

**PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, WOMEN,  
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND SPORTS**

**Demands for Grants 2023-24 of the Department of Higher Education**

**THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH REPORT**

**OVERVIEW**

Article 113 of the Constitution necessitates the approval of various Demands for Grants for the upcoming financial year by the Government of India which is referred to the concerned Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee to undertake close scrutiny. The Committee evaluated the performance, programmes, initiatives, and policies of the Department of Higher Education in relation to expenditures made from the Consolidated Fund of India in the Current Fiscal Year while scrutinising the Demands for Grants.

The Department of Higher Education is in charge of **the development of the Higher Education Sector's fundamental infrastructure, in terms of planning and policy with a vision of realising the human resources potential in India to its fullest with equity and excellence.**

**Mission**

- Provide greater access to higher education with equity to all eligible persons, particularly the vulnerable sections;
- Expand access by supporting existing institutions, establishing new institutions, supporting State Governments and Non-Government Organizations/ Civil Society to supplement public efforts aimed at removing existing regional or other imbalances;
- Initiate policies and programmes for strengthening research and innovations and encourage institutions to stretch the frontiers of knowledge; and
- Promote the quality of higher education by investing in infrastructure and faculty, promoting academic reforms, and improving governance and institutional restructuring towards the inclusion of the hitherto deprived communities.

The Institutional setup of the Department of Higher Education includes the following autonomous institutions and bodies-

- University Grants Commission (UGC);
- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE);
- Council of Architecture (CoA);
- Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR);
- Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR);
- Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)

### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DEMAND FOR GRANTS (2023-24) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

The Budget Estimates (2023-24) for the Ministry of Education is Rs 1,12,899.47 crore which is around 2.50% of the total Union Budget. The share of the Department of Higher Education in the total outlay of the Ministry of Education is Rs. 44,094.62 crore which is **39.05% of the budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Education** and 0.979% of the budgetary allocations of the Union Government. Out of the total allocation, Rs. 44,082.10 crore was for Revenue Expenditure while allocation under the head of Capital Expenditure was Rs. 12.52 crore.

The detailed breakup of the allocation of funds to the department is as follows:

	Actuals 2021-22	BE 2022-23		RE 2022-23		BE 2023-24		Variation (percentage)	
		Scheme	Non-Scheme	Scheme	Non-Scheme	Scheme	Non-Scheme	BE 2022-23 & BE 2023-24	RE 2022-23 & BE 2023-24
Revenue	33994.37	7454.96	33355.38	4774.78	36035.56	6468.03	37614.07	8.02%	8.02%
Capital	12.02	0.01	18.00	0.01	18.00	0.00	12.52	(-) 30.48%	(-) 30.48%
Total	34006.39	7454.97	33373.38	4774.79	36053.56	6468.03	37626.59	8.00%	8.00%
Grand Total	34006.39	40828.35		40828.35		44094.62		8.00%	8.00%

#### **The budgetary allocation at both BE and RE stages:**

There has been an **increase of 8% in the year FY 2023-24.** Budget Estimates for 2023-24 was increased to Rs.44094.62 Cr.

Out of the Total Budget Estimates of Rs. 44094.62 Cr. in 2023-24, budgetary allocation for Establishment, Autonomous Bodies (ABs), and Schemes is as under-

- Establishment: Rs.290.85 Cr.
- Autonomous Bodies (ABs): 37335.74 Cr.
- Schemes: Rs. 6468.03 Cr.

Centrally Sponsored: Rs. 1500 Cr. Central Sector: Rs. 4968.03 Cr

## **PROJECTION OF FUNDS MADE AND ALLOCATED FOR SCHEMES/PROJECTS:**

### **Establishment Expenditure of the Centre**

The total establishment expenditure as per the BE 2022-23 were Rs. 273.38 crores and the RE stood at Rs 270.49 crores. There is a 7.53% increase in the budget estimate for 2023-24 which was Rs. 290.85 crores. The BE 2023-24 and the projections to the Ministry of Finance show a variation of -7.70%. The schemes/ projects under the Establishment Expenditure include the Secretariat- Social Services, Directorate of Hindi, Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore and Regional Language Centers and Educational Institutions Abroad.

