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# COLLEGE POST

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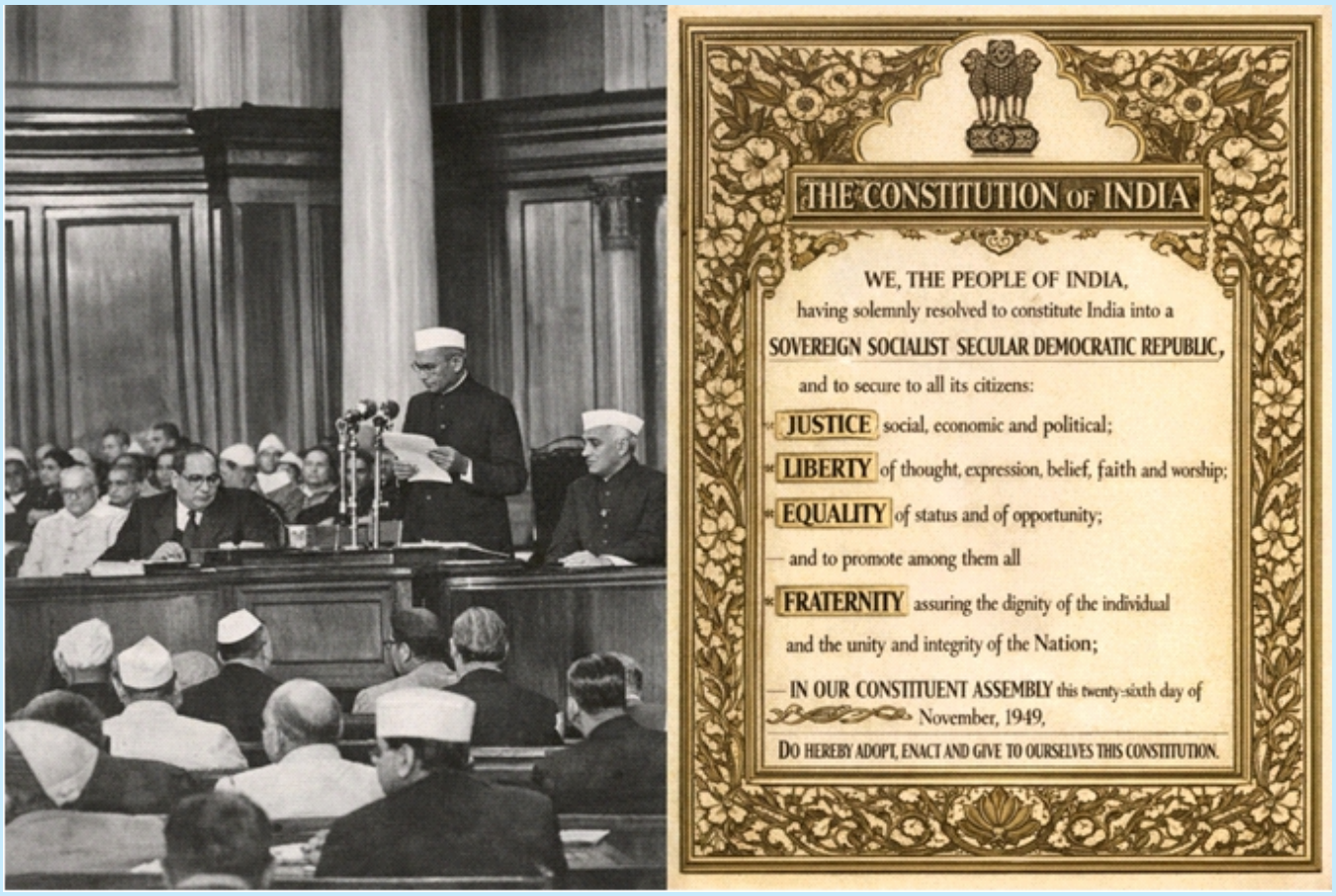


**Celebrating the Constitution of India Day –**
**Photos of: Constituent Assembly and Preamble of the Constitution of India**

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CHEST

# Online Courses on Ethics, Values & Life Skills

## Course -1

Introduction to Ethics – 2 Credits

Module -1: DEFINITION AND MAJOR THEORIES

Unit 1: The definition

Unit 2:Major Theories of Ethics and Brief description of theories

Unit 3: Ethical Framework and Approaches

Unit 4:Key Distinction between Ethics, Morals, and Values

Module - 2: SCOPE OF ETHICS AND ETHICS IN DIFFERENT DISCIPLINESAND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Unit 1: ScopeUnit 2: Scope of Ethics in Different Disciplines

Unit 3: Professional EthicsUnit 4: Challenges of Application

Module – 3: ETHICSIN MODERN TIMES

Unit 1: Ethics in Modern TimesUnit 2: Future Challenges

## Course - 2

Introduction To Values – 2 Credits

Module - 1: VALUE ORIENTATION

Unit 1: The Definition Unit 2: Norms and ValuesUnit 3: Perennial Values

Module - 2: VALUES IN MODERN SOCIETY

Unit 1:Modernization and ModernityUnit 2:The Rationalistic or Liberal Model

Unit 3:The Revivalist or the Orthodox ModelUnit 4:The Radical or the Revolutionary Model

Module - 3: TYPES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES

Unit 1:Traditional SocietiesUnit2:Transitional SocietiesUnit 3:Modern Societies

Unit 4:Post-Modern SocietiesUnit 5: Indian Unity and Diversity Value

Unit 6: UGC Guidelines Value Pravesh 2.0 Unit 7:Changing Societies under the Tech. Revo.

## Course- 3

LIFE SKILLS- 2Credits:Self Development, Management, Rights &Duties, Personal Safety and Security-

Module - 1: SELF DEVELOPMENT

Unit 1: Emotional IntelligenceUnit 2:Self-EsteemUnit 3: Yoga Unit 4: Skills for Quality LifeUnit 5: The True North Principles Unit 6: The Potentiality Of The Four Human Endowments

Module - 2:WORK, HABITS, ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION &FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS & DUTIES

Unit 1:Work,Unit 2:Sense of Duty,Unit 3:Habits of Thrift, Unit 4:Environment, Unit 4.1:Environment Protection Policy,Unit 5:Fundamental Rights and Dutiesof The Citizens

Module - 3: NATIONAL SECURITY, PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

Unit 1: National Security Unit 2: Personal Security Unit 3: Body Heat: As Temperatures Rise, Please Add SaltUnit 3.1: Prevent Electrical Fires at HomeUnit 3.2: Security Travel TipsUnit 3.2.1: Travel Tips Unit 4: Sexual Harassment: What Every Working Woman needs to knowUnit 5: How Burglars Choose Their VictimsUnit 6: Ten Ways to Protect Your HomeUnit 7: Credit Card & Cyber Security Precautions Unit 7.1: Negative Impact of Excess use of Mobile Phone Unit 8: Prudent Precautions against Terrorism.

IMPORTANT NOTE -
Courses will be offered in collaboration with the institutions. Also, students can directly enroll for the Courses. Certificate will be provided jointly by SEED-CHEST and Collaborating Institute.

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## EDITORIAL

# UGC AND THE VIKSIT BHARAT SHIKSHA ADHISHTHAN: A SHIFT

Soon after Independence, the Government of India constituted the University Education Commission (1948) under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, which laid the intellectual and institutional foundations of Indian higher education. With the adoption of the Constitution of India, education was placed within a federal framework: school education largely became a State subject, while the coordination and determination of standards in higher education were entrusted to the Union under Entry 66 of the Union List.

To give effect to this constitutional responsibility, Parliament enacted the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956. Prior to this, the UGC had functioned since 1953 through executive arrangements, modelled on the UK system. The statutory UGC emerged as the national apex body for the coordination, maintenance of standards, and development of university education in India.

**UGC: An Autonomous, Academic-Led Institution**

The UGC was conceived as an autonomous body, accountable to Parliament rather than functioning as a department of the Ministry of Education. Its structure reflected this philosophy. The Commission consisted of twelve members: a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, two ex-officio members representing the Government of India (the Education Secretary and the Expenditure Secretary), and eight members drawn from Vice-Chancellors, eminent educationists, and industry.

Appointments to leadership positions were based on recommendations of a Search Committee dominated by academics, and the Secretary of the Commission-appointed by the Commission itself-functioned as its CEO without being a member. This ensured that academic judgment rather than executive authority guided decision-making.

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The UGC negotiated directly with the Planning Commission for funds and functioned as a developmental agency, supporting universities and colleges through plan grants, infrastructure funding, academic schemes, and faculty development initiatives. Universities, whether established under Central or State Acts or recognised as Deemed-to-be Universities under Section 3, enjoyed considerable autonomy in academic and administrative matters.

**Developmental Role and Academic Trust**

The UGC's role was largely advisory, facilitative, and promotional. It sought to maintain standards not through coercive regulation but through persuasion, incentives, and academic consensus. A key focus was on teacher quality, reflected in national pay scales and service conditions for university teachers and academic staff. States were encouraged-through substantial financial support-to adopt these norms.

Inspection powers existed under the Act but were rarely exercised, reflecting a belief in self-regulation by universities. Academic committees, composed largely of scholars, played a central role in shaping schemes, evaluating performance, and guiding implementation.

**Accreditation, Expansion, and Nation-Building**

As higher education expanded and global practices evolved, the UGC introduced Assessment and Accreditation by establishing the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as an autonomous Inter-University Centre. Accreditation was voluntary and developmental rather than punitive.

The UGC also established Inter-University Centres in emerging areas of science and technology, promoted faculty development through Academic Staff Colleges (now HRD Centres), and introduced the National Eligibility Test (NET) to maintain academic standards. This framework produced generations of scholars, scientists, professionals, and administrators, contributing significantly to national development and global knowledge systems.

*....contd on page 12*

The Indian Colleges Forum (ICF) organised its **26th National Annual Conference** at the India International Centre, New Delhi, in **December 2025**, in collaboration with **Kawa Group of Institutions, Jammu (J&K)**. The conference focused on **NEP-2020 implementation**, **Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education**, and **Climate Change**, and was inaugurated by **Prof. N. V. Varghese**. Eminent scholars and college principals presented papers, and participants worked in thematic groups to develop policy-oriented recommendations.

**Key Outcomes and Recommendations**

1. **NEP-2020 Implementation**
   The conference emphasised curriculum integration of **AI and Climate Change**, India-centric and inclusive education, adequate **financial support**, timely **faculty recruitment**, strengthened **industry–academia collaboration**, clear **internship frameworks**, and cautious implementation of **multiple entry–exit** and **Academic Bank of Credits**. Greater clarity was sought on four-year UG programmes, enhanced autonomy for colleges, and regular updating of skill-oriented courses.

2. **Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education**
   Recommendations included establishing **AI Ethics Committees**, ensuring **human-in-the-loop** oversight, framing robust **AI governance and data policies**, and using AI to enhance **access, inclusion, personalised learning, research, and innovation** without replacing human judgment—especially in assessment. Capacity building in **AI literacy**, aligned with UNESCO frameworks, was strongly advocated.

3. **Climate Change and Higher Education**
   The conference proposed a **compulsory UG course on Climate Change**, a strengthened multidisciplinary **Environmental Studies curriculum**, certificate courses, promotion of **local and indigenous knowledge**, encouragement of **decarbonisation research**, and effective implementation of **UNESCO funding and support frameworks**.

Overall, the conference produced **actionable recommendations** for policymakers, regulators, and institutions to strengthen higher education reform, ethical AI adoption, and climate responsiveness.

Organization and academic Issues placed by the President to the House:

The President of **SEED–ICF** placed key organisational and academic issues before the House, which were deliberated and broadly endorsed.

To **strengthen ICF**, the House agreed on greater member engagement through quarterly online meetings of State Chapter Secretaries, periodic meetings of members, and active enrolment of new institutions, with each State Chapter encouraged to add at least five members.

On **clearance of dues**, the President noted significant pending subscriptions and urged State Chapters to ensure timely payment, at least for the current year. He appreciated colleges from Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, and Delhi for clearing their dues and reiterated that **50% of the collected dues** would be shared with State Chapters to support academic activities. The House resolved to mobilise members for regular payment.

The House supported **recognition of excellence and innovation** among member colleges and approved the proposal to constitute a committee to identify best practices and award certificates of recognition.

Regarding **certificate courses**, members appreciated the success of courses on ethics, values, and life skills, as well as SEED-CHEST's LMS-based certificate programmes and the **International Diploma in Educational Leadership – Higher Education (IDEL-HE)**. The House endorsed expanding these value-added courses to enhance student employability and leadership capacity.

The House discussed holding the **27th ICF National Conference in 2026**, with offers to host it in Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, or Kalaburagi, Karnataka. The final decision will be communicated after further consultations.

In his concluding remarks, the President emphasised the national relevance of the conference themes—**NEP-2020 implementation, AI, and climate change**—and reiterated the central role of colleges in shaping the future of India's youth. He called for greater autonomy for colleges, promotion of multidisciplinary and field-based research, and adoption of dialogic, participatory teaching–learning practices to address societal challenges and support national development.

Report of the 26th ICF Conference is available at :
www.seed.edu.org and indiancollegesforum.com

# INTERNATIONALISING INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Kandi Kamala & Dr. Gedam Kamalakar *

*Authors elaborate on Internationalization of Higher Education citing data and reasons for internationalization. They highlight the initiatives taken by UGC, types of foreign university campus set up in India and their likely impact on higher education.*


## ABSTRACT

Indian higher education is at a critical juncture, entering a new chapter marked by rapid transformations, global aspirations, and structural reforms. The sector, one of the largest in the world, is undergoing a paradigm shift with the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, expansion of digital and online learning, the entry of foreign universities, and increased focus on research, innovation, and skill development. These changes reflect India's ambition to align its higher education system with global standards while addressing long-standing challenges of access, equity, and quality.This new chapter emphasizes multidisciplinary education, flexible curriculum frameworks, and a stronger connection between academia and industry, aiming to produce globally competent graduates equipped for the knowledge economy. Moreover, government initiatives such as research fellowships, international collaborations, and skill-based programs are creating new opportunities for students and faculty. However, persistent issues such as regional disparities, inadequate funding, employability gaps, and digital divides continue to pose significant hurdles. By critically analyzing these opportunities and challenges, this paper argues that Indian higher education is moving towards a transformative era - where innovation, inclusivity, and global integration will determine its trajectory. The "new chapter" thus reflects both optimism and caution, highlighting the need for policy effectiveness, institutional resilience, and collaborative efforts to ensure India's higher education system emerges as a driver of national development and global engagement.



