders released their full share of funding, no further financial responsibility was to lie with them. Further, as PPP institutes, IIITs are also only eligible for HEFA financing under Window IV, according to which they must bear 100% of the principal repayment as well as 100% of the interest repayment. These loans are provided at relatively much lower interest rates (5.5%) than the market rates, and without the requirement of any collateral. Besides HEFA, IIITs (PPP) can also seek funding under the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme. So far, two IIITs (PPP) have sought and obtained HEFA loans. Additionally, funding under the VGF scheme has also been approved for one IIIT (PPP). The Committee notes that NIRF ranking includes capital investment as a metric – and a high NIRF ranking in turn opens up other benefits. The Committee also notes the Department's views on the challenges faced by IIITs –

i. *Since their inception, IIITs have faced issues that hinder their ability to achieve their goals, including delays in land allocation, poor geographical locations, and lack of funds, infrastructure, and quality faculty.*
ii. *The approved capital cost for construction in 2010 has not been adjusted for inflation, affecting IIITs where land allocation or campus construction has been delayed for reasons beyond their control.*
iii. *Fourteen of the 20 IIITs (PPP) still haven't received full funding from state governments or industry partners. Although recently included in the HEFA scheme, they must repay the full principal and interest, which is difficult given their reliance on student fees for revenue. This hampers their ability to expand.*
iv. *Insufficient funding and lack of corpus funds/IRG make it difficult for IIITs to expand capacity or attract quality faculty, resulting in low student intake and lower Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER). None of the 20 IIITs (PPP) rank in the top 100 NIRF rankings, and limited resources have prevented them from advancing in fields like AI and ML, where they could make a significant impact.*

The Committee notes that since the IIITs are teaching highly marketable skills and since there is no fee-capping of their undergraduate courses, they are able to raise some revenues from students in the undergraduate programs. However, the Committee observes that any institution needs economics of scale to be financially sustainable. The total capital investment of Rs. 128 crores is insufficient for any institution to reach the economies of scale required for financial sustainability. The Committee recommends that a one-time fund infusion may be provided to IIITs (PPP) to cater to the capital expansion in these institutions.

(Para 3.23.4 ibid)

Action Taken

It is submitted that two initiatives i.e., HEFA and VGF are both available to the IIITs to support their funding requirements. These loans are provided at relatively much lower interest rates (5.5%) than the market rates. So far, two IIITs (PPP) have sought and obtained HEFA loans.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes that the Department merely reiterated the existing financing mechanism already acknowledged in the Committee's original recommendation. The Committee, therefore, reiterates that the approved capital cost of ₹128 crores, frozen since 2010 without inflation adjustment, is wholly inadequate for achieving financial sustainability. It further recommends that the Department should undertake a comprehensive financial review of all 20 IIITs (PPP), index capital costs to current price levels, and prepare a concrete proposal for one-time grant-based capital infusion the earliest.

Recommendation

15. Accordingly, the Committee strongly recommends that the Union Government provide additional grants to IIITs for capital investments to enable them to scale to a size where they can be financially self- sustaining. The Committee recommends, as one possible solution, the proposal taken up in the 2nd Coordination Forum meeting held on 16th October 2019, for additional Grant. The Committee also strongly recommends that all fellowships, like JRF, be made available to students in IIITs.

(Para 3.23.5 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted.

Recommendation

16. The Committee notes that the experience of the PPP model in the IIIT doesn't inspire much confidence in the NEP's call for "the rejuvenation, active promotion, and support for private philanthropic activity in the education sector. In particular, over and above the public budgetary support which would have been otherwise provided to them, any public institution can take initiatives towards raising private philanthropic funds to enhance educational experiences." The Committee therefore reiterates that the financing of higher education must continue to be primarily driven by the Government.

(Para 3.23.6 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted.

Recommendation

17. The Committee also notes that for IIITs and other technical institutions, faculty turnover can be high due to uncompetitive benefits for faculty compared to careers in the private sector IT companies. This turnover of faculty can cause serious damage to the institution's quality of teaching and the Department must consider solutions to this problem.

(Para 3.23.7 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHEAST

Recommendation

18. The Committee notes that in keeping with the spirit of the Purvodaya championed by the Prime Minister, Northeast India needs more focused attention in higher education. The key institutions in the Northeast noted by the Department in its submission to the Committee are IIT Guwahati and IIM Shillong. However, the Committee observes that both these institutions are highly specialised in their course offerings. Furthermore, the Northeast occupies a unique geographic, geopolitical, and cultural position and can be the home for world-class research and expertise on security studies, international relations including China, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, riverine studies, sports management, and textiles research. The Committee therefore recommends the development of at least one marquee institute for the sciences, social sciences, and humanities in the Northeast. TISS Guwahati has the potential to be one such institute, given the Northeastern region-focus of its coursework, research, and admissions reservation policy.

(Para 3.24.1 ibid)

Action Taken

The recommendation has been duly noted.

Further recommendation of the Committee:

The Committee notes that replies furnished by the department in response to the observations contained in Paras 15-18 above in Chapter-III lack specificity. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Department that replies should be comprehensive and should not be inconclusive or in general terms. Further, a detailed reply to the observations as contained in Paras 15-18 above in Chapter-III may be provided at the earliest for consideration of the Committee.