### **Expenditure made on Schemes**

Total expenditure	BE 2022-23	RE 2022-23	BE 2023-24
Central Sector Schemes	5412.01	4413.02	4968.03
Centrally Sponsored Schemes + other transfers to states	2042.95 0.01	360.67 1.10	1500.00 -

(Rs. in Crore)

Overall, BE 2023–24 was approximately 8% higher than RE 2022–23. **As the economy of the nation expands and changes, funding provided by the Union Budget 2023 for industries like higher education, which are poised to fundamentally alter India's development, should be adequate to inspire the sector to offer fresh and exciting opportunities for those pursuing higher education.**

The **Centrally Sponsored Schemes** include schemes on **Higher Education** where the variation in the BE of 2023-24 over RE 2022-23 stands at 25.71% and the variation between the projection to MoF 2023-24 (Rs. 1740.29 Cr) and the BE 2023-24 (Rs. 1540.27 Cr) are -11.49%.

There has been a high allocation for the scheme of **Indian Knowledge Systems** followed by the **Prime Minister's Girls Hostel scheme** and **World Class Institutions scheme**.

**Student Financial Aid** schemes like **Scholarship for College and University Students**, **PM-Uchhatar Shiksha Protsahan**, and **PM Research Fellowship** also form a part of centrally sponsored schemes. Out of this, the scheme of the Research Fellowship was allocated Rs. 400 Cr and PM-Uchhatar Shiksha Protsahan got an allocation of Rs. 1554.00Cr. **Digital India e-Learning** and **Research and Innovation** fall under centrally sponsored schemes as well. Under this, the National Mission in Education through ICT and **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education-EAP (MERITE)** saw the highest variation of 1011.11% in the BE of 2023-24 and the revised estimates of the previous year.

**Autonomous organisations** UGC, AICTE, IITs, IISc, etc. have received an overall improved allocation of Rs 4235.74 crores, an increase of 12.8% from their BE 2022–23 allocation. **Prime Minister Research Fellowship (PMRF) funding has increased by 100%** from BE 2022–23 to BE 2023–24, or Rs. 200 crores to Rs. 400 crores. The Department was able to utilise 79% of the allocated funds.

## **SCHEMES/PROGRAMMES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

The various schemes categorised under the following areas along with their budgetary allocations :

### **CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES AND BE 2023-24:**

Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) - Rs. 1500 cr

**CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEMES AND BE 2023-24:**

<b>SCHEME</b>	<b>ALLOCATION (INR in Crores)</b>
Institutes of Eminence	1500
Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)	0
National Apprenticeship Training Scheme	440
Student Financial Aid	1954
Digital India on- e-Learning	420
Research & Innovation	210.6
Planning, Administration & Global Engagement	115.6
Champion Services Sector Scheme-Internationalization of Higher Education	200
Technical Education- Quality Improvement Programme of Government of India (EAP)	0

The total budget estimate for 2023-24 for all the schemes is Rs. 6468.03 Cr and the revised estimate for 2022-23 was Rs. 4774.79 Cr.

**Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)**

It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education to strategically address the felt needs of the State higher educational institutions to achieve the **objectives of equity, access and excellence along with academic and administrative reforms**. As per the present implementation status of the RUSA 1.0 & 2.0 scheme, a total of 2,972 units have been approved for the total fund of Rs. 14846.82 crores, wherein the Centre approved fund is Rs. 9,867.38 crores and the central share released is Rs.

7058.86 crores till January 2022. The total utilisation is Rs. 5,804.35 crores till December 2022. Under the Scheme, universities have been funded under five components:

- a) Creation of Universities by Upgradation of Existing Autonomous Colleges
- b) Creation of Universities by Conversion of Colleges in a Cluster
- c) Enhancing Quality and Excellence in select State Universities
- d) Infrastructure Grants to Universities
- e) Research, Innovation & Quality Improvement

Under RUSA 2.0, approvals have been granted in cases of 77 units against total targets of 86 under the five components mentioned above.

RUSA has been instrumental in improving the educational ecosystem under the State institutions where the funding to States is on the basis of critical appraisal of State Higher Education. The extension of RUSA scheme would help to increase facilities like infrastructure, maintenance of labs and purchasing of high quality lab equipment ensuring that quality teaching-learning outcomes take place in the State government HEIs. **The focus of the scheme should shift to Tier II and Tier III cities to also bring the requisite benefits from the scheme to these cities which have great potential.**

A number of meetings with HEIs and other stakeholders were organised with an aim to increase rankings of HEIs in QS World Rankings. To attract international students the Department through UGC should **issue guidelines for higher education institutions pertaining to introduction of courses on Indian heritage and culture such as Vedic mathematics, Yoga and Ayurveda which will result into increase in the enrolment for foreign and domestic students** keen to unravel and unfurl the reservoir of hidden knowledge in these ancient paradigm of learning that may eventually lead to improvement of world rankings of the nation's Institutions.

## CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEMES

### **Institutes of Eminence (IoE)/ World Class Institutions**

The scheme was launched in 2017 with the objective of **enabling Higher Education Institutions in India to have world class academic and research facilities and to bring about improvement in the global rankings of the institutions**. The scheme was launched to identify 20 'Institutes of Eminence' (IoE) (10 each from public and private categories) with a budget outlay of Rs. 10,000 Crore – for support to public institutions - for a period of 5 years. As per the regulatory framework of the scheme, the public institutions are provided financial support of up to Rs. 1000 Crore over a period of five years to implement their plans. An outlay of Rs. 1700 crores in BE 2022-23 was provided under Institutes of Eminence which was reduced to Rs. 1200 crores at the RE 2022-23 stage and the Department has been able to utilize only 75% of the allocated funds.

### **Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)**

HEFA had been formed as a Joint Venture by the Ministry of Education and is registered under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013 as a Union Government company and a non-deposit-taking NBFC. The **vision of HEFA is to enable India's premier educational institutions to excel and reach the top of global rankings by financing and building world class infrastructure including R&D Infra**. A token allocation in 2022-23 and no allocation under BE 2023-24 was made and the purpose behind it was that HEFA is a Section-8 NBFC setup for providing loans to Centrally Funded Higher Educational Institutions for the construction of infrastructure projects with government equity on the company.

SHAREHOLDER	AMOUNT (RS. CR)	SHAREHOLDING %
MoE Govt. of India	4812.50	90.91
Canara Bank	481.25	9.09
Total	5293.75	100

A third-party evaluation of HEFA was carried out by NIPFP and its scope was expanded to include a large number of institutions and more Banks are under consideration. HEFA has sanctioned 378 projects related to Infrastructure, Equipment & Machinery for Research development to Centrally Funded Institutions located all over India as on September 2022, out of which 107 projects have been successfully completed.

#### NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING SCHEME (NATS)

NATS is one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India for Skilling Indian Youth. It is a **one-year programme equipping technically qualified youth with the practical skills** required in their field of work. During the period of apprenticeship, the apprentices are paid a stipend amount, 50% of which is reimbursable to the employer from the Government of India and are issued a Certificate of Proficiency at the end by the Government of India which can be registered at all employment exchanges across India as valid employment experience.

National Apprenticeship Training Scheme	RE 2022-23 (Rs. Cr)	Actuals on 31.01.2323(Rs Cr)	BE 2023-24 (Rs. Cr)
	400	303.75	440



## STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Under the category of Student Financial Aid, there are various schemes towards which allocation has been made.

Name of Scheme	RE 2022-23	Actuals on 31.01.2023	BE 2023-24
PM Uchhatar Shiksha Protsahan Yojana (USP)			1554
PM Research Fellowship	300	200	400
Indian Scholars Going abroad against Scholarships offered by Foreign Government	1	0.02	0
Total	1,813.00	1,364.88	1954

**Pradhan Mantri-Uchhatar Shiksha Protsahan Yojana (PM- USP)** has three components under it namely, Interest Subsidy and Contribution for Guarantee Fund, Scholarship for College and University Students, and Special Scholarship Scheme for Jammu and Kashmir. **The allocation for PM-USP is approximately 2.7% higher than the RE 2022-23 allocation.** Underutilisation of funds was due to lower number of applicants from the North Eastern Region and the SC/ST category availing benefits of Schemes under their respective State Governments.

The **PM Research Fellowship** attracts talented students for undertaking research in the frontier areas of science & technology, preferably those addressing the national requirements, from all recognized Universities/Institutes selected as per PMRF guidelines to enrol in the PhD program in IITs/IISc/IISERs and selected CUs/NITs and are incentivized by providing attractive rates of fellowship. Rs. 400.00 Crores has been proposed for the PM Research Fellowship which is an increase of Rs. 100 Crores from RE (2022-23).

## DIGITAL INDIA E-LEARNING

There are various schemes under the category of Digital India e-Learning such as **National Mission in Education through ICT (NMEICT-III)**, **Higher Education Statistics and Public Information System (HESPIS)**, **Academic Bank of Credits**, **National Academic Depository**, and **PM e-Vidya**. The allocation for Digital India e-Learning has improved in BE 2023–24 compared to RE 2022–23. The department has taken initiatives to improve digital education in India which will also enable increased digital accessibility among students in rural areas particularly remote villages with access to high-quality education.