## KEYWORDS

NEP 2020 (National Education Policy), Globalization of Education, Cross-border Education, Higher Education Reforms in India, Academic Collaboration, Student Mobility, World-class Education, Research and Innovation, Knowledge Economy.



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*Internationalisation has emerged as a central theme in contemporary higher education policy, driven by the global circulation of knowledge, students, faculty, and institutional models.*

## INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation has emerged as a central theme in contemporary higher education policy, driven by the global circulation of knowledge, students, faculty, and institutional models. For countries with large and rapidly expanding higher education systems, internationalisation is increasingly viewed as a strategic tool to enhance academic quality, research competitiveness, and global visibility. In this context, India's recent policy initiatives to allow the entry of foreign universities represent a significant departure from its historically cautious and protectionist approach to higher education.

India possesses one of the largest higher education systems in the world, characterised by rapid massification, institutional diversity, and persistent challenges related to quality, access, and equity. While Indian students have long engaged with global higher education through outward mobility, institutional-level internationalisation within India has remained limited. The introduction of regulatory frameworks permitting foreign universities to establish campuses or academic programmes in India signals a shift from a mobility-driven model of internationalisation to a more inward-looking, institution-based approach.

The role of foreign universities in this evolving landscape is both promising and contested. Proponents argue that foreign institutions can contribute to curriculum innovation, research collaboration, faculty development, and global benchmarking of academic standards. Critics, however, raise concerns about marketisation, affordability, regulatory asymmetries, and the potential marginalisation of public universities. These debates underscore the need to examine foreign universities not merely as symbols of global integration, but as actors embedded within India's political economy of higher education.

This article situates the entry of foreign universities within broader theories of higher education

internationalisation and regulatory governance. It seeks to analyse the extent to which foreign universities can contribute to systemic transformation in Indian higher education, while also interrogating the structural constraints that shape their functioning. By doing so, the study aims to assess whether the internationalisation of Indian higher education through foreign universities can advance national objectives of quality enhancement, research capacity, and inclusive development, or whether it risks reinforcing existing hierarchies within the system.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The trajectory of higher education in India reflects a long and complex evolution shaped by cultural traditions, colonial interventions, and post-independence reforms. Its roots trace back to ancient centers of learning such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, and Vallabhi, where education was not only religious but also focused on philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and statecraft. These institutions attracted scholars from across Asia, making India a hub of global intellectual exchange. During the medieval period, higher education largely shifted to religious institutions such as madrasas and pathshalas, where Islamic, Sanskritic, and vernacular traditions thrived. Centers like Delhi, Ajmer, and Bidar witnessed the growth of madrasa education, while temple schools promoted Vedic and classical learning.

The colonial era marked a turning point. The establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857 introduced the Western model of higher education, with an emphasis on English, liberal arts, and administrative training. This period witnessed the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems but also laid the foundation for modern universities. Reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan advocated modern education while still negotiating cultural traditions.

Post-independence, India recognized higher education as a driver of nation-building. The University Education Commission (1948-49) under Dr. S. Radhakrishnan emphasized the role of universities in fostering democracy and citizenship. Successive commissions, including the Kothari Commission (1964-66), stressed access, equity, and quality, calling for a common school system and national educational planning. Institutions like the IITs, IIMs, and AIIMS were established to position India as a global hub of science, technology, and management education.

The 1990s economic reforms introduced privatization and expansion, which dramatically increased enrolment but also raised concerns about commercialization, regional imbalance, and quality assurance. The growth of private universities and deemed-to-be universities transformed the higher education landscape, making it one of the largest in the world.

In the 21st century, Indian higher education entered a new chapter with reforms such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which envisions multidisciplinary education, global competitiveness, digital transformation, and a focus on research and innovation. The historical trajectory thus demonstrates a shift from elitist and colonial models toward democratization, massification, and globalization of higher education.

India, with the third largest higher education system globally, has the lowest gross enrolment ratio compared to G20 nations. The National Education Policy 2020 has made a strong recommendation to enhance the gross enrolment ratio for higher education to 50% by 2035. This figure stood at 19.4% in 2010 and 28.4% in 2021-22. The study, therefore, analyses the nature of the growth of higher education in India from 2000 to 2020 and carries out Panel regression to investigate the gross enrolment ratio at the state level, primarily affected by the number of universities and the growth in the number of colleges per million populations. The analysis reveals a need for significant expansion of higher education in India in the future, or it will result in a case of elusive inclusive development-wherein India will miss the 2030 global agenda concerning Sustainable Development Goal 4 on higher education and the 2035 National Education Policy target. The study recommends that higher education should be closely monitored by the states at the district level, providing high-quality and affordable online education to realise the preferred outcomes.

Refined year-wise table of the number of Indian students going abroad to study (approximate figures), covering 2015 through 2024, based on the best available official data: Table 1.

**1. DIFFERENCE IN METRICS FOR 2024**

- The ~760,073 figure reflects the number of students who went abroad in 2024 (based on government's Bureau of Immigration data on outbound movement)
- The ~13.36 lakh number captures those already pursuing studies abroad in 2024, regardless of when they left.

These numbers measure slightly different things-so it's valuable to specify which perspective you're interested in.

**2. MISSING DATA FOR 2025**

As of August 2025, full-year data for 2025 isn't publicly available. However, news reports indicate that in early 2025, about 760,000 students went abroad for higher education-nearly matching the total for 2024. This suggests continuation of recent trends, but the complete annual figure is yet to be confirmed.

**1. HOW MANY STUDENTS GO ABROAD EACH YEAR?**

- According to government data, more than 7.6 lakh (760,000) Indian students went abroad for higher

**Table 1**

| Year | Indian Students Abroad (approx.) |
|---|---|
| 2015 | ~368,625 Education for All in India |
| 2016 | ~382,184 Education for All in India |
| 2017 | ~454,009 Education for All in India |
| 2018 | ~517,998 Education for All in India |
| 2019 | ~586,337 Education for All in India Hindustan Times |
| 2020 | ~259,655 / ~260,363 Education for All in IndiaThe Economic Times Business Standard |
| 2021 | ~445,582 / ~444,553 Education for All in India Mint News18 |
| 2022 | ~750,365 / ~750,000 Hindustan Times News18 |
| 2023 | ~894,783 / ~894,000 Sabrang India The Indian Express+1 |

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

- *"Going abroad" (outbound in that year): ~760,073 students.*
- *"Currently studying abroad" (enrolled overseas): ~1,335,878 (i.e., 13.36 lakh) students.*

studies in 2024, based on Bureau of Immigration figures. This was slightly lower than the peak of 8.95 lakh in 2023.

- Another key figure comes from data presented to Parliament: as of 2024, 13.35 lakh Indian students were pursuing higher education abroad (i.e., enrolled across multiple years), compared to 13.19 lakh in 2023 and 9.07 lakh in 2022.
- In 2025, estimates suggest this number has grown significantly, reaching approximately 1.8 million (i.e., 18 lakh) Indian students studying overseas (See table 2).

## FOREIGN UNIVERSITY ARRIVING IN INDIA - A NEW CHAPTER

The data pertaining to foreign universities in India is given in Table 3. The present position of operation of some of the universities are discussed here.

### 1. Landmark: University of Southampton Opens in Gurugram

The University of Southampton (UK) has become the first foreign university to establish a full-fledged campus in India under the UGC's 2023 regulations. Named "Southampton Delhi," the campus in Gurugram's International Tech Park will launch in August 2025, offering four undergraduate and two postgraduate courses in fields like computer science, business management, accounting & finance, economics, and finance/ international management. These programs mirror the UK campus in quality, and students may spend up to a year at Southampton's UK or Malaysia campuses. Notably, TOEFL/IELTS scores are not required.

### 2. Five More Universities to Join by 2026-27

Between 2026 and 2027, five additional global institutions have received Letters of Intent (LoIs) from the UGC to set up autonomous campuses in India:

- **Illinois Institute of Technology (USA)**
- **University of Liverpool (UK)**
- **Victoria University (Australia)**
- **Western Sydney University (Australia)**
- **Istituto Europeo di Design (Italy)**

These campuses will allow students to earn international degrees locally, drastically reducing the costs and logistical challenges of overseas study.

### 3. Mumbai Edu City: A New Hub for Global

**TABLE 2**
**AT-A-GLANCE COMPARISON**

| Metric | Approximate Value |
|---|---|
| Indian students departing in 2024 | 7.6 lakh (new annual departures) |
| Indian students enrolled abroad in 2024 | 13.35 lakh (total enrolled) |
| Indian students abroad in 2025 | ~18 lakh (total enrolled) |
| Total spending by Indian students (2025) | US $70 billion (estimated) |

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/study-abroad/over-7-6-lakh-indian-students-

**Table.3**
**Foreign Universities Arriving in India (as of 2025-27)**

| University / Institution | Country | Location (India) | Status / Expected Operations Start | Programs / Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Deakin University | Australia | GIFT City, Gujarat | Announced 2023; operations started 2024 | Offering Business Analytics, Cyber security; first foreign campus under UGC rules |
| University of Wollongong (UOW) | Australia | GIFT City, Gujarat | Commenced November 2024 | Postgrad courses in Computing (Data Analytics, FinTech), modern infrastructure |
| University of Southampton | UK | Gurugram (Gurgaon) Haryana | Classes starting ~ August 2025 | UG & PG in CS, Business, Economics, Law, Engineering; investment £30 m |
| University of York | UK | Navi Mumbai (Mumbai region) | LoI issued; enrolling by late 2026-27 | To offer UG/PG in Comp Sci, Business, Economics, Creative Industries |
| University of Aberdeen | UK | Navi Mumbai or Mumbai region | LoI issued; start ~ by 2026 | Full autonomy, programs pending; part of 5 LoI group |
| University of Western Australia (UWA) | Australia | Navi Mumbai / Chennai (planned) | LOI; launch by ~2026-27 | STEM & Business programs; campuses in Mumbai and Chennai envisaged |
| Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) | USA | Navi Mumbai (likely) | LoI; start operations by ~2026-27 | First U.S. university in India under UGC rules |
| Istituto Europeo di Design (IED) | Italy | Navi Mumbai | LOI; expected by ~2026-27 | Offering design, fashion, visual arts, communication programs |
| University of Liverpool | UK | Bengaluru | LoI issued; operations from ~Aug 2026 | UG/PG: Business, Finance, CS, Biomedical Sciences, Game Design |
| Western Sydney University | Australia | Greater Noida (UP) | LoI; classes in Aug-Sept 2026 | BBA, IT; first phase infrastructure under development |
| Victoria University | Australia | Noida (planned) | LoI; expected by ~2026-27 | Career-oriented courses in Business, IT, Hospitality |
| Queen's University Belfast | UK | GIFT City, Gujarat | Plans for early 2026 launch | Postgrad Business Analytics, Finance, Project Management; future AI focus |
| University of Surrey | UK | GIFT City, Gujarat | Expected ~2026-27 | Offering Business, Finance, CS, AI, Cybersecurity |
| Coventry University | UK | GIFT City, Gujarat | Expected ~2026 | UG in International Business, Business & Finance |
| Lincoln University College (Malaysia) | Malaysia | Telangana (planned) | Proposed 2025 - pending approval | Programs in Medicine, Engineering, Business, AI |

*Source: UGC*

**Education**

As part of the visionary Mumbai EduCity initiative near Navi Mumbai, the following five institutions have also received LoIs:

- **Illinois Tech (USA)**
- **University of Aberdeen (UK)**
- **University of York (UK)**
- **University of Western Australia (Australia)**
- **IstitutoEuropeo di Design (Italy)**

This development seeks to position Mumbai as a global knowledge capital, fostering innovation, research, and entrepreneurship.

**4. Already Operational: Deakin University & University of Wollongong**

Australian universities have already made headway:

- Deakin University and University of Wollongong have established campuses at GIFT City, Gujarat, supported by special regulatory and financial frameworks.
- Wollongong has also reportedly started offering short-term postgraduate programs (around Rs 8-9 lakh) even before full-scale operations began.

**5. UGC Regulations Enabling the Wave**

The UGC's 2023 regulations pave the way for top-500 global universities (by overall or subject rankings, or reputational standing) to set up autonomous campuses in India. These universities can decide their own curricula, admissions, fee structures, and faculty hires, while maintaining parity with their home institutions.

**6. Why It Matters for India**

- **Local access to global quality education**: Students can pursue world-class degrees without going abroad, saving significantly on cost and time.
- **Stem-focused offerings**: Many programs emphasize STEM, business, design, and research-areas crucial to India's development.
- **Boost to research & retention**: Enhances domestic research capacity and helps retain talent that would otherwise study overseas.
- **Global academic ecosystem**: Creates vibrant, multicultural campuses and underscores India's emergence as a global education hub.

India's bold steps starting with Southampton and expanding rapidly through LoIs and policy reform are reshaping higher education. By blending international reputation with local accessibility, the country is on track to become a premier destination for global learning.

**Outcome of UGC Regulations on Foreign Universities**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has framed regulations enabling foreign higher educational institutions to operate in India, aiming to:

- Improve quality and global competitiveness
- Promote research and innovation ecosystems
- Reduce student out-migration
- Position India as a global education hub

The role of foreign universities includes curriculum innovation, faculty exchange, collaborative research, international accreditation standards, and enhancing employability through industry-linked global programs. However, concerns remain regarding affordability, regulatory oversight, cultural integration, and equity in access. A study was carried out to find impact of regulations.

