



Research Unit

Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA)

Building Stronger Institutions for a Knowledge-Driven Future

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Introduction

The **PM-USHA** is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched by the **Ministry of Education**, Government of India, in **June 2023**. It aims to enhance the **quality of higher education** in **State-run institutions** by promoting accessibility, equity, accountability, affordability, and quality, aligning with the five pillars of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**. As the demand for higher education is increasing continuously over the years, there has been an **unprecedented expansion** in the **number of institutions, universities**, and volume of students in the country.



Recently, a two-day **National Workshop on Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU)** under **Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA)** was held on April 30, 2025 and May 1, 2025 at ICAR, New Delhi. The event saw the participation of over **64 Vice Chancellors** from over **64 different universities**, along with **State officials** represented by **State Project**

Directors of Higher Education. The national workshop provided essential guidance on how best to implement various elements of the NEP in collaboration with central and state government funding. The Union Minister of State for Education and Development of the North Eastern Region announced that for **35 universities**, the Ministry is providing **Rs. 100 crore each** for **implementing 44 mandatory activities** under the MERU components. Further, during this two-day seminar **12 important sessions** were held on topics like UGC Regulations for NEP Implementation, Clustering and Collaboration for Multidisciplinary Education, Holistic Education through Integration of Skilling and Industry Connect, etc. Eminent academicians and officials participated in these speaker sessions.

Funding and Implementation

PM-USHA has an outlay of **₹12,926.10 crore** for the period **2023-24 to 2025-26**. A total of **33 States** and **Union Territories** have signed the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for participating in

the scheme. In the first and second meetings of the **Project Approval Board** for PM-USHA, **440 units** have been approved in various States/UTs with a total amount of **₹5,613.12 crore** under various components. For FY 2025-26, the budget for this scheme has been kept **₹1,815 crore**.

PM-USHA is **funded** through the **Ministry of Education (MoE)** with **prescribed contributions** from the State governments and Union Territories (UTs). The project cost in the public-funded institutions for all sub-components is shared between the Central Government and State Governments in the ratio of **90:10** for **North Eastern States, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand** and **60:40** for the **Other States and UTs with Legislature**, the **UTs without Legislature** would be **100% centrally funded** under this scheme.

The amount of **Management Monitoring Evaluation and Research (MMER) grants** is **2%** of the **total fund approved**, out of which **1 %** will be released to the States/ UTs and **1%** will be utilized by the Centre. The fund will be utilized for activities related to the implementation and monitoring of the scheme by the States/ UTs and Centre such as **operation of the technical support group, monitoring portal** etc. All States/UTs will be eligible for these grants.

PM-USHA shall be implemented and monitored through an **institutional structure** of bodies with **clearly defined roles** and powers at the **Central, State, and institutional levels**. All the bodies shall **monitor** the **progress** of the scheme at their respective levels, starting right from the institutional level up to the national level.



CENTRAL LEVEL STRUCTURE

The central level structure comprises four bodies namely

- ✓ National Mission Authority (NMA) which would be chaired by Hon'ble Education Minister, Gol
- ✓ Project Approval Board (PAB) which would be chaired by Secretary (Higher Education), Gol
- ✓ National Project Directorate (NPD)
- ✓ Technical Support Group (TSG)

STATE LEVEL STRUCTURE

STATE LEVEL STRUCTURE State level structure is comprised of three bodies namely

- ✓ State Higher Education Council (SHEC)
- ✓ State Project Directorate (SPD)
- ✓ State Technical Support Group (State-TSG)

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL STRUCTURE

The project at the institutional level is managed by two bodies

- ✓ Board of Governors (BOGs)
- ✓ Project Monitoring Unit (PMU)

Background

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) was a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** to **fund States/UTs institutions**, with the vision to attain higher levels of access, equity, and excellence in the State higher education system with greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. The **first phase** of the scheme was launched in **2013** and the **second phase** was launched in **2018**. Now, in the light of the **National Education Policy**, RUSA scheme has been launched as **PM-USHA**.

RUSA 1.0 and RUSA 2.0 have resulted in **significant progress** in a number of higher educational

indicators like **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)**, and **Accreditation (Quality Reforms)**, **Student-Teacher ratio**, etc. However, the gap still remained vis-à-vis. access, inclusion, enrolment, quality enhancement, skilling, employability, technology, etc. and therefore, some new interventions were required for achieving the targets and reducing the gaps, ensuring better output and outcome.