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

NIL

Recommendations/Observations of the Committee – At A Glance

1. **The Committee notes that the reply in the above recommendations is merely a repetition of the procedural framework of the IoE Scheme and does not address the concerns raised by the Committee. On the first issue, the Committee notes that even eight years after the launch of the scheme, only twelve out of the mandated twenty Institutions of Eminence have been notified. On the second issue, the Committee's recommendation regarding expansion of the Scheme to include globally recognised institutions of the country excelling in social sciences, humanities and developmental studies, such as Jawaharlal Nehru University has not been addressed by the Department. The Committee recommends that the Department should set a time-bound roadmap for identifying and notifying the remaining eight IoEs and also to conduct a feasibility study on expanding the Scheme's ambit.**

(Paras 3.3.8 and 3.3.10)

2. **The Committee takes note of the response of the Department regarding AISHE 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 data collection. However, it expresses concern that three years' reports still remain unpublished and are to be released together, which defeats the purpose of an annual survey. The Committee reiterates that student-level data collection be adopted at the earliest. It further recommends that the Department should establish a fixed annual timeline for AISHE publication as any delay in access to data undermines evidence-based policymaking in higher education, particularly concerning SC/ST/OBC/EWS enrolment monitoring.**

(Paras 3.9.9)

3. **The Committee notes the responses of the Department on the education loan support framework and observes that a systemic inadequacy exists in the financial assistance architecture for students pursuing higher education. On the issue of interest subvention, the Committee acknowledges the extension of 3% interest subvention up to ₹8 lakh family income under PM-Vidyalaxmi. However, since this benefit is provided only to students of Quality HEIs, as a result, a vast majority of students enrolled in non-QHEIs continue to be excluded.**

   Further, the income ceiling of ₹4.5 lakh under PM-USP CSIS remains inadequate given the prevailing economic realities. The Committee therefore, reiterates that the family income ceiling must be uniformly enhanced to ₹8 lakh across all schemes, all types of courses, and all institutions, without any conditionality based on institutional quality rankings.

   On the Priority Sector Lending limit, the Committee acknowledges the RBI's revision from ₹20 lakh to ₹25 lakh as a step in the right direction. However, this falls considerably short of the Committee's recommended limit of ₹50 lakh. Given the escalating cost of higher education and the availability of collateral-free loans under PM Vidyalaxmi, the revised limit remains insufficient. The Committee therefore reiterates its recommendation that the Department actively pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance and the RBI to raise the PSL limit to ₹50 lakh.

   On the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Education Loans (CGFSEL), the Committee would like to highlight that the guarantee cover ceiling of ₹7.5 lakh has remained unchanged since 2015 despite a decade of significant inflation in education

costs. A general assurance of revisiting the ceiling during scheme renewal is not convincing. The Committee therefore, urges the Government to enhance the guarantee cover to ₹20 lakh forthwith.

(paras 3.13.13, 3.13.14 and 3.13.15)

4. **The Committee notes that the response only talks about general procedures and rules but disregards the specific issue raised about Jawaharlal Nehru University, where many eligible faculty members have not been promoted despite the same being due for years. The Committee therefore reiterates its earlier recommendation to the Department that it should look into such specific cases and take expeditious action so that a qualified and deserving candidate gets his or her promotion on time.**

   (para 3.16.9)

5. **The Committee notes that replies furnished by the department in response to the observations contained in paras 8 to 10 above lack specificity. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Department that replies should be comprehensive and should not be inconclusive or in general terms. Further, a detailed reply to the observations as contained in paras 8 to 10 above in Chapter-III may be provided at the earliest for consideration of the Committee.**

   (paras 3.16.15, 3.16.16, 3.16.17)

6. **The Committee notes the steps taken by the Ministry, including the constitution of the High-Powered Steering Committee headed by Dr. K. Radhakrishnan to monitor the implementation of recommendations of HLCE. However, despite these measures, the paper irregularities are still happening leading to the cancellation of the examinations thereby causing a lot of anxiety among students. The Committee reiterates its recommendations as contained in its 371st Report on this issue. The Committee also recommends the Department to publish a time-bound implementation roadmap for the HLCE recommendations at the earliest**

   (para 3.18.2)

7. **The Committee notes the continuing delay in implementation of the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations in ICSSR affiliated research institutes and regional centres. This matter has been flagged by the Committee in its 364th Report and reiterated in its subsequent 371st Report. This delay is affecting the ability of these institutes to attract and retain quality researchers. The Committee is of the view that the Department should pro-actively take up this issue with the Ministry of Finance and implement the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations without any further delay.**

   (para 3.20.1)

8. **The Committee notes that replies furnished by the department in response to the observations contained in para 13 above in Chapter-III lack specificity. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Department that replies should be comprehensive and should not be inconclusive or in general terms. Accordingly, a detailed reply to the observations as contained in para 13 above in Chapter-III may be provided at the earliest for consideration of the Committee.**

(para 3.22.3)

9. **The Committee notes that the Department merely reiterated the existing financing mechanism already acknowledged in the Committee's original recommendation. The Committee, therefore, reiterates that the approved capital cost of ₹128 crores, frozen since 2010 without inflation adjustment, is wholly inadequate for achieving financial sustainability. It further recommends that the Department should undertake a comprehensive financial review of all 20 IIITs (PPP), index capital costs to current price levels, and prepare a concrete proposal for one-time grant-based capital infusion the earliest.**

(para 3.23.4)

10. **The Committee notes that replies furnished by the department in response to the observations contained in paras 15 to 18 above in Chapter-III lack specificity. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Department that replies should be comprehensive and should not be inconclusive or in general terms. Further, a detailed reply to the observations as contained in paras 15 to 18 above in Chapter-III may be provided at the earliest for consideration of the Committee.**

(paras 3.23.5, 3.23.6, 3.23.7 and 3.24.1)