**Chart 1: Most Common Pathway Choices**

| Step | Regulator / Authority | Applies to | What they check/require | Outcome / document |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Eligibility check (rank/ quality threshold) | UGC — FHEI Regulations (2023) | Foreign HEIs wanting **mainland** campuses | University ranking / reputation (e.g. top global list threshold), demonstration that programmes are “at-par” with home campus, governance & academic standards. | UGC acceptance of eligibility; start formal application. |
| 2a. Central Ministry / UGC approvals (mainland route) | UGC / Ministry of Education / other Central bodies | Mainland (state territory) campuses | Academic approvals, recognition, compliance with NEP principles, proof of finances, land/affiliations; may require state nods. | UGC grant / Letter of Intent (LoI) ’! final approval to set up campus. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2b. IFSCA / GIFT-IFSC route (special economic / IFSC zone) | IFSCA (IFSCA regs + GIFT City SEZ authority) | Campuses inside GIFT IFSC (financial services zone) | Compliance with IFSCA framework for International Branch Campuses (IBC) / Offshore Education Centres (OEC): governance, identical programs as home campus, commercial/ tax/infra arrangements. Faster, autonomous regulatory regime for certain subject areas (esp. finance/tech). | IFSCA registration / approval to operate in GIFT-IFSC. |
| 3. State / Local approvals (if mainland) | State government / state higher-ed councils / local planning authorities | Mainland campuses (not required for IFSC) | Land use, building permits, state education clearances, local incentives. State may host "EduCities" and offer facilitation (e.g., Maharashtra, Gujarat). | State permits; local clearances. |
| 4. Operational (faculty, curriculum, fees) | UGC / IFSCA / Institutional QA | Both routes | Assurance of "parity" with home campus; freedom to set fees (UGC rules allow autonomy once approved); QA processes, student protections. | Operational license; programme registration; marketing allowed. |
| 5. Ongoing compliance &recognition | UGC (mainland) or IFSCA (IFSC) + periodic reporting | Both | Periodic audits, quality assurance, recognition of degrees, consumer protection / student grievance channels. | |

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a mixed-method research design combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Descriptive and analytical framework. Comparative analysis between Indian institutions and foreign collaborations Structured questionnaires administered to students and faculty in selected universities Interviews with policymakers and institutional administrators. Focus group discussions with stakeholders. Policy documents of the Ministry of Education UGC regulations on foreign universities Government reports, AISHE data, academic journals International higher education reports. The outcome of the study is briefly mentioned here:

## 3. OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

1. Academic Quality Enhancement
   - o Adoption of international curricula and interdisciplinary models.
2. Strengthened Research Output
   - o Growth in joint publications, patents, and funded research projects.
3. Increased Institutional Competitiveness
   - o Indian universities improving governance, infrastructure, and ranking performance.
4. Reduction in Brain Drain
   - o Availability of foreign degrees within India reduces outward student migration.
5. Economic and Skill Development Impact
   - o Industry-aligned global programs enhance employability and innovation ecosystems.
6. Equity and Accessibility Challenges
   - o High tuition fees risk widening socio-economic disparities.
7. Regulatory and Quality Assurance Issues
   - o Need for strong monitoring frameworks to maintain academic standards.

The entry of foreign universities represents a transformative phase in Indian higher education. While it offers opportunities for global integration, research excellence, and institutional reform, balanced regulatory mechanisms and inclusive policies are essential to ensure equitable and sustainable internationalization.

## PATHWAY CHOICES OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Pathway choices of foreign Universities and challenges are discussed in here:
The chart 1 gives pathway choices.

- **Two clear routes now exist in India**: the UGC FHEI (mainland) route with stricter academic eligibility and parity requirements, and the IFSCA / GIFT-IFSC route that functions like a free-zone option offering regulatory and commercial autonomy for campuses inside GIFT City.
- **States matter for mainland campuses**: after UGC clearance, state/local planning and education authorities control land, building and some facilitation - this makes mainland projects multi-jurisdictional.
- **UAE is a useful comparator**: UAE succeeded by offering free-zone/ emirate-level licensing and market-driven approvals (many branch campuses), while India is attempting a hybrid: controlled mainland entry plus an IFSC free-zone alternative to attract top global universities.
- **Practical implication for an HEI**: if you want speed + commercial terms, GIFT-IFSC/IFSCA is attractive for finance/tech programs; if you want full integration into India's higher-ed system (degree recognition across India) and to reach broader student markets, pursue UGC FHEI + state approvals (slower, more conditions

## CHALLENGES FOR FOREIGN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES IN INDIA

1. **Affordability & Access**
   - High tuition fees at foreign branch campuses risk limiting access to only affluent students, contrary to NEP 2020's inclusivity goals.
   - Lack of reservation obligations and insufficient scholarships may further exclude socio-economically disadvantaged groups, reinforcing inequality.
2. **Regulatory Complexity**
   - India's fragmented regulatory framework, involving UGC, AICTE, and other bodies, challenges foreign campuses offering multidisciplinary programs.
   - State-level differences, lands, approvals, taxes, and bureaucratic inertia add layers of difficulty.
   - Despite the FHEI Regulations (2023) offering a legal foundation, navigating evolving and overlapping rules remains tough.
3. **Financial Sustainability & Commercialization**
   - There's a tension between maintaining academic quality and achieving commercially viable operations, especially without preferential treatment.
   - Foreign campuses may pivot toward profit-driven models, compromising the educational mission and raising equity concerns. 4. Brand vs Substance
   - Many early branch campuses are specialized or small, rather than full-scale research universities. This can dilute reputation and raise concerns about academic depth.
   - Overreliance on branding without delivering high academic standards risks skeptical student response.
5. **Cultural and Academic Disconnection**
   - Imported teaching methods may clash with Indian classroom norms, pedagogies, and evaluation styles. Adapting while preserving quality is delicate.
   - Without integration into local curriculum, faculty, and collaboration, campuses risk isolation from India's broader educational ecosystem.
6. **Faculty Recruitment & Immigration**
   - Hiring foreign faculty involves complex visa processes and regulatory compliance, including UGC's minimum-stay requirements.
   - Recruitment of Indian academics can be sensitive due to compensation inequalities or infrastructure constraints.
7. **Operational Infrastructure & Perception**
   - Many campuses begin operations in rented urban buildings, lacking the aesthetic and facilities of typical universities distracting from institutional credibility.
8. **Limited Initial Impact**
   - The anticipated scale of branch campuses is modest; their effect on Gross Enrolment Ratio and the overall education landscape will be gradual.
   - Excessive hype or poorly prepared roll-outs risk launching distrust in internationalisation efforts.
9. **Sovereignty & National Identity**
   - Academics caution against foreign institutions overshadowing local educational autonomy or undercutting indigenous curriculum and values.
   - Foreign campuses, if seen as instruments of soft power, could raise concerns about academic independence. See Table 4.

## PRACTICAL EXAMPLES & CONTEXT

- University of Southampton is investing up to £30 million to open a full-fledged campus in Gurugram by 2025, targeting 5,500 students annually with degrees in computing, business, engineering, economics, and law, at about two-thirds the cost of UK fees.
- Similarly, institutions like Deakin University and University of Wollongong have begun operations in GIFT City, while others are pursuing campuses in Mumbai and Delhi-highlighting both opportunity and urgency.

**TABLE-4 CHALLENGES AT A GLANCE**

| Category | Core Challenges |
|---|---|
| Affordability & Access | High fees; limited scholarships; equity concerns |
| Regulation & Bureaucracy | Multi-layered approvals; state variance; evolving policy complexity |
| Financial Viability | Need for profits versus maintaining quality; long-term sustainability |
| Academic Integrity | Reputation risks; specialized focus; marketing overshadowing substance |
| Cultural Integration | Pedagogy mismatch; insufficient local adaptation |
| Faculty & Immigration | Complex visa/stay rules; talent competition and retention issues |
| Infrastructure & Facilities | Lack of campus identity; temporary setups |
| Scale & Impact | Slow enrolment; risk of premature failures |
| National Identity & Policy | Concerns over sovereignty; soft power dynamics; local institutional displacement |

*https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/ECE-HBP-225_Housing%20Affordability_E_web.pdf*

- Indian higher education faces foundational challenges-such as limited international faculty, infrastructure shortfalls, insufficient international collaborations, and poor industry engagement-which could affect the ecosystem's readiness for foreign campuses.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Foreign university campuses offer exciting potential to enrich India's education landscape bringing global curricula, exposure, and competition. However, their success will hinge on inclusive access, robust regulation, cultural alignment, financial sensibility, and infrastructure planning.

For these campuses to become sustainable and meaningful contributors (rather than elite enclaves), collaborative efforts between policymakers, domestic institutions, communities, and foreign partners are essential aligned around shared values and long-term educational impact.

## LIMITATIONS

This paper is primarily descriptive in nature, relying on secondary data and publicly available reports. It does not incorporate primary stakeholder interviews that could have provided deeper insights into policy intentions and implementation challenges. Similarly, no cost-benefit modeling or quantitative assessment of financial implications has been undertaken, which limits the ability to evaluate the economic viability of proposed reforms.

## CHALLENGES

1. **Regulatory and Policy Barriers**
   - Despite the UGC Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEI) regulations, uncertainties remain regarding operational autonomy, fee regulation, and academic freedom.
   - Complex compliance processes may discourage world-class institutions from entering.
2. **Quality Assurance and Accreditation**
   - Ensuring consistent academic standards, maintaining global benchmarks, and monitoring quality across campuses in India is a major challenge.
   - Risk of low-tier or commercial institutions entering with profit motives rather than academic excellence.
3. **Competition With Domestic Universities**
   - Private and public universities may face intense competition for students and faculty.
   - Could widen inequality by benefiting only urban, affluent, English-educated students.
4. **High Cost and Affordability Issues**
   - Tuition fees of foreign universities may remain significantly higher than Indian institutions.
   - Risk of creating an elitist education environment accessible only to wealthier groups.
5. **Brain Drain of Faculty and Talent**
   - Attracting top faculty with higher salary packages may lead to a talent shift from Indian universities to foreign branch campuses.
   - Potential decline in human resources for state and central universities.
6. **Cultural and Academic Adaptation**
   - Differences in teaching pedagogy, curriculum design, evaluation patterns, and student expectations may pose adaptation challenges.
   - Balancing Indian socio-cultural context with global standards may require local customization.
7. **Infrastructure and Resource Requirements**
   - High-quality research infrastructure requires large investment, which may be difficult in tier-2 and

tier-3 regions.
- Uneven development may increase regional disparities.

8. **Impact on Research Ecosystem**
   - Collaboration opportunities exist, but commercial institutions might prioritize revenue-generating programs over fundamental research.
   - Risk of undermining public research institutions.
9. **Intellectual Property and Data Security**
   - Research collaborations may raise concerns related to data privacy, patents, and ownership of research outcomes.

10. **Equitable Access and Social Justice Concerns**
    - Foreign universities may focus on profitable disciplines like management, IT, and health sciences rather than humanities and social sciences.
    - Could widen urban-rural educational inequality rather than bridging it.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Students:**

- Watch Southampton and Wollongong campuses this year-they're fully functional and offer global credentials affordably.
- Prioritize based on discipline:
  - STEM & Analytics: UOW, IIT, Liverpool
  - Design & Creative Arts: IED, York
  - Business/Management: Southampton, Liverpool, Victoria, York
- Cost advantage: Expect savings of 25-35% compared to studying abroad.
- International exposure: Opportunities to study abroad for a semester/year (e.g., Southampton) can enrich learning.

**Policymakers:**

- Ensure equitable access: Address concentration in metro areas and expand to smaller cities over time.
- Foster collaboration: Encourage joint programs with Indian universities; uplift domestic institutions.
- Monitor quality & equity: Enforce strict standards to prevent uneven distribution and ensure affordability.

**Indian Universities:**

- Form alliances: Collaborate with foreign counterparts for dual degrees, research, and faculty exchange.
- Elevate offerings: Responsiveness to global trends and autonomy can help compete with top foreign institutions.
- Leverage ecosystem: Highlight regional strengths-for instance, IITs partnering with industry-relevant offerings.

The arrival of foreign universities in India marks the beginning of a global academic era. With Southampton and Wollongong already active, and a robust pipeline including institutions from the UK, Australia, USA, and Italy, students now have expanded access to international-standard education right at home. This expansion if nurtured wisely can significantly strengthen India's higher education ecosystem.Indian higher education is at a critical juncture and faces challenges of access, equity, and quality while also embracing opportunities in internationalisation, technology, and policy reforms which require coordinated efforts by government, institutions, and stakeholders. Indian higher education is at a critical juncture. It must expand access, ensure equity, and improve quality. At the same time, it is opening opportunities in internationalisation, technology, and policy reform. These require coordinated action from government, institutions, and stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

The entry of foreign universities into India marks a significant, though carefully calibrated, shift in the internationalisation of Indian higher education. Rather than representing a wholesale liberalisation, the current policy framework reflects India's attempt to balance global engagement with national priorities such as access, equity, regulatory control, and academic sovereignty. Foreign universities are positioned not merely as providers of elite education but as potential partners in strengthening research capacity, curriculum innovation, and institutional governance within the Indian system.

From an internationalisation perspective, foreign universities can contribute to diversifying academic offerings, enhancing research collaboration, and exposing students and faculty to global pedagogical practices. Their presence may also reduce outbound student mobility and associated foreign exchange outflows, while signalling India's growing confidence as a destination for global knowledge production. However, these benefits are neither automatic nor evenly distributed. High tuition costs, urban concentration of campuses, and selective programme offerings risk reinforcing existing social and regional inequalities in access to higher education.

The regulatory environment remains a defining factor in shaping outcomes. Overlapping jurisdictions involving the UGC, professional councils, state governments, and special regulatory zones create both constraints and uncertainties for foreign institutions. While recent reforms demonstrate policy intent to attract global universities, sustained impact will depend on regulatory clarity, protection of academic freedom, and long-term policy stability. Without these, foreign universities may remain symbolic actors rather than systemic contributors.

Ultimately, the role of foreign universities in internationalising Indian higher education should be evaluated not by their numbers or brand value, but by their integration into national developmental goals. Meaningful internationalisation requires moving beyond

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**Liberalisation and the Changing Policy Environment**

With the rapid expansion of higher education came concerns about quality, equity, and funding. The liberalisation of the Indian economy in the 1990s, coupled with the influence of IMF-World Bank policy frameworks, altered the state's approach to higher education. Public investment declined, higher education began to be viewed as a subsidised sector, and self-financing models gained legitimacy even within public institutions.

This period witnessed the growth of private universities, self-financing colleges, and deemed universities, along side a gradual dilution of long-term planning as the Planning Commission's role weakened.

**NEP-2020 and the Proposal for Structural Overhaul**

Following the change of government in 2014, higher education reform gained renewed political momentum. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, based on the Kasturirangan Committee Report, proposed sweeping reforms: multidisciplinary education, curricular restructuring, flexible entry-exit options, outcome-based learning, and credit portability.

Crucially, NEP 2020 recommended restructuring the apex regulatory framework by merging professional councils and replacing the UGC with a new body, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), comprising separate verticals for regulation, accreditation, funding, and research. However, the proposed HECI legislation never reached fruition.

**The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025**

The ideas underlying HECI have resurfaced in the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which seeks to replace the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE. This Bill marks a decisive break from the earlier philosophy of academic autonomy and cooperative federalism.

The proposed framework establishes a highly centralised structure consisting of:

- Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (the Commission)
- Regulatory Council
- Accreditation Council
- Standards Council

While the Bill is carefully drafted across nine chapters and avoids criminal penalties included in earlier drafts, it introduces financial penalties, adjudication mechanisms, and provisions for recommending institutional closure. The emphasis shifts from development and guidance to compliance and enforcement.

**Regulation Extended to the Entire University System**

The Regulatory Council draws heavily from the logic of the AICTE (1987) and NCTE (1993) Acts, which were enacted to control the unregulated growth of self-financing technical and teacher education institutions. Extending this regulatory framework to the entire university system raises serious concerns.