PM-USHA addresses key gaps highlighted in the **NITI Aayog's Evaluation Report** by **redesigning and rationalizing existing schemes for greater impact**. It focuses on enhancing **graduate employability** through **market-linked courses, industry collaboration, internships, and skill-based education**. The scheme emphasizes tracking **employability outcomes, identifying skill gaps**, and introducing **employment-led vocational modules**. It promotes the use of **technology** and **open distance learning** to improve access and quality, supports institutions in **improving National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accreditation**, and encourages quality initiatives, **virtual learning, community participation**, and gender sensitization, while closely monitoring outputs and outcomes. With the emergence of the NEP 2020 and recommendations of NITI Aayog, an effort has been made to give a new and energized structure to this phase of the scheme.

Objectives

The objectives of this scheme are:

1. To improve the **overall quality of existing state higher educational institutions (HEIs)** by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards and adoption of accreditation as a quality assurance framework.
2. Usher **transformative reforms** in the State higher education system by creating a **facilitating institutional structure** for **planning** and **monitoring** at the state level, promoting autonomy in State Universities, and improving governance in institutions.
3. Implementation of recommendations of the **NEP 2020** through **funding support** provided to State HEIs.
4. Ensure **governance, academic, and examination (and evaluation) reforms** in the State higher educational institutions and establish backward and forward linkages with school education on one hand and employment market, on the other hand, to facilitate self-reliance and thus creating an **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
5. Create an enabling atmosphere in the higher educational institutions to devote themselves to **research and innovations**.
6. **Correct regional imbalances** in access to higher education by facilitating access to high-quality institutions in urban & semi-urban areas, creating opportunities for students from rural areas to get access to better quality institutions, and setting up institutions in unserved & underserved areas.
7. **Developing infrastructure** for **ODL/Online/Digital mode** of education in such States/UTs.
8. Improve equity in higher education by providing adequate opportunities for higher education to **socially deprived communities; promote inclusion of women, minorities, SC/ST/OBCs, and special-abled persons**.
9. To identify and fill up the **existing gaps** in higher education, by augmenting and supporting the State Governments' efforts.
10. Enhancing employability through **skilling and vocationalization**.
11. **Improving accreditation status** of accredited institutions and getting accreditation of non-accredited institutions.
12. Providing **better hostel facilities** in remote areas.

13. Establishing **New Model Degree Colleges** in the districts where there are no Government and Government-aided institutions. So far, the Project Approval Board has approved a total of **8 units** in the eligible States/UTs (**4 in Nagaland, 2 in Manipur and 2 in Meghalaya**) with a total amount of **₹119.98 crore** for New Model Degree Colleges.
14. Focusing on **low GER, Left Wing Extremism (LWE), border area districts, aspirational districts and districts with higher SC/ ST population**.
15. Focus on **multidisciplinary education**, including STEM, commerce and humanities fields of education.

Scope and Coverage

PM-USHA covers **government and government-aided institutions** of the States and Union Territories. It prioritizes **educationally unserved or underserved areas**, including **rural regions**, to improve their quality. Under PM-USHA, priority is given to **Focus Districts** identified by the concerned States/UTs, subject to either **5 districts** or a **maximum of 50% of their districts (whichever is higher)**, based on various criteria, including low Gross Enrolment Ratio, gender parity, population proportion and enrolment proportion for females, transgenders, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, as well as Aspirational/Border Area/Left Wing Extremism prone districts. The recommendation of institutions shall be done by the **State/ UT Governments/ State Higher Education Council (SHEC)**. **The final decision shall be taken by the Centre.**

Components and Activities

The components of the scheme have been structured to improve the higher education scenario in States/UTs by targeting the:

- **Existing Higher Educational Institutions**, in keeping with the philosophy of NEP 2020, to consolidate and transform existing institutions.
- **Districts** as a unit of planning and strategizing for improving access and equity.
- **Areas with no HEIs**, to improve educational parameters in un-served areas.



Every component in PM-USHA has a **fixed amount** as its **upper limit**. The States/UTs must develop their needs/ proposals within the specified upper limit of every component. This upper limit is based on **well-defined norms and parameters** and is linked to academic, administrative, and governance reforms, whereas **future grants** are **outcome-based** and **performance-based**. The PM-USHA aims to create a **self-sustaining momentum** for **greater accountability of State institutions** and to impress upon them the importance of improving educational quality.

Conclusion

PM-USHA represents a significant step towards transforming India's higher education landscape by enhancing the quality and accessibility of State-run institutions. By aligning with the objectives of the NEP 2020 and focusing on underserved areas, the scheme aims to create an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, contributing to the vision of a developed **India by 2047**.

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