The **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)**, as envisioned in the National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020, is a National-level facility to promote flexibility of the curriculum framework and interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary academic mobility of students across the higher education institutions in the nation with the appropriate "Credit Transfer" mechanism.

### **National Mission in Education through ICT**

With respect to the schemes implemented under NMEICT the Department of Higher Education has informed its goal is to take advantage of ICT advancement to bring knowledge resources to students' doorsteps. The National Digital Library (NDL), Virtual Lab, e-Yantra, Free/Libre and Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE), e Shodh Sindhu (eSS), Shodh Shuddhi, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), SWAYAM and other digital initiatives are being implemented under the NMEICT - Phase - III scheme.

**SWAYAM Prabha** strives to assist students who lack good learning choices, such as access to the internet, nearby colleges, adequate teachers, etc. It was designed as a project to use two GSAT-15 transponders to broadcast top-notch educational content 24/7 across 34 DTH channels to reach Indian students and learners as cheaply as possible.

**The National Digital Library (NDL)** offers a single-window search interface and a virtual library of educational materials. A total of 7.93 crore contents in the form of books, audiobooks, articles, video/audio lectures, problems, solutions, and other learning stuff culled from 378 various sources are available in NDL on this website, which supports 11 distinct languages.

The goal of the **Virtual Labs** Project was to create a fully interactive simulation environment where users could conduct experiments, gather data, and respond to questions about the knowledge they had gained. Currently, 1686 universities and institutions across the nation that have been designated as Nodal Centres (NCs) use virtual labs.

To encourage the use of open-source software in educational institutions, **Project FOSSEE (Free Open-Source Software for Education)** has been developed. It operates through educational materials like manuals, book supplements, awareness programmes, conferences, training sessions, and internships.

The Information and Library Network Centre (INFLIBNET) created the **Indian Research Information Network System (IRINS)**, a Web-based network and management system for research information. The portal enables academic, R&D organisations, faculty members, and scientists to compile, curate, and present their scholarly communication activities. It also offers a chance to establish a scholarly network.

The **Global Initiative for Academic Network** in Higher Education aims to tap into the global talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs and to promote their interaction with Indian higher education institutions in order to supplement the nation's current academic resources, quicken the pace of quality reform, and raise India's scientific and technological capacity to a level of global excellence.

**Indian Knowledge Systems'** mission is to advance multidisciplinary study of all facets of "Indian Knowledge Systems," while also preserving and disseminating "Indian Knowledge Systems" for future study and social uses.

**Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching** aims to provide quality teachers in schools and colleges, attract talented people in the education sector and improve quality in teaching, set the teaching standard so that an organized cadre of professional teachers can be created and develop innovative teaching methods and high-level institutional facilities in all the constituent areas of education.

### **ASEAN Fellowship Scheme**

Fellowship granted to students of ASEAN countries to pursue integrated Ph.D programmes in the IITs, at a total outlay of Rs. 300 cr. for 7 years. Fellowship provided at the same rate as Indian students along with research grants and living expenses covered by the IITs.

### **National Education Policy 2020**

Various steps have been undertaken to revamp the higher education system in line with the provisions of NEP 2020. Approximately 674 universities have joined and 45 lakh students have registered on the Academic Bank of Credits website. The guidelines for transforming higher education institutions into multi-disciplinary institutions and pursuing two academic programmes simultaneously have been issued by the department. The Curriculum and Credit Framework to facilitate choice based credit systems and allow them to pursue a career path of their choice has been announced and the integration of Indian Knowledge System is under finalisation. The department apprised about the **Centre of Excellence (CoEs) on Artificial Intelligence to be set up in educational institutions as provided for in the NEP**. These centres would work on implementing multidisciplinary research in agriculture, health and sustainable cities and help premier institutions to transform research to cutting edge technology needed essentially for our country. The provision of labs to develop apps using 5G services will be set up as per the education policy in order to provide a boost to employment, start-ups, businesses and promote innovation & entrepreneurship.

The **MERITE (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education)** Scheme has been designed to improve the quality, equity and governance in technical education in selected States/ UT, aligned with the Educational Policy-2020.

**UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION, ALL INDIA COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION, and other Autonomous Bodies.**

The budget allocation to some of the autonomous bodies -

Organisation/ Institution	RE 2022-23 (Rs. Cr)	Actuals on 31.01.2023 (Rs.Cr)	BE 2023-24 (Rs.Cr)
UGC	5,130.91	4,146.63	5360
AICTE	420	3.9.3	420
Central Universities	11091.15	8579.91	11614
IITs	9345.00	8046.99	9661.5
NITs	4444.00	3730.39	4820.6
IISERs	487.52	352.02	560

The total allocation at the Revised Estimate stage 2022-23 to these institutions was Rs. 35,783.07 crore while the actuals at the end of January 2023 was Rs 28,900.98 crore. The Budget Estimate for 2023-24 is Rs. 37335.7 crore. BE 2023-24 Grant to UGC has been increased by 9.37% and that to Central universities have been increased by 17.66 %, Deemed University by 27%, support to IITs increased by 14%, and to NITs by 10.5% as compared to BE 2022-23. There is an increase of 3.3 % for the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (UGC and AICTE) under the Department receive an allocation of Rs. 5,780 crore which corresponds to an increase of 4.1% over RE 2022-23

## OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The BE and the RE in the FY 2022-23 have remained same with an increase in the BE 2023-24 to Rs.235.74 crores. There has been an overall enhancement of allocation for autonomous bodies. In order to make the vision expressed in NEP 2020 a reality. The Department should **concentrate on the aspirational growth** that the Higher Education sector should direct.
- Appropriate **physical and financial surveys of the schemes** in relation to its goals on a regular basis should be conducted to prevent time and cost overruns and to ensure successful monitoring and implementation.
- In order to address the important problem of grantees and institutions delaying the submission of UCs, a **framework that allows for the accountability of the officers** involved to be fixed must be put in place, and the justifications provided must be carefully examined and validated.
- Active steps to **highlight each grantee/institution's status** and the UCs that are pending against it on a public platform or through repeated reminders in order to make sure that this obligation is met and to identify any lapses on their side.
- A proactive stance in order to monitor the **progress and steps being taken towards filling these vacancies in universities, premier institutions recognised by the AICTE, IIMs, IITs, NITs, etc.,** in a time-bound fashion with permanent faculty members as much as is feasible by the end of 2023. The Committee also suggests that targeted recruitment drives be launched.
- A **better coordination with States/UTs and monitoring the unutilized funds for improved utilization under RUSA 3.0** to curtail unspent amounts lying with States/UTs is required.. There is a need for better coordination with the State Governments and Institutions and preparing a monitoring framework for effective implementation of the scheme. Initiatives in consultation with various stakeholders, Vice Chancellors and esteemed academicians that can lead to enhanced learning, better research, and promoting innovation should be included in the scheme to bring about transformative reforms in the Higher Education System of States. It is suggested that to attract international students the Department via UGC should issue guidelines for introduction of courses on Indian heritage and Culture.

- When evaluating institutions for recognition as IoEs, **consideration should be given to elements like internationalisation, eminent faculty who are multidisciplinary in nature**, multidisciplinary research character, innovation ecosystem, transformational research outputs, etc. as these elements will help place these institutions on international fora. The department should consider pursuing additional allocation under the scheme at the RE stage. **The process for granting status of IoEs should be accelerated.**
- With respect to Higher education Financing Agency sanctioning of more loans to mobilise resources to the fullest and a speedy disbursement of the sanctioned loans is recommended. Expediting the revision of HEFA scheme to widen the scope of financing under the scheme is required.
- A **study of various scholarship schemes for higher education** should be conducted to evaluate the amounts and benefits under the Student Financial Aid. The amount under various scholarship programmes, taking into account the real expenses borne by students, should be increased.
- There is a pressing need to **ensure that digital education penetrates further** and the Department should evaluate the scheme under the ‘Digital India e-Learning’ category to develop high quality electronic content in all local languages, build infrastructure for virtual training.
- Development of **new cooperative mechanisms between the higher educational institutions/ universities with industry** to find ways to support and strengthen digital education initiatives in the country to create a system for income generation for students in order to make them self-sufficient.
- Thorough **analysis of the funding requirements**, category-wise, scheme-wise and NEP 2020 clause-wise along with the cumulative funding that can be generated through the States and private sector.
- Due care be taken while rolling out the scheme so that the **access to technical education among students of socio-economically disadvantaged groups**, and, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and all Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) improve for making of new India.