Universities are governed by their own Central or State Acts, and subjecting them to a uniform regulatory regime risks conflict with constitutional principles, federal arrangements, and the limited scope of Union authority under Entry 66.

Similarly, accreditation and standard-setting-earlier achieved through persuasion and incentives-are now embedded within a directive and government-controlled architecture, undermining institutional self-regulation.

**Composition of the Commission and Councils**

Although the proposed Commission mirrors the UGC in size, its composition reflects a clear shift towards executive dominance. The categories of eminent members are vaguely defined, unlike the UGC Act, which explicitly represented teachers, Vice-Chancellors, and academics.

The operational authority rests largely with the Member Secretary, a serving or retired senior bureaucrat, while the Chairperson is appointed in an honorary capacity. A similar pattern is evident in the Councils, each having member secretary, CEO - a Joint Secretary rank. This represents a departure from the earlier arm's-length relationship between government and higher education institutions.

**Centralisation through Miscellaneous Provisions**

Chapter IX of the Bill substantially expands Central Government powers, enabling it to issue binding directions, assign additional functions, supersede the Commission and Councils, and frame wide-ranging rules governing appointments, institutional expansion, and transitions. These provisions effectively convert the framework into a command-and-control system, notwithstanding claims of "light-touch regulation".

**Conclusion**

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 represents a fundamental shift in higher education governance-from an autonomous, academic-led, and developmental model to a centralised, regulatory, and compliance-driven regime. Whether such a system can sustain academic creativity, institutional diversity, and cooperative federalism-while remaining consistent with the constitutional mandate under Entry 66-remains an open and consequential question for the future of Indian higher education.

# CHALLENGES AND PERCEPTIONS OF NEP 2020 IMPLEMENTATION IN MEGHALAYA'S HIGHER EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM STATE POLICY EVOLUTION AND STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

MS. BAHUNLANG TRON *

*The author brings out the status of implementation of NEP 2020 in the institutions of higher education in Meghalaya state. The research conducted by her reveals challenges of implementation. She makes recommendations to remedy them.*


## ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces transformative reforms, including the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP), aimed at fostering multidisciplinary, holistic education across India. In Meghalaya, a northeastern state with unique socio-economic challenges, these reforms intersect with a historically fragmented education policy landscape marked by reliance on private institutions, politically influenced grant-in-aid systems, and inadequate teacher qualifications. This paper analyzes Meghalaya's state education policies from pre-1972 to the 2018 State Education Policy, critiques their alignment with NEP 2020, and presents findings from a pilot survey of 360 undergraduate students and 19 college teachers across 15 colleges in Shillong (East Khasi Hills) and a few from Jaintia Hills. The results reveal overwhelming concerns, which included an over loaded FYUP curriculum (33 papers versus 18 previously for a three-year degree), teacher overburden without training or additional appointments, lack of text books for new courses, rising financial burdens, and student backlogs leading to potential dropouts. With 87% of students reporting complaints about unwieldy syllabi and 43% of teachers citing rushed learning, the study underscores the need for contextualized implementation, infrastructure support, and poverty-sensitive policies. Recommendations include rationalizing FYUP credits, enforcing UGC norms, and prioritizing teacher capacity-building to prevent exclusion of under privileged students.


**Keywords -** Four-year undergraduate program (FYUP), colleges, syllabus, policy, grant-in-aid

## INTRODUCTION

The education system in Meghalaya reflects a complex interplay of colonial legacies, post-state hood policy inertia, and recent national mandates, such as the NEP 2020. Carved as a separate state in 1972, Meghalaya inherited Assam's model of sparse government schools, dominant government-aided private institutions, and minimal direct state intervention. Education shifted from the State List to the Concurrent List through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment in 1976, yet states retain significant policy autonomy. For decades, Meghalaya operated without a formal policy until the 2018 State Education Policy, which promised inclusivity but faltered in addressing poverty-over 30% of the population lives below or near the poverty line-and rural-urban disparities.

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The FYUP, designed in line with the NEP 2020, has been implemented in Meghalaya in colleges affiliated to North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) since 2023. It extends the traditional three-year degree to four years with multiple exit options, emphasizing multidisciplinary courses (MDCs), ability enhancement courses (AECs), skill enhancement courses (SECs), value-added technical courses (VTCs), and internships. However, affiliated colleges face acute challenges, which include teacher shortages, infrastructure deficits, and non-compulsory Common University Entrance Test (CUET) admissions, with only 26% of surveyed students entering via CUET. This paper also includes a speech critiquing state policies with original pilot data on FYUP perceptions, arguing that without targeted interventions, NEP risks exacerbating inequities in a state already grappling with 16% higher secondary retention rates and 75% pre-college dropouts.

The study addresses three research questions: (1) How has Meghalaya's policy evolution shaped higher education vulnerabilities? (2) What are students' and teachers' perceptions of FYUP implementation? (3) What reforms are needed for equitable NEP rollout? Grounded

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in stakeholder voices from elite and rural colleges, it contributes to the discourse on contextualizing national policies in marginalized regions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Historical Policy Context in Meghalaya

Meghalaya's education policies can be traced back to Assam's provincialization model, where government-aided schools dominated post-1980s. Unlike Assam's legislative provincialization, Meghalaya's grants-in-aid (GIA) evolved into various other categories, such asad hoc colleges, a deficit system (75% state salary share), lump-sum grant colleges (where ?1 lakh per institution is being given by the government post-2000), and the latest addition to the categories is the People's College Scheme offering state-scale salaries sans UGC allowances to 10-15 colleges from 2018. These categories of institutions were started usually through executive orders, often politically driven-favoring institutions linked to ministers' constituencies-created inequities, with older deserving colleges being sidelined.

The 2018 policy, adopted amid poverty concerns, encouraged private provisioning but ignored post-retirement benefits, risking fee hikes and dropouts. NEP 2020 supersedes it partially, yet a recent Education Commission urges alignment, highlighting gaps in teacher training and infrastructure. NEHU colleges boycotted FYUP in 2023 over unpreparedness, citing insufficient books, classrooms, and faculty for multidisciplinary demands.

## NEP 2020 AND FYUP FRAMEWORK

NEP envisions FYUP as holistic. The course is designed with 120 credits for a three-year exit (versus 72 previously), including 14 majors, 6 minors, 3 MDCs, 3 AECs, 3 SECs, 2 VTCs, and internships. Admission to the fourth year requires a 7.5 CGPA and 40 additional credits. Benefits include flexibility, but challenges in resource-poor states like Meghalaya-95% elementary schools without electricity, 30% untrained teachers-threaten efficacy. Studies note superficial learning from overloaded curricula and mismatched faculty skills.

Considering the overall scenario of education in Meghalaya, teacher education and teacher recruitment have been areas of neglect over the years. The state suffers from teacher recruitment lags where schools ignore NCTE norms with regard to recruitment, where teachers without D.El. Ed./MTET are being recruited.Colleges bypass UGC NET/PhD via executive orders until 2018.

## STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS IN NORTHEAST INDIA

Limited studies show NEP strains: NEHU affiliates report 94% dropouts in some universities, enrollment dips from 750 to 150 in colleges. Students face exam pressure; teachers handle untrained vocational teaching (e.g., Political Science faculty teaching baking). Financial burdens rise with fees exceeding ?45,000 annually, outpacing scholarships.

This review reveals a policy-practice disconnect, necessitating empirical validation.

## METHODOLOGY

This mixed-methods study reanalyzes a conference speech by education experts critiquing Meghalaya's policies, augmented by pilot surveys conducted in 2025. Quantitative data from 360 fifth-semester students (first FYUP batch, 2023 entrants) across 15 NEHU-affiliated colleges (Shillong, Jaintia Hills; elite/rural; arts/science/commerce) were collected using Google Forms. Respondents represent diverse demographics, with 26% CUET-admitted. Teachers: 19 respondents (38% PhDs, 42% postgraduates; 3 to 30 years' experience; social sciences/humanities/sciences/commerce).

The data collection tool considered aspects including curriculum load (papers/credits), admission processes, teaching resources (textbooks/notes/internet), MOOC preference, backlogs, fees (annual receipts), internships (stipends/costs), overall satisfaction, and complaints. Teachers were asked their opinion on workload, infrastructure, assessments, multidisciplinary risks, and CUET concerns. Thematic analysis was done, resulting in coded qualitative responses such as "unwieldy syllabus". Descriptive statistics in the form of percentages were used to summarize findings. No inferential tests were adopted due to the pilot scope of the study.

Ethical considerations:This study adhered rigorously to ethical principles in human subjects research, ensuring participant protection and data integrity. Anonymity was maintained throughout by collecting responses via Google Forms without capturing identifiable information such as names, email addresses, or institutional affiliations, thereby minimizing risks of coercion or reprisal in a small academic community like Meghalaya's colleges. Informed consent was obtained digitally at the survey outset, where participants received a clear, concise explanation of the study's purpose-to gauge FYUP perceptions-their voluntary participation, the approximate 10-15-minute duration, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences; affirmative opt-in was required before proceeding.

## STATE POLICY EVOLUTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Meghalaya's education governance prioritizes private participation over direct intervention, yielding a landscape of 80% aided/private institutions. Pre-1976 state exclusivity gave way to concurrent powers, yet policies remained reactive. Post-1972, Assam's footprint persisted: few government schools, aided majority provincialized legislatively in Assam but not in Meghalaya. GIA

proliferation-deficit (1991, basic+DA only), ad-hoc (1987 colleges, 75% state), lumpsum (2000s), Peoples' Scheme (2018)-hinged on political proximity, not merit. Post-1970s Bengal grants favored power-center institutions; Meghalaya mirrored this from the 1990s, extending school-to-college aid via executive fiat.

This politicization turned education into a "football field," prioritizing constituents over quality. General degree overload ensued: private colleges, fund-strapped, offered arts sans science/technical/teacher-training seats. Since 1991 liberalization, thousands migrate for jobs/B.Ed, returning unqualified via NIOS relaxations (Class 10 to +2 equivalency sans classes). NCTE 2001/RTI norms ignored in aided/private sectors; UGC 1991/2001/2010 NET/PhD bypassed by 2000/2012 orders deeming PG sufficient.

Service conditions exacerbate: private salaries Rs. 5,000-6,000 (2025), no regulations despite 1981 School Act Section 91. 2018 policy shifts post-retirement burden to managements, risking fee spikes/exclusion amid multidimensional poverty. NEP 2020, post-2020, demands infrastructure/teacher hires unaddressed in private/aided colleges; government aids governance but not skills.

Consequences: unqualified teachers (schools/colleges), substandard institutions, migration, low employability. FYUP amplifies: private burden without grants leads to superficiality.

## RESULTS

### Student Perceptions of FYUP

Of 360 respondents, syllabi ballooned: three-year degree now 33 papers (14 major, 6 minor, 3 MDC, 3 AEC, 3 SEC, 2 VTC, 2 others + internship) versus 18 pre-FYUP; credits 120 vs. 72. Fourth-year: 40 credits (5 major/2 minor or dissertation). 18% reported backlogs, primarily "overloaded syllabus" (major reason), not teacher fault/poverty. 87% preferred direct learning over MOOCs (11-12% usage), citing cost/cumbersomeness/non-accessibility; 67% favored direct for better comprehension. Resources scarce: 57% vocational taught by non-experts (e.g., Pol Sci baking, Math piggery, well-dressed beauty); 7% college teachers; few (e.g., Shillong College) hired externals. Textbooks absent for new courses; 57% rely on class notes, 17% textbooks, 27% internet. Fees: 28% Rs.10-25k (suburban arts), 28% Rs.25-45k, 28% >Rs.45k (science-heavy); additional book/exam/hostel fees burden poor students, scholarships insufficient. Internships chaotic: unpaid (40%), self-funded substantial costs (majority), unclear guidelines/hosts.
Overall: 27% unhappy, majority neutral; 87% complaints-unwieldy syllabus (less major focus), exam pressure, infrastructure gaps, unqualified teachers, unplanned rollout.

### Teachers' Perceptions

19 teachers (multi-disciplinary, experienced): overloaded curriculum (too vast, short semesters); rising workload sans support (extra courses/training/duties/exams); infrastructure/faculty gaps (rural worse); assessment pressure (100-400 scripts, high ratios); student dropouts/admission declines (weaker/rural); superficial multidisciplinary; CUET unnecessary for marginalized. 43% key remarks: rushed learning, no experts for research/vocational.

## DISCUSSION

The findings from the study align with broader critiques of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 implementation in resource-constrained settings such as Meghalaya. The introduction of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) represents a significant increase in academic workload, with a 67% rise in required credits compared to the previous three-year degree structure. This has led to a rushed learning environment, as evidenced by resistance and boycotts from colleges affiliated with North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), and a dramatic fall in student enrollment, from 750 to 150 in some institutions. The mismatch between vocational courses and faculty expertise is striking, with 57% of vocational classes being taught by untrained or unqualified, or unskilled teachers-such as political science teachers handling banking or beauty courses-greatly undermining the intended skills-development agenda of NEP. The absence of adequate textbooks and learning materials aggravates the problem, compelling students to rely heavily on class notes and internet resources, which risks superficial and fragmented learning. Furthermore, an 18% student reporting backlog rate, largely attributed to the overloaded syllabus, signals increasing dropout risks, compounding Meghalaya's already high pre-college dropout rate of approximately 75%, largely tied to pervasive poverty in the state.

| Aspect | Student % Concern | Teacher % Concern |
|---|---|---|
| Overloaded Syllabus | 87 | 43 |
| Teacher Workload | 57 (mismatch) | 100 (extra duties) |
| Backlogs/Dropouts | 18 | High (admissions down) |
| Resources (Books/Infra) | 57 notes/internet | Insufficient |
| Fees/Financial Burden | >45k (28%) | N/A |

Policy legacies play a critical role in amplifying these challenges. The grant-in-aid (GIA) system operates without clear, merit-based criteria, perpetuating systemic inequities through politically influenced allocations. Historically, the state has tolerated the employment of unqualified teachers, ignoring pre-NEP norms that are essential for managing FYUP's multidisciplinary demands. The current fee structures, with over 28% of colleges charging more than Rs.45,000 annually, effectively exclude underprivileged students, especially given that 80% of institutions fall within the private or government-aided category where infrastructure and NEP-mandated support remain grossly inadequate. These structural shortcomings are reflected in significant teacher workload pressures; a reported 43% of teachers experience overload without corresponding increases in training or staffing, a concern sharply contrasting NEP's emphasis on teacher empowerment and professional development.

Contextual factors unique to Meghalaya compound these issues. The state's tribal and rural poverty landscapes necessitate flexible policy adaptations-for example, the optional nature of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET), which 74% of surveyed students have bypassed, reflects attempts at inclusivity but also signals challenges for standardized admission criteria. Meanwhile, internships, a mandatory FYUP component, have been implemented in an unplanned manner, adding financial and logistical burdens on students. While multidisciplinary exposure offers educational benefits, the lack of systemic support transforms this advantage into an additional burden rather than empowerment. In comparison to Assam's more structured provincialization of aided institutions, Meghalaya's education sector urgently requires legislative reform that rationalizes the GIA system, enforces qualification standards, and ensures resource adequacy to align with NEP objectives and regional realities.

Limitations: This study, while offering valuable preliminary insights into FYUP perceptions, is constrained by several methodological limitations inherent to its pilot-scale design and data collection approach. Pilot studies like this one are not powered for efficacy testing or effect size estimation, potentially leading to uninterpretable results or flawed power calculations for future full-scale research, and they may overlook large-scale implementation issues such as resource scalability or contamination effects if participants overlap with subsequent studies. Further, the regional focus on Shillong, East Khasi Hills, and Jaintia Hills excludes Garo Hills and non-affiliated colleges, reducing generalizability across Meghalaya's diverse tribal and geographic contexts, while the cross-sectional timing captures only fifth-semester views of the inaugural FYUP batch, missing longitudinal outcomes like completion rates or long-term employability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

To address the overloaded FYUP curriculum, policymakers should rationalize the structure by capping the three-year degree at 100 credits, prioritizing core major subjects over peripheral courses to reduce student backlogs and enhance focus, as echoed in the recent Meghalaya State Education Commission (MSEC) Report 2025, calling for outcome-based reforms.Enforcing qualification norms requires legislative backing for UGC and NCTE standards across aided and private institutions, coupled with mandatory training programs through upgraded bodies like the proposed State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), to equip teachers for multidisciplinary demands.

The grant-in-aid (GIA) system demands urgent reform toward merit-based allocation via legislative acts, replacing political favoritism with transparent criteria, while channeling funds specifically for NEP-mandated infrastructure like classrooms and labs in 80% private/aided colleges.Targeted support measures include developing textbooks and MOOCs for new AEC/SEC/VTC courses, introducing stipend internships with clear guidelines, and imposing fee caps alongside expanded scholarships for students.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal tracking of FYUP cohorts for dropout and employability outcomes, aligned with MSEC's data-driven monitoring via annual 'Meghalaya Education at a Glance' reports.

Prioritizing teacher empowerment through these reforms will inherently strengthen students, but holistic change in Meghalaya necessitates robust state intervention tailored to tribal poverty and rural inequities.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the recent rollout of the FYUP as part of NEP 2020implementation reveals systemic fissures in aspects such as policy politicization, unqualified educators, and resource voids,exacerbating FYUP strains and exclusion risks. Further, the problem is compounded by students' and teachers' distress over increasing workloads and other burdens, which in turn threaten NEP's equity vision. Therefore, proactive steps should be taken by the government towards prioritizing teachers and strengthening students, such that holistic reforms in higher education are achieved.

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# HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020: A CRITICAL REVIEW

PROF. AARTI SRIVASTAVA* & BABITA BALODI**

*The paper reviews historical context of education policies and discusses issues of implementation of NEP 2020 focussing on some key indicators namely, equity, inclusion, financial constraints and at the same time offers opportunities to transform the higher education.*

## INTRODUCTION

India is striving to become a 10 trillion-dollar economy in terms of Gross domestic output by 2035. Expansion of access to higher education can drive this economic transition as it leads to human capital formation in the country which in turn causes socioeconomic growth and reduction in inequality(Naik et al., 2024).India's higher education system is currently the second largest system in the world after China (Srivastava & Balodi, 2023). It has undergone a radical change over the last few decades with the extensive massification of education. Massification in higher education refers to the transition from elite to mass higher education with rapid increase in enrolment (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). It is the process which occurs when access to tertiary education expands significantly across socio-economic strata in the country (Trow, 2007). Since independence, India has consistently recognized education as a critical instrument for national development, social transformation, and economic progress. The number of colleges in India has grown by 52.35 times, and student enrolment has increased 178 times since independence, reflecting an unprecedented democratization of access to higher education (Ministry of Education, 2023). This expansion of higher education is remarkable particularly in the past decades. There was an increase in enrolment from 8.8 million in 2000-02 to 29.6 million in 2012-13. Thus, almost 1.9 million students were added annually to the higher education system (Varghese, 2015).

However, in spite of such an impressive quantitative growth in the higher education sector in the country, there are still significant structural and systemic barriers that continue to restrain its growth. Despite the increased enrolment and institutional capacity, the system remains plagued by sustained shortages in qualified faculty, inadequate physical and digital infrastructure, and gross imbalances in the education attainment of the socio-economic, regional, caste, and gender gaps (Ashokkumar et al., 2025)These disparities are representative of the broader social divides, as well as highlight the lack of inclusiveness that is present in the current paradigm of higher education.

Moreover, there are some deeply rooted academic and bureaucratic limitations that further undermine the ability of the system to deliver high-quality education. The strict delineation of the academic fields and the imposed compartmentalisation of qualification do not only limit the student mobility but also restrict the development of multidisciplinary learning opportunities. Early specialisation and academic streaming with narrow academic focus limits learners to few areas of study that are frequently not in line with new areas of knowledge and demands of the labour market. To make matters worse, there is the insufficient focus on research and innovation by the majority of universities where most of them are mainly teaching institutions with little emphasis on scholarly inquiry (Chandramana & Kurien, 2020)

*The lack of an adequate and competitive research funding system has also created low research productivity in higher education. In addition, the centralised model of affiliation, where large public universities oversee hundreds of member colleges, has created excessive management loads, institutional loss of autonomy and variance in academic quality.*

The lack of an adequate and competitive research funding system has also created low research productivity in higher education. In addition, the centralised model of affiliation, where large public universities oversee hundreds of member colleges, has created excessive management loads, institutional loss of autonomy and variance in academic quality. This organizational structure is often the cause of congested and under-funded undergraduate programmes, thus compromising the quality of instruction and attaining student outcomes. All these issues highlight the urgent need to radically reform Indian higher education system in the country.

Moreover, at present India is going through a phase of demographic dividend with substantially large proportion of its population in workforce (Srivastava & Balodi, 2022). However, this demographic dividend can be realised successfully if the workforce is equipped with relevant skills demanded in the fast-changing world. Therefore, there is a need to align the education system in the country with requirement of dynamic world by

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focussing on universal access to quality education which will help the country in reaping the benefits of demographic dividend(Mittal, 2022)

Recently, the Government of India has launched the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to re-imaginethe higher-education sector and the educational ecosystem overall. The National Education Policy 2020 is considered to be one of the most significant document to bring about changes that seek to transform the educational landscape of the country. Its vision is to establish a system of education that is based on the values and traditions of India, and the larger scope of it is to transform India into a sustainable, equitable, and dynamic knowledge society. The policy envisions making the country a global knowledge powerhouse by increasing the accessibility of high-quality education to all (Raj, 2025).

Although the policy provides a visionary framework, the impact of policy depends on its implementation and the extent to which the provisions can address longstanding issues in higher education. In this light, the present paper seeks to critically examine the various provision of new education policy with respect to higher education, assessing its future effectiveness, identifying its possible weaknesses, and, in that way, adding to the current academic discourse on the future of education reform in India.

## A HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF INDIA'S EDUCATION POLICIES SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Over the year, the education system in the country has gone through various reforms to increase the access, enhance the quality of education, and align the educational development with the national priorities. The first reform was the Education Commission in 1964-66, which was established following the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. Its focus was on the national integration, compulsory education up to the age of 14, and the use of the three-language formula. Although a significant focus was on expanding the school infrastructure and narrowing the gaps, the sector of higher education at that time remained mostly centralized, and the flexibility of the curriculum, development of research, or institutional autonomy was considered marginally.

The more detailed and far-reaching reform took the shape of the National Policy on Education in 1986, elicited by a scathing government report that revealed longstanding shortcomings in classroom settings and learning performances in spite of the improvement in the school enrolment. The policy made the central government to be the main player in the education policy making process, and at the same time, it underscored the importance of the decentralised administration that was supported by increased community involvement. The District Education Boards, the Panchayati Raj institutions and the state governments would therefore be expected to play a role in planning, coordinating, monitoring and even evaluation of the education development. The policy was based on three main goals, which included achievement of universal access and enrolment, universal retention, and the overall quality of education.

The national programme on education (1986) operationalised these aims by placing a number of focused interventions such as the financial incentives for students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and also steps to improve the female participation in planning and administration of educational establishments. Later policy makers realised that enrolment numbers were not enough as an indicator of education development. Attendance and participation were later considered as more reliable measures of learning outcomes whereas opportunity costs such as loss of household labour and income were cited as major factor responsible for low enrolment and high dropout rates. Government initiatives like the Mid-Day Meal Scheme were then launched in reaction to these results, with the sole objective of providing a form of incentive to attend school, especially the girls and hence leading to a considerable rise in the rates of participation on a national level.

Nevertheless, these initiatives failed to address major structural impediments in the higher education sector such as rigid curricula, lack of cohesion, disparate governance systems, and fragile affiliation systems, and lack of industrial linkage. Although some minor changes were made in further decades, the fundamental architecture of higher education was largely unchanged which substantiated the need to enunciate a more radical policy change.

A decisive shift occurred with the introduction of the National Education Policy 2020, widely regarded as a transformative and holistic overhaul of India's educational framework. The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a comprehensive framework from basic education to higher education including vocational and technical education. The policy's five foundational pillars namely access, equity, affordability, accountability, and quality, have been taken into consideration in order to transform India educational system in accordance with the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development (Kumar et al., 2021). The National Education Policy of India 2020 is an important step towards enhancimng the quality, attractiveness, affordability, and as well as access to higher education while simultaneously enforcing stringent regulations to maintain quality in all higher education institutions (P. S. Aithal & Shubhrajyotsna Aithal, 2020).To realize this, the policy proposes a number of reforms which include implementation of the?new curricular structure (5+3+3+4), emphasis on foundational learning, vocational education, promoting multilingualism and others. At the heart of the policy is a focus on equity and inclusion, as evidenced by targeted

initiatives to assist socio-economically?disadvantaged cohorts and widen access to high quality educational experiences for all learners.

National Education Policy 2020 attempts to fill long-standing gaps and bring India's?educational ecosystem in line with global benchmarks. One of?its most significant strengths is the focus on holistic, multi and transdisciplinary learning approaches that attempt to bridge between rigid disciplines and promote new academic environment which is flexible and oriented towards innovation.(Ashokkumar et al., 2025). Therefore, NEP 2020 is significant departure from previous policies as it provides a detailed plan for transforming India into a vibrant global knowledge powerhouse.

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 intends major change in the higher education system with the goal of making it more flexible, multidisciplinary, student-oriented, and globally competitive. The policy measures at the structural level envisions a complete transformation of the existing institutional arrangements by developing multidisciplinary universities and institutions. The policy proposes that the long-standing affiliation system should be gradually abolished in a way that universities and college clusters work as autonomous degree-granting institutions, so that governance and academic quality are improved. The institutions are furtherdivided into research universities, teaching universities, and autonomous colleges not as a hierarchical classification but as a way of encouraging institutional diversity and specialization.

Another key element of NEP 2020 is the curricular reforms, which represent the second major pillar of the initiative. Among other things, the new policy will allow a flexible four-year undergraduate program with multiple entries and exits, thus granting students the right to earn certificates, diplomas, or degrees depending on their study duration. Moreover, under the Academic Bank of Credits, students' credits can be stored digitally and transmitted to different institutions, which would not only facilitate their mobility but also promote lifelong learning.The new educational policy also emphasis pedagogical innovations and creative methods. It proposes the change from traditional strategies to inquiry-based learning which will help in developing not only conceptual understanding but also critical thinking.

In order to improve research ecosystem in India, NEP 2020 suggests the establishment of the National Research Foundation, which will provide funding, mentorship, and coordination across all disciplines and institutions. The policy underscores the need to encourage research culture starting with undergraduate level and four-year degree provides students with the opportunity to conduct research. NEP 2020 aims to improve the ranking od India in the global knowledge economy by enhancing its partnership with the industry research bodies and international community.

NEP 2020 also introduces Higher Education Commission of India as a critical step towards governance reforms. Higher Education Commission of India will serve as an overarching regulatory body with four verticals dedicated to regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standards. This integrated system will minimize the level of fragmentation, enhance transparency and provide institutions with more autonomy on the basis of their performance.

The New Education Policy 2020 further aims to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50 % by 2035. Along with increase in enrolment, the NEP aims to increase access opportunities of students from the socio-economically disadvantaged groups and focuses on equalising the access opportunities by attending to their specific problems. It further highlights the need to provide financial assistance, academic support, and the integrative approaches to enable the inclusion of students who represent the socially and economically disadvantaged milieus in higher education systems.

Finally, NEP 2020 highlights the transformative potential of digital education. Through initiatives such as the National Educational Technology Forum, the policy promotes the adoption of technology-enabled learning tools and the creation of robust digital infrastructure in higher education institutions. It supports the expansion of online programmes such as MOOCs, blended learning models, and ICT-enabled classrooms.

Therefore, NEP 2020 proposes a comprehensive reform agenda that touches every dimension of higher education including structure, curriculum, pedagogy, research, governance, inclusion, and technology. Thus, it aims to build a future-ready higher education system that is flexible, holistic, inclusive, innovation-driven, and aligned with global standards.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 proposes a systemic reimagining of higher education in India, seeking to enhance quality, equity, flexibility, and global competitiveness. Its implementation, however, requires navigating a complex set of structural, administrative, pedagogical, and socio-economic challenges.

### 1. Structural and Institutional Challenges

India higher education is heterogeneous in terms of variation in universities and colleges in terms of autonomy, financial capacity, governance models, and academic culture. Implementing NEP 2020 proposals such as the transition to multidisciplinary universities, the merger of smaller institutions into clusters, and the shift to a four-year undergraduate programme requires expansive institutional restructuring. Many higher education institutions, particularly state universities and

rural colleges, lack sufficient physical infrastructure, faculty strength, and administrative bandwidth to undertake these reforms without substantial external support. Moreover, many small colleges were established in rural areas to improve access among disadvantage groups and several of these colleges function as mono disciplinary institutions thus turning them into multidisciplinary can cause significant financial challenges (Varghese, 2022).

Moreover, new education policy considers India's education as a monolithic, nationally homogenous entity. The complex character of the system working in many states is not sufficiently captured by the suggestions, nor does it fully acknowledge the variable stage of development of education across different states. At the central level, a flexible and accommodating policy that fosters advancement in various states is required. This is a matter of perspective rather than specifics, acknowledging the variety of circumstances and outlining a pluralist framework. It appears that the NEP is substantially lacking in this area (Govinda, 2020)

The policy also envisions reducing regulatory fragmentation by creating a single overarching body, the Higher Education Commission of India. While this promises long-term clarity and efficiency, the interim period of transition can create governance uncertainties. Aligning existing state-level regulatory frameworks with the new national structure may lead to operational delays, jurisdictional challenges, and varying levels of compliance across regions.

**2. Curriculum Reform and Pedagogical Transformation**

NEP 2020's emphasis on holistic and multidisciplinary learning requires a significant overhaul of traditional curriculum structures. Moving away from rigid discipline silos toward flexible, choice-based frameworks involves redesigning course offerings, integrating skill-based and value-based modules, and embedding research components at the undergraduate level. Many institutions are still at the early stages of developing the academic capacity needed for such reform.

Pedagogical transformation represents an equally formidable challenge. The policy advocates student-centered teaching approaches, experiential learning, problem-based instruction, and continuous assessment practices. However, a large proportion of faculty members have been trained in traditional pedagogical methods. Thus, there is a need for fresh faculty development programmes to train teachers so they can better incorporate pedagogical innovation in their teaching otherwise implementation will become superficial which will only result in structural compliance without genuine pedagogical change.

**3. Financial and Resource Constraints**

One of the most significant problems in the successful implementation of proposals of the NEP-2020 is limited financial resources. As proposed in previous educational policies, new education policy 2020 also proposes to increase the expenditure on education to 6 per cent of GDP. However, achieving it remains contingent on sustained and equitable financial support.India has not yet been able to reach the target of investing 6 percent GDP in education and public expenditure on education in India has been declining over the years (Balodi & Srivastava, 2021).As a result, declining public resources, limited fiscal capacity, complex centre-State financial connections, and a growing education sector has further intensified the demand for investment in education (Khare, 2022).

Many state universities continue to face chronic funding deficits that restrict investments in infrastructure, digital tools, research labs, and faculty recruitment. Moreover, upscaling digital education, promoting blended learning, and ensuring universal digital access require extensive technological investments. In regions with limited connectivity or inadequate digital infrastructure, these mandates risk creating disparities unless accompanied by targeted public funding and technological support.

**4. Equity, Inclusion, and Language Barriers**

The National Education Policy underscores the importance of equal and equitable opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their social background (Raj, 2025). While NEP 2020 prioritizes inclusiveness with an aim of expanding gross enrolment ratio to 50 % by 2035 however the concern of equity is quite prominent in higher education with number of regional, social and gender disparities which stand in contrast to the policy's goal of inclusive and equitable access. There is a variation of enrolment across regions with higher enrolment concentrated in regions dominated by private institutions mainly urban areaswhile rural areas lag behind. Moreover, students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups such as SC, ST and OBC, continue to experience lower enrolment. Gender gaps in enrolment are also stark with women particularly from marginalised section facing number of constraints which influence their participation as well as course choices(NIEPA, 2020). These inequities highlight challenges that must be addressed for NEP 2020's vision of equitable, inclusive, and socially just higher education to be realised.

The policy's emphasis on Indian languages in higher education also presents opportunities and tensions. While mother-tongue instruction can enhance comprehension and participation, HEIs currently have limited availability of high-quality teaching material, scholarly resources, and technical textbooks in regional languages. Developing this ecosystem requires large-scale translation efforts, faculty preparedness, and

institutional coordination.

**5. Administrative Level -Challenges**

The smooth implementation of the new education reforms depends significantly on the synchronized activities among different stakeholders such as governments at both central and state levels, regulatory authorities, universities, academic staff, and industry collaborators. The teacher burnout emerges as a formidable challenge with additional one year of teaching load and new courses along with other administrative work that they undertake during their service. A number of Higher Education Institutions facenumber of issues such as of overworked administration, limited decision making power, and slow bureaucratic processes, which could hinder the successful implementation of these reforms. Moreover, the frequent changes in curriculums, credits transfers through the Academic Bank of Credits, and the different entry and exit routes demand very strong data management systems to support their operations. At present, a lot of educational institutions do not have the necessary digital infrastructure and administrative capacity for the smooth academic tracking and monitoring needed.

## OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY NEP 2020

Despite these challenges, NEP 2020 offers transformative opportunities that can significantly elevate India's higher education landscape.

**1. Promotion of Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education**

The shift to multidisciplinary institutions promotes creativity, thinking and cross-disciplinary innovation. Such a change will put Indian education in parallel with the world systems and prepare students to address the complex problems of the twenty-first century. The introduction of vocational studies, skills training programs and value-based education can further enhance the employability opportunities among students.

**2. Strengthening of Research and Innovation**

With the creation of the National Research Foundation, there is a new, streamlined, merit-based paradigm of research funds allocation. NEP 2020 can boost the research ecosystem in India and its position in the global academic community by promoting inter-institutional cooperation, industry relations, and the development of research at the early phase.

**3. Enhanced Student Flexibility and Mobility**

The introduction of an Academic Bank of Credits, multiple entry-exit gates, and interdisciplinary choicesacross disciplines give students greater freedom in shaping their educational paths. These mechanisms encourage lifelong learning, improve credit mobility and offer many and diverse learning experiences.

**4. Digital Integration and Modernization**

The strong focus of the NEP 2020 on digital learning through the use of blended learning, virtual labs, online course repositories, opens the possibilities of scalability, a higher level of access, and personalised learning.

**5. Institutional Autonomy and Quality Enhancement**

The policy envisions granting graded autonomy to the institutions depending on their performance hence allowing innovation in the areas of the curriculum, admission processes, assessment procedures, and governance. This change will help in creating a competitive ecosystem, which in turn will facilitate quality enhancement, transparency, and accountability.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP 2020 IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The successful implementation of NEP 2020 in higher education requires a combination of coordinated governance, sustained investment, capacity building, and systematic monitoring. To realize the policy's transformative vision, several targeted policy recommendations can help address existing structural challenges and ensure meaningful reform across institutions. First, the government should prioritize adequate and equitable funding for higher education institutions, especially state universities and rural colleges that currently lack the infrastructure needed to implement multidisciplinary programmes, digital learning environments, and research facilities.

A second recommendation is the establishment of robust faculty development systems. NEP 2020 emphasizes learner-centered pedagogy, multidisciplinary teaching, and research integration, all of which demand new competencies among faculty. National-level training programmes, continuous professional development frameworks, and incentives for pedagogical innovation should be systematically developed. Faculty recruitment policies must also be updated to encourage diversity, research productivity, and interdisciplinary teaching capabilities.

Third, effective implementation requires strengthening institutional governance and autonomy. The transition to the Higher Education Commission of India and the move toward graded autonomy must be supported by clear guidelines, streamlined administrative processes, and capacity-building initiatives for institutional leadership. Universities should be encouraged to develop internal quality assurance systems, data-driven decision-making structures, and transparent evaluation mechanisms aligned with NEP 2020's objectives.

Another critical recommendation is the development of digital infrastructure and digital literacy across the

higher education ecosystem. Institutions should be supported in upgrading broadband connectivity, establishing digital libraries, and adopting learning management systems capable of supporting blended learning models. At the same time, faculty and students must receive training to effectively use these tools, ensuring that digital transformation enhances rather than exacerbates inequalities.

To uphold NEP's commitment to inclusion, policies must focus on equity-driven interventions to reduce regional and social disparities in higher education, priority must be given to establishing high-quality institutions in underserved and aspirational districts, as well as in newly proposed Special Education Zones that primarily serve students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. A catchment-area policy reserving a share of seats for students residing in SEZs can strengthen affirmative action for students belonging to Scheduled Tribes and minority communities(NIEPA, 2020). Moreover, expanding professional and technical education infrastructure particularly public and aided institutions in rural and underserved regions will be crucial for improving access to socially disadvantage groups.

Finally, the successful implementation of NEP 2020 depends on monitoring, evaluation, and collaborative governance. Establishing national and state-level implementation units, ensuring cooperation between central and state authorities, and creating transparent monitoring mechanisms will help track progress and address emerging challenges. Partnerships with industry, research organizations, and international institutions should be encouraged to integrate global best practices and promote innovation.

Thus, implementing NEP 2020 in higher education demands a holistic approach that combines financial support, institutional capacity building, regulatory clarity, digital integration, inclusion, and continuous evaluation. These policy recommendations can help translate the ambitious goals of NEP 2020 into tangible reforms that strengthen India's higher education system and align it with contemporary global standards.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 in the higher education is a multifaceted, long-term procedure which requires long-term financial investments, capacity-building at the level of institutions, and a governance system based on the cooperation between the stakeholders. Despite the overwhelming difficulties associated with the infrastructure, the pedagogy, equity, and finances, the possibility of the policy to transform the higher education sector is quite significant. If implemented strategically, it has the potential to achieve a sustainable system of higher-education, which is inclusive and future-oriented and competitive in the global market.

NEP 2020 has transformational potential through its focus on multidisciplinary education, improvement of research, digitalization, and improved governance systems. It has the potential to transform the Indian higher-education environment and bring it to the global standards. However, realization of this potential is contingent on a carefully designed and phased implementation strategy that will involve a holistic stakeholder training, a well-built regulatory framework, and an open system of accountability. Therefore, the achievement of new education policy will depend on its ability to translate visionary goals into meaningful and measurable improvements in educational quality, access, and innovation across the country.

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prestige-driven models towards partnerships that strengthen public universities, expand research ecosystems, and promote inclusive access. If aligned with these objectives, foreign universities can serve as catalysts for qualitative transformation; if not, their presence risks deepening stratification within an already unequal higher education landscape.

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*This column brings out briefs of: Ph.D, M.Phil Researches in Education, Economics of Education, Social, Political, Psychology aspects of education/ economics conducted in University /College departments. It also brings out briefs on researches done by Research Institutions, Industry and NGOs. This column was introduced from April-June, 2016 issue of College Post. Method of reporting the researches completed and in progress was given in that issue. Interested researchers, professors and Heads of institute are requested to send their brief accordingly. Purpose of this column is to high light the researches in education conducted in university and college departments and in any other institution / industry and NGO for the benefit of policy makers, research scholars, thinkers. Readers are welcome to encourage relevant person and institute to send briefs on research done and being done in education/ economics.*

This issue brings to you brief on following Researches in Education/Economics.

## TITLE OF THE THESIS

### Impact of Education on Income Inequality in Selected Districts of Uttar Pradesh

Researcher- Ansari, Azharuddin, Research Guide- Dr. Halima Sadia Rizvi, Department- Economics, University- Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To analyse the patterns and trends of government investment in education at different levels in Uttar Pradesh during the period 2000-2019.
2. To examine income-earning capacity across different levels of educational attainment, occupations, age groups, and gender.
3. To explore the relationship between educational attainment, earning capacity, and income inequality in selected districts of Uttar Pradesh.

## HYPOTHESES

1. There exists a significant disparity in public expenditure on education, which has a measurable impact on earnings and household income.
2. Rural and socially disadvantaged groups are comparatively less benefitted by educational services, leading to income differentials across the selected districts.
3. Investment in education has not resulted in a proportionate increase in income-earning capacity in the selected districts.

## DATA SOURCES

**Secondary Data**

Secondary data were drawn from multiple official and credible sources, including the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Uttar Pradesh (https://updes.up.nic.in), the Global Data Lab (https://globaldatalab.org), and the District Information System for Education (UDISE+) (https://udiseplus.gov.in). In addition, annual reports of the Department of Higher Education and the Department of School Education and Literacy under the Ministry of Education were consulted. Census data from different years were also utilised. These sources enabled the analysis of long-term trends and inter-district comparisons based on aggregate data.

**Primary Data**

Primary data were collected through a field survey conducted in 2019 in the districts of Kushinagar and Deoria, Uttar Pradesh. These districts were purposively selected to capture regional disparities. Sub-regional blocks were also chosen purposively, followed by random sampling of households. Adult members of households constituted the target population. Out of 250 household questionnaires administered, 200 valid responses were used for the final analysis. Data were collected through personal interviews using a structured questionnaire focusing on educational investment and income generation.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The findings clearly indicate that Uttar Pradesh has made measurable progress across several socio-economic indicators over the past two decades. Despite this progress, the state continues to face persistent challenges such as low living standards, unemployment, poverty, and economic stagnation.
- Income inequality between the "haves" and the "have-nots" has widened over time. The state continues to lag behind several other Indian states in terms of human resource development.
- A significant proportion of the rural poor remain trapped in a cycle of unemployment and poverty, with limited access to quality and affordable education. Consequently, educational opportunities have not been equitably distributed across social strata.
- Although there has been notable expansion in educational infrastructure and enrolment since Independence, progress has been uneven and limited in scope. Serious deficiencies persist in terms of quality, equity, retention, and high dropout rates, overshadowing quantitative gains in enrolment and coverage.
- Nearly one-fourth of the population in Uttar Pradesh remains illiterate. The dualistic nature of the education system-providing differential standards for the affluent and the poor-has disproportionately favoured urban populations at the expense of rural areas, which constitute nearly 60 per cent of the state's population. This has increased the likelihood of unequal appropriation of educational benefits.
- The number of schools and educational institutions has increased steadily alongside rising public and private expenditure.

- Literacy rates for both males and females have improved. However, stark disparities persist across regions, genders, and income groups, indicating uneven human development within the state.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the study are derived from both primary survey data and aggregate secondary data and are presented under four broad themes:

**(a) Literacy Disparities**

Uttar Pradesh exhibits significant disparities in literacy across rural-urban divides, genders, and regions. Gender disparities in literacy increased from 15.1 per cent in 1951 to a peak of 30.45 per cent in 1991, before declining to 19.98 per cent in 2011-still among the highest in India. Inter-district variations are also pronounced. According to the 2011 Census, Gautam Buddha Nagar recorded the highest literacy rate (80.12%), followed closely by Kanpur Nagar, Auraiya, Etawah, Ghaziabad, and Lucknow. In contrast, districts such as Shravasti, Bahraich, Balrampur, and Badaun reported literacy rates below 52 per cent.

Female literacy remains particularly low. Only Kanpur Nagar recorded a female literacy rate exceeding 75 per cent. Districts such as Kushinagar and Deoria exhibit large gender gaps, influenced by economic stagnation, limited educational facilities, physical accessibility constraints, low awareness, rural dominance, and reliance on agricultural labour.

While the rural-urban literacy gap (around 10 percentage points in 2011) is smaller than the gender gap, it remains significant. The primary survey further revealed that average years of schooling were substantially higher in urban areas (12 years) than in rural areas (7.5 years). Such disparities undermine socio-economic mobility, restrict income-earning potential in backward regions, and may generate long-term social and political instability.

**(b) Unemployment and Educated Youth**

Despite rising educational attainment, job creation in Uttar Pradesh has remained inadequate. Educated unemployment is particularly acute, as the growth in the educated population has outpaced employment opportunities. Among the 200 unemployed respondents surveyed in Kushinagar and Deoria, 25 per cent had no formal education, 50 per cent had completed primary or secondary education, and 25 per cent held a degree.

Respondents cited multiple causes of unemployment, including seasonal and weather-related factors, low wages, family responsibilities, lack of suitable employment opportunities, and inadequate skills. Secondary data corroborate that widespread unemployment contributes significantly to inter-regional disparities in per capita income across the state.

**(c) Dropout Rates and Educational Discontinuation**

Student dropout rates remain a serious concern. A substantial proportion of respondents discontinued schooling at the primary level, and fewer than 50 per cent pursued higher education after completing secondary school. Financial constraints emerged as the dominant factor, with nearly half of the respondents reporting inability to meet educational and living expenses. The remaining respondents cited lack of interest and inadequate local educational facilities.

Among female respondents, marriage was a major factor leading to discontinuation of education after secondary school. More than half of those who dropped out due to financial constraints were from rural areas, highlighting that affordability remains a critical challenge across both rural and urban settings.

**(d) Education and Income Relationship**

The analysis reveals a positive correlation between educational attainment and monthly income. In the 2019 sample, 66 per cent of respondents earning ?20,000 per month or more had completed over ten years of formal education, whereas only a negligible proportion of earners in this income bracket had completed only primary education. This trend was consistent across income slabs, indicating that higher educational attainment significantly enhances earning capacity, even though its overall impact is moderated by structural unemployment and regional disparities.

*Source: Shodh Ganga, INFLIBNET, IUC-UGC*

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## IMPACT OF EDTECH-AI ON HIGHER EDUCATION (SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS)

A recent survey report, "The AI Challenge: How College Faculty Assess the Present and Future of Higher Education in the Age of AI", published by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and reported in University World News (28 January 2026), captures widespread faculty concern about the academic impact of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Copilot.

Based on responses from over 1,000 faculty members across disciplines, the survey reveals deep anxiety about learning quality. About 90% of faculty fear that GenAI diminishes students' critical thinking skills, while 95% believe it increases students' overreliance on AI. 83% report a decline in students' attention spans, indirectly affecting reading and analytical abilities.

Despite these concerns, faculty adoption of AI for teaching remains limited: only 12% use GenAI extensively and 34% use it minimally. Resistance is driven largely by lack of familiarity with AI tools (83%). At the same time, 69% of instructors report addressing AI literacy in classrooms, emphasizing issues such as bias, misinformation, hallucinations, privacy, cybersecurity, deep fakes, and environmental costs.

Professor Ann Mills (College of Marin) described the situation as a "learning crisis," arguing that GenAI enables students to "offload" cognitive effort, undermining learning that depends on struggle, engagement, and intellectual friction. She stressed that GenAI represents a fundamental shift, not merely another disruptive medium.

The survey also highlights serious concerns about academic integrity. 78% of faculty believe cheating has increased with GenAI, but definitions of cheating vary widely. While most see AI-written first drafts as unethical, substantial minorities accept AI use for rubric alignment, outlining, fact-checking, citation correction, and structural editing. Faculty views on their own use of AI are similarly divided, including for syllabus drafting, presentations, email responses, grading, and even scholarly writing-raising questions about evolving norms of authorship.

Experts cited in the report advocate for clearer assessment frameworks and "guardrails," including a two-lane approach: one secure, AI-restricted assessment environment and another that encourages responsible, transparent AI use.

Overall, the survey underscores a global challenge for higher education: balancing AI's potential benefits with the urgent need to protect critical thinking, learning integrity, and academic values in the AI age.

*Source and courtesy: Nathan M Greenfield, University World News, 28th January, 2026*

## BACK TO BASICS

A recent report published in The Economist highlights an important shift in the use of artificial intelligence in education. After years of rapid digital adoption, many educators are now moving back from technology-heavy practices to handwritten and in-person forms of assessment.

The report cites Laura Lomas, a professor of literature at Rutgers University, who has replaced AI-friendly PowerPoint presentations with oral presentations. She also conducts traditional "blue book" examinations and restricts bathroom breaks during exams to prevent students from accessing mobile phones. Such measures reflect growing concern about the impact of generative AI tools on academic integrity and learning outcomes.

A 2023 survey conducted by Intelligent.com found that more than 66 per cent of high-school and college instructors had modified their assignments in response to the rise of ChatGPT. Many now require handwritten submissions, while 87 per cent reported that they either require or plan to require an oral presentation component in student assessments. Similarly, a study by the EdWeek Research Center revealed that 43 per cent of educators believe students should solve mathematics problems in class using pencil and paper.

The report observes a paradoxical trend: richer countries are restricting classroom technology even as they continue to invest heavily in digital infrastructure. After going all-in on educational technology, Sweden banned digital tools for young children in 2023 and renewed its emphasis on physical textbooks, handwriting, and reading. Schools in Denmark and Finland are adopting similar approaches.

While rigorous studies show that classroom technology can help pupils learn algebra, evidence of improved outcomes in other subjects remains limited. In contrast, the cognitive benefits of handwriting are gaining renewed recognition, extending beyond the humanities to other disciplines as well.

The report also draws attention to digital inequality. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in December 2024 found that 58 per cent of Hispanic and 53 per cent of Black teenagers reported being online almost constantly, compared with 37 per cent of White teenagers. This suggests that digital devices may be deepening, rather than bridging, existing social divides.

The report concludes with a compelling reminder: "Maybe the best thing we can do in the classroom is give young people the gift of quiet, undistracted time." This message carries relevance for both rich and poor societies alike.

*Source: Economist, November, 22nd 2025, Learning like the ancients, United States, p35*

## UGC GUIDELINES (2012) AND UGC EQUITY REGULATIONS (2025/26) ON EQUITY AND DISCRIMINATION IN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

When tempers run high and reason recedes to the background, constitutional pause becomes necessary. That is precisely what the Supreme Court of India has done by staying the 2025/26 UGC Equity Regulations, citing concerns including vagueness and overreach. The debate, however, must move beyond immediacy and emotion toward institutional clarity.

Let me state at the outset: inequity and discrimination are universal social and economic phenomena. India, like other democracies, has addressed them through its own constitutional and statutory pathways. The United Kingdom enacted the Equality Act 2010, creating a national anti-discrimination framework while leaving universities substantial autonomy to design institutional policies. The United States has relied on federal civil rights statutes such as Title VI and Title IX to regulate discrimination in federally funded institutions.

## CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT IN INDIA

The Indian Constitution, in its Preamble and Fundamental Rights, guarantees equality before law and equality of opportunity. Yet constitutional interpretation has recognized that formal equality alone cannot remedy historical injustice. Thus emerged the doctrine of protective discrimination-reservations, targeted scholarships, and statutory safeguards such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Similar protections extend to women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

At a conceptual level, "equity" and "discrimination" are not identical. Equity can often be measured through quantifiable indicators-representation, access, participation. Discrimination, however, is frequently subtle, embedded in attitudes and perceptions. It is social and psychological, sometimes overt but often diffuse. While its effects may be measurable, its origins may not always be traceable to a single identifiable act. For this reason, anti-discrimination frameworks typically adopt broad language rather than narrow categorical prescriptions. Penal consequences, where necessary, ordinarily fall within general legal and judicial processes rather than within the internal administrative framework of regulatory bodies.

## THE QUESTION BEFORE US: WHY 2012 WAS UNCONTROVERSIAL, BUT 2025/26 IS NOT

Public debate has intensified around the shift from the 2012 Guidelines to the 2025/26 Regulations. Some commentators cite rising complaint figures to justify stronger enforcement. Yet statistical interpretation must be careful: a rise from ten complaints to twenty may be described as a "100 percent increase," but without contextualizing scale and reporting mechanisms, such claims risk exaggeration.

The more fundamental question is this: why did the 2012 Guidelines operate-albeit imperfectly-without provoking constitutional litigation, while the 2025/26 Regulations have invited judicial scrutiny? The answer lies in institutional design and legal authority.

## POWER OF THE UGC: STATUTORY LIMITS

The University Grants Commission was established under the University Grants Commission Act 1956 pursuant to Entry 66 of the Union List of the Constitution, which empowers Parliament to legislate on "coordination and determination of standards in institutions of higher education."

Historically, the UGC has functioned as a coordinating and standard-setting body. It has promoted autonomy, funded centres of excellence, supported examination reforms, and facilitated pay scales. Its leverage has largely been financial-grants could be withheld if misused. The Act does not confer judicial or penal powers upon the Commission.

Education, moreover, occupies a federal space. Originally in the State List (Entry 25), it was moved to the Concurrent List by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. Both Union and States may legislate on education, subject to constitutional distribution of powers. This federal character requires sensitivity to institutional autonomy.

The 2012 Guidelines reflected this balance. They were advisory and recommendatory. They encouraged the establishment of Equal Opportunity Cells and suggested grievance mechanisms, but stopped short of prescribing punitive consequences.

The 2025/26 Regulations mark a departure. They introduce mandatory institutional structures-Equity Committees, Equal Opportunity Centres, equity ambassadors, 24×7 helplines-with strict timelines for complaint redressal. More significantly, they provide for sanctions, including possible withdrawal of recognition or funding for non-compliance. It is this transition-from advisory coordination to enforceable regulatory regime-that has raised constitutional and federal concerns.

## COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

### 1. United Kingdom

Under the Equality Act 2010, discrimination on protected grounds is unlawful. Universities, as public bodies, must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty-eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations.

Enforcement, however, operates through judicial and tribunal mechanisms. Universities internalize equality

obligations within their own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) frameworks. Accreditation initiatives such as Athena SWAN remain voluntary benchmarking mechanisms. The regulator does not prescribe uniform committee structures for every campus; institutional autonomy remains central.

**2. United States**

In the United States, anti-discrimination in higher education is anchored in federal statutes. Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in federally funded programs. Title IX addresses sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. Enforcement occurs through the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education and through courts.

While many universities operate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices, these are institutional initiatives grounded in statutory compliance and campus culture-not regulator-imposed committee templates. Recent judicial decisions, including Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, have further underscored the centrality of constitutional adjudication in resolving equality disputes.

## KEY DISTINCTIONS

1. **Source of Authority**
   - o UK and US frameworks are rooted in primary legislation passed by Parliament or Congress.
   - o The UGC framework derives from delegated authority under the 1956 Act, limited to standards coordination.
2. **Nature of Enforcement**
   - o In the UK and US, enforcement is judicial or quasi-judicial.
   - o The 2025/26 UGC Regulations appear to concentrate investigative, supervisory, and sanctioning powers within the regulator.
3. **Institutional Autonomy**
   - o UK and US universities internalize equality duties within their own governance frameworks.
   - o The 2025/26 model prescribes uniform institutional structures, potentially reducing diversity of institutional approaches.
4. **Federal Sensitivity**
   - o In India, education's concurrent status requires calibrated regulatory intervention. Over-centralization risks federal imbalance.

## TO SUM UP

Equity and anti-discrimination policies are essential to democratic higher education. Indian campuses have witnessed distressing instances of caste and gender discrimination; these cannot be minimized. Yet constitutional design matters. Regulation must align with statutory authority, respect institutional autonomy, and preserve federal balance.

The 2012 Guidelines sought persuasion and institutional encouragement. The 2025/26 Regulations shift toward centralized enforcement and penal consequences. Whether this shift is legally sustainable will ultimately be determined by constitutional adjudication.

In addressing inequity, the objective must not be to multiply bureaucratic structures but to strengthen lawful, fair, and accountable grievance mechanisms. Equity is a constitutional value. Its realization requires both moral commitment and legal restraint.

The present movement, therefore, is not merely about guidelines. It is about the appropriate balance between social justice, statutory limits, and the autonomy of universities within a federal constitutional framework.

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## GLOBAL AI SUMMITS AND EMERGING TRENDS

**India Hosts the 4th Global AI Summit (2026)**

India is hosting the **Fourth Global AI Summit** - the AI Impact Summit - in **New Delhi from 16-20 February 2026**, marking the first time the summit is being held in the Global South. The previous three summits were hosted in Western and East Asian countries, laying the foundation for evolving global AI governance.

**1. 2023 - AI Safety Summit,Bletchley Park, United Kingdom (1-2 November 2023)**

The inaugural summit, formally known as the AI Safety Summit, focused primarily on AI safety, systemic risks, regulation, and ethical cooperation.

Leaders from around 28 countries and the European Union signed the Bletchley Declaration, committing to international collaboration on safe, responsible, and inclusive AI development.

**Significance:**

- Established AI safety as a global governance priority.
- Initiated dialogue on "frontier AI" risks.
- Laid the foundation for subsequent annual summits.

**2. 2024 - AI Seoul Summit, Seoul, South Korea (21-22 May 2024)**

The AI Seoul Summit, co-hosted by South Korea and the United Kingdom, broadened the discussion beyond safety to include innovation and inclusivity.

Participating countries adopted the Seoul Declaration for Safe, Innovative and Inclusive AI, accompanied by ministerial statements and cooperation frameworks.

Major AI companies also agreed to Frontier AI Safety Commitments, voluntary frameworks for responsible model development.

**Significance:**

- Expanded focus from risk mitigation to innovation ecosystems.
- Encouraged global research collaboration and institutional cooperation.
- Integrated inclusivity into AI governance discourse.

**3. 2025 - AI Action Summit,Paris, France (10-11 February 2025)**

The AI Action Summit, co-presided over by France and India, marked a further shift toward implementation and sustainability.

More than 60 countries adopted a declaration on "inclusive and sustainable AI approaches."

**Key Outcomes:**

- Greater emphasis on practical implementation of AI frameworks.
- Broad participation from governments, civil society, and industry (100+ countries represented).
- Recognition of AI's role in public good, economic opportunity, and equitable access.
- Some major countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, did not sign the declaration, reflecting geopolitical differences.
- Announcement of cooperative initiatives on open safety tools and data governance.

**Overall Trend:** The summit emphasised innovation and global coordination alongside safety, moving away from narrowly framed regulatory caution.

**4. 2026 - Delhi AI Impact Summit ,New Delhi, India (16-20 February 2026)**

The central themes of the summit are: Responsible AI, global cooperation, inclusive innovation, and AI for development.

According to Abhishek Singh, CEO of the India AI Mission, AI today is largely controlled by a few nations and corporations. India seeks to bring the perspective of the Global South and promote democratised and inclusive AI governance.

A major focus is on:

- Indian language and voice-based AI systems, expanding access for non-English speakers.
- Leveraging natural language processing and generative AI for inclusive service delivery.
- Proposal for developing Sovereign AI capabilities.

Over 20 heads of state, global CEOs, technologists, and policy leaders are participating.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- A framework emphasising human-centric and socially inclusive AI.
- Sustainability-oriented governance recommendations.
- Likely adoption of a Delhi/India AI Impact Declaration, reaffirming international cooperation.

**Other Influential AI Conferences Shaping Global Policy**

While not part of the intergovernmental summit series, several large-scale industry and policy conferences significantly influence global AI discourse:

**World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) - Shanghai, China**

- Major annual AI conference with extensive industry participation.
- Focus on AI innovation and industrial applications.

**LEAP Tech Event & DeepFest - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

- Large technology and AI forums in the Middle East.
- Emphasis on robotics, AI deployment, and digital transformation.

**GITEX Global - Dubai, UAE**

- Global technology exhibition with strong AI and future-technology segments.

**Axios AI+ Summit - New York, USA**

- Business-oriented AI summit focusing on enterprise strategy, policy, and societal implications.

## EMERGING REFLECTIONS FROM INDIA

Recent reports in the The Times of India (15 February 2026) highlight how AI applications are spreading beyond metropolitan centres into rural India, demonstrating grassroots adoption.

An article in The Hindu (15 February 2025) cited research by Anthropic titled "How AI Impacts Skill Formation." The study suggests that while AI can accelerate task completion, it may also slow cognitive development if used as a substitute rather than a supplement.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

The AI revolution is advancing rapidly. While significant investments are being made in AI development, equal attention must be devoted to research on its cognitive, social, and ethical impacts.

Beyond technological expansion, there is an urgent need to examine AI's influence on human intelligence, skill formation, and democratic access, ensuring that innovation strengthens - rather than diminishes - human capacity.

*Source: Times of India, AI generated matter*

## THE POWER AXIS
## The Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power by Gautam Bhatia, HarperCollins India, 2025

Last year, my daughter presented three significant books: Apostles of Development by David C. Engerman, Speaking with Nature: The Origins of Indian Environmentalism by Ramachandra Guha, and The Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power by Gautam Bhatia. I had the opportunity to read all three. Given the increasing attention to constitutionalism and the "power axis" in India's body politic, I felt compelled to review Bhatia's work for College Post, a journal devoted to higher education.

At the outset, I must clarify that I am neither a law student nor a lawyer. I approach the Constitution as an ordinary citizen observing the workings of governance. Yet I believe every citizen-particularly those in higher education-should engage with the questions raised in this book.

### Framing the Debate: Competing Constitutional Imaginations

In the Interlude titled Yesterday's Tomorrow, Bhatia revisits constitutional visions outside the Constituent Assembly. He discusses The Constitution of India: A Draft by M. N. Roy, which imagined authority rising bottom-up from People's Committees, with legislatures acting as delegates rather than commanding authorities.

He contrasts this with the Gandhian vision articulated in Hind Swaraj by Mahatma Gandhi and later developed in the Gandhian Constitution drafted by Shriman Narayan Agarwal. Gandhi's model opposed centralization, linking it to violence and curtailment of liberty. It envisaged a "village republic" as the basic unit, with higher tiers performing coordinating-not commanding-functions.

Some of these ideas were sharply criticized by B. R. Ambedkar, who led the drafting process in the Constituent Assembly. Gandhi's vision flowed from mass participation in the freedom struggle; Ambedkar's approach drew heavily upon comparative constitutional models and a deep awareness of India's social and historical complexities. This tension-between faith in decentralized popular power and caution grounded in institutional safeguards-forms the heart of Bhatia's "power axis."

### The Structure of the Book

The book is organized into six substantive chapters:

1. Power Decentralized: Federalism
2. Power Divided: Parliamentarianism
3. Power Dispersed: Pluralism
4. Power Confronted: Institutions
5. Power Contained: Rights
6. Power Unbound: The People

These are framed by a Prologue, the Interlude, and an Epilogue. Throughout, Bhatia argues that the Constitution is a "terrain of contestation" between competing visions of power: centralized versus federal, concentrated versus distributed, representative versus direct, homogeneous versus plural, statist versus individual.

### Federalism and the Centralizing Drift

Article 1 describes India as a "Union of States." The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments strengthened local governance through Panchayats and Municipalities, marking a significant step toward decentralization.

Yet Bhatia identifies a "centralizing drift." Schedule VII distributes legislative powers across Union, State, and Concurrent Lists. However, the Union's primacy in case of conflict under the Concurrent List tilts the balance. Judicial interpretation has often reinforced this tilt.

In S. R. Bommai v. Union of India, the Supreme Court imposed limits on the misuse of Article 356 (President's Rule), yet the broader judicial trend, according to Bhatia, has favored central authority. The abrogation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, is analyzed as an example of how the "centralizing approach" leaves little conceptual space to challenge such exercises of power.

### Parliamentarianism and the Silence on Opposition

In discussing Parliament, Bhatia highlights two structural constraints: the anti-defection law and the classification of certain legislation as Money Bills. The Aadhaar Act's passage as a Money Bill effectively bypassed the RajyaSabha, raising questions about procedural integrity. More crucially, the Constitution is silent on the institutional role of the Opposition. In many parliamentary democracies, opposition rights are constitutionally protected. In India, the Leader of the Opposition exists by statute and recognition by the Speaker, whose independence is itself debated. This silence, Bhatia argues, weakens internal checks within representative democracy.

### Pluralism versus Homogeneity

The chapter on pluralism examines asymmetrical federal arrangements such as Articles 371A-I and Schedules V and VI, alongside the now-abrogated Article 370. Bhatia contrasts constitutional pluralism-accommodating diversity within unity-with constitutional homogeneity, which insists on uniform structures regardless of context. He writes that pluralism in India survives precariously between "unity" and "uniformity." The tension between diversity and central authority remains unresolved and continues to animate political contestation.

### Guarantor Institutions and Their Limits

Beyond the traditional trinity of Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary, Bhatia examines "guarantor institutions"

such as the Election Commission, Comptroller and Auditor General, and Information Commissions under the RTI framework.

Article 324 envisions an independent Election Commission. In the AnoopBaranwal case, the Supreme Court attempted to insulate appointments by including the Chief Justice of India in the selection committee until Parliament enacted a law. Subsequent legislative changes, however, altered that arrangement. Bhatia sees such developments as limiting the autonomy of guarantor institutions and reinforcing statist centralization.

### Rights, Preventive Detention, and the State of Exception

Chapters Five and Six directly concern "We the People." Fundamental Rights-particularly Articles 20 to 22-serve as safeguards against coercive state power. Article 21, after Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India, was interpreted to require that any procedure depriving liberty must be "just, fair, and reasonable."

Yet preventive detention provisions under Article 22 create what Bhatia calls an "authoritarian enclave." In A. K. Gopalan and later A. K. Roy, judicial interpretation often limited scrutiny of preventive detention laws. Bhatia argues that courts have gradually normalized what was meant to be exceptional, blurring the line between emergency and normalcy.

He concludes that courts, through interpretation, have sometimes contracted constitutional constraints, legitimizing an "eternal state of necessity."

### The Marginalization of "We the People"

The Constitution begins with "We, the People," yet beyond periodic elections, it provides limited avenues for direct participation. Debates in the Constituent Assembly reveal proposals for recall and referenda-ideas supported by members like Loknath Mishra-but these were rejected. As SardarVallabhbhai Patel suggested, legislators were expected to resign voluntarily if they lost public confidence. Bhatia contrasts this with constitutions such as those of Kenya and Bolivia, which include recall and referendum mechanisms. The Indian model relies primarily on institutional checks and periodic elections rather than participatory democracy.

### Concluding Reflections

Bhatia's central thesis is that over seven decades, India's constitutional practice has drifted toward a unitary, centralized, statist model-often at the expense of federal, plural, and participatory dimensions. Whether one agrees fully with this assessment or not, the questions he raises are fundamental.

At a time when institutional autonomy is sometimes criticized as the "tyranny of the unelected," and civil liberties are debated in the context of national security laws, this book urges readers to revisit first principles. It asks whether the balance between State and citizen has tilted too far toward centralized authority.

The Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power is not merely a legal analysis; it is an invitation to civic reflection. For students and scholars in higher education-and indeed for all citizens-it offers a framework to examine how power is organized, exercised, and contested in India.

I strongly recommend this book to readers of College Post. It compels us to ask whether our constitutional democracy remains dynamic, people-centric, and future-ready-and, if not, how it might yet become so.

**GD Sharma**

## BOOKS FOR REVIEW

- Speaking with Nature – the Origins of Indian Environmentalism by Ramchandra Guha
- Apostles of Development – six Economists and the World They Made by David C. Engerman
- Caste-Communal Politics Nexus in Higher Education Policy by A. Methew

Authors and Publishers are encouraged to send their publication for review in the College Post

- Editor

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CHEST

# Online Course on Critical Thinking - Foundations, Skills & Applications for – Students & Professionals

*Course Code: 02, Credit Hours: 4 Credits, Course Duration: 1 Semester*

**Curse Overview:**

*This course aims to develop students' critical thinking skills by encouraging logical reasoning, effective argumentation, and problem-solving. Students will learn to identify fallacies, construct sound arguments, evaluate evidence, and make well-informed decisions in academic, professional, and personal contexts.*

**Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course, students will be able to:*

- *Recognize the key components of critical thinking and logical reasoning.*
- *Analyse and evaluate arguments for validity, soundness, and clarity.*
- *Identify common logical fallacies and cognitive biases.*
- *Construct well-reasoned arguments and communicate them effectively.*
- *Apply critical thinking skills to solve problems and make decisions in real-world situations.*

## Course Modules

**Module 1: Introduction to Critical Thinking**

- Unit 1: Definition and importance of critical thinking
- Unit 2: Critical thinking vs. ordinary thinking
- Unit 3: Characteristics of a critical thinker.

**Module 2: Basics of Logic and Reasoning**

- Unit 1: Arguments: Premises, conclusions, and structure
- Unit 2: Deductive vs. inductive reasoning
- Unit 3: Evaluating validity and soundness of arguments

**Module 3: Identifying and Avoiding Fallacies**

- Unit 1: Common logical fallacies: Unit 1.1: Ad hominem
- Unit 1.2: Straw man argument
- Unit 1.3: False dichotomy
- Unit 1.4: Slippery slope Unit 1.5: Hasty generalization
- Unit 2: How to detect and address fallacies in arguments

**Module 4: Cognitive Biases and Critical Thinking**

- Unit 1: Understanding cognitive biases: Confirmation bias, anchoring, etc.
- Unit 2: The role of perception, memory, & heuristics in reasoning
- Unit 3: Techniques to mitigate biases in decision-making

**Module 5: Critical Reading and Media Analysis**

- Unit 1: Evaluating credibility and reliability of sources
- Unit 2: Analysing media, news, and online content for bias and manipulation
- Unit 3: Recognizing fake news and misinformation

**Module 6: Argument Construction and Effective Communication**

- Unit 1: Structuring arguments: Claims, evidence, and reasoning
- Unit 2: Writing and presenting arguments clearly and persuasively
- Unit 3: Debates and discussions: Techniques for effective argumentation

**Module 7: Problem-Solving and Decision-Making**

- Unit 1: Strategies for solving complex problems critically
- Unit 2: Decision-making frameworks
- Unit 3: Ethical reasoning and moral decision-making

**Module 8: Applications of Critical Thinking**

- Unit 1: Applying critical thinking in academics and research
- Unit 2: Critical thinking in professional and workplace settings
- Unit 3: Case studies: Real-world problems requiring critical thinking

**Teaching Methods Online:** (i) Contents on LMS (ii) Interactive sessions (iii) Group activities, debates, and role-plays (iv) Case studies and analysis (v) Assignments and presentations

**Online Assessment Methods:** (i) Reading of Modules: 10% (ii) Quizzes/Tests: 20% (iii) Assignments and Essays: 25% (iv) Group Debate/Presentation: 15% (v) Final Exam: 30%

*IMPORTANT NOTE -*
*Course will be offered in collaboration with the institutions. Also, students can directly enroll for the Courses. Certificate will be provided jointly by SEED-CHEST and Collaborating Institute(s).*

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# Online Course on Communication Skills

***A 4 Credit Course***
***8 MODULES COURSE WITH SUB-MODULE UNITS***
***DURATION: 60 HRS. 6-8 WEEKS***

Average Per week self-study 8 Hrs.

and contact /test on Virtual mode 2 Hrs.

Course on Canvas Platform

Virtual Meet on Google Meet platform

Course Over View

*This course helps participants develop effective communication strategies for various contexts, improving verbal, non-verbal, written communication, and skills for conflict Resolution, Negotiation techniques, collaboration and effective Teamwork.*

## Course Objectives

- Develop clear and concise verbal communication.
- Enhance active listening skills.
- Master non-verbal communication techniques (e.g., body language, tone).
- Improve writing skills for reports, emails, and formal documents.
- Overcome barriers to effective communication.
- Build confidence for public speaking and presentations.
- Build skills for Conflict Resolution and Negotiation
- Cultivate interpersonal skills for teamwork and leadership.

## Course Modules

**Module1: Introduction to Communication**

- Understanding the basics of communication.
- Components: Sender, message, receiver, and feedback.
- Barriers to communication and how to overcome them.

**Module2: Verbal Communication**

- Speaking with clarity and confidence.
- Vocabulary building.
- Formal vs. informal communication.
- Handling difficult conversations.

**Module3: Non-Verbal Communication**

- Role of body language and facial expressions.
- Reading non-verbal cues.
- Using gestures effectively.

**Module4: Listening Skills**

- Active listening techniques.
- Empathetic listening.
- Improving concentration and retention.

**Module5: Written Communication**

- Email and business letter etiquette.
- Writing reports, proposals, and resumes.
- Editing and proofreading skills.

**Module6: Public Speaking& Presentations**

- Overcoming stage fright.
- Structuring effective presentations.
- Engaging your audience.

**Module7: Conflict Resolution & Negotiation**

- Dealing with conflicts constructively.
- Persuasion and negotiation techniques.

**Module8: Communication in Teams**

- Building rapport with colleagues.
- Collaboration and effective teamwork.

**IMPORTANT NOTE -**
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