

PM USHA

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Education (MoE) has mandated States and Union Territories to implement the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and adopt contentious academic criteria for Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) funds.
- This move appears to make the central scheme exclusivist, requiring agreement with NEP 2020 and other guidelines to access funding.
- The PM-USHA is an evolved version of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA 1 and 2) aimed at enhancing access, equity, and excellence in State higher education with central funding.
- 22 out of 36 States and Union Territories have joined PM-USHA, while 14 including West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala have refused to participate.
- The memorandum of understanding for PM-USHA includes commitments to adopt guidelines for the National Credit Framework and Choice Based Credit System for the Four Year Undergraduate Programme.
- States not agreeing to these conditions cannot access the ₹12,926.10 crore funds allocated between 2023-24 and 2025-26, despite requiring 40% State government funding.
- Some States have opposed NEP 2020, with demands to move 'education' from the Concurrent List back to the State List.
- The PM-USHA conditions seem tailored to indirectly impose NEP 2020, leading to concerns about its implementation.
- The scheme requires the adoption of multiple entry and exit options in degree programs and National Higher Education Qualifications Framework guidelines.
- Concerns have been raised about dropouts due to multiple entry and exit options and affordability of a four-year undergraduate program.
- Even a NEP 2020 supporting State like Meghalaya seeks better funding criteria and beneficiary unit increase due to its initial stage of state university operation.
- It is advisable for the Ministry of Education to negotiate better terms with dissenting States, respecting cooperative federalism.

Contentious criteria

The Centre must revisit the PM-USHA and take on board dissenting States

By mandating States and Union Territories to implement the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and adopt contentious academic criteria in order to avail funds under the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), the Ministry of Education (MoE) appears to have made the central scheme exclusivist. The guidelines for the scheme – an improvised version of the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA 1 and 2) to ensure increased access, equity and excellence in the State higher education system with central funding – were released in June. Only 22 States and Union Territories have joined the PM-USHA, which requires a memorandum of understanding to be signed between the State and the Department of Higher Education (MoE). West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are among 14 States and Union Territories which have refused to get on board. Apart from embracing the NEP 2020, the memorandum of understanding, includes, *inter alia*, commitment from States on adopting guidelines for the National Credit Framework and Choice Based Credit System for Four Year Undergraduate Programme. Without agreeing to these conditions, States cannot avail of a share in the funds, an outlay of ₹12,926.10 crore between 2023-24 and 2025-26, earmarked to improve State-run higher education. This despite the fact that 40% of funding has to be borne by the respective State governments.

What is National Education Policy, 2020?

The National Education Policy 2020 places a significant emphasis on fostering the creative potential of every individual.

- It is founded on the principle that education should not only cultivate cognitive capacities like literacy and numeracy but also higher-order cognitive abilities such as critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Moreover, the policy recognizes the importance of nurturing social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020



Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100% GER in school education by 2030		
 <p>GER in higher education to be raised to 50% by 2035; 3.5 crore seats to be added in higher education</p> <p>No rigid separation between academic streams, extracurricular, vocational streams in schools</p>	<p>NEP 2020 will bring 2 crore out of school children back into the main stream</p>	<p>New 5+3+3+4 school curriculum with 12 years of schooling and 3 years of Anganwadi/ Pre-schooling</p>
	<p>Vocational Education to start from Class 6 with Internships</p>	<p>Teaching upto at least Grade 5 to be in mother tongue/regional language</p>

Influence of Ancient Indian Knowledge

- The policy draws inspiration from India's ancient knowledge and philosophy, with a focus on values like pursuit of knowledge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragyaa), and truth (Satya).
- The historic Indian education system aimed not only at acquiring knowledge but also at self-realization and liberation.
- The policy recognizes the contributions of ancient institutions like Takshashila and Nalanda, which set high standards in multidisciplinary teaching and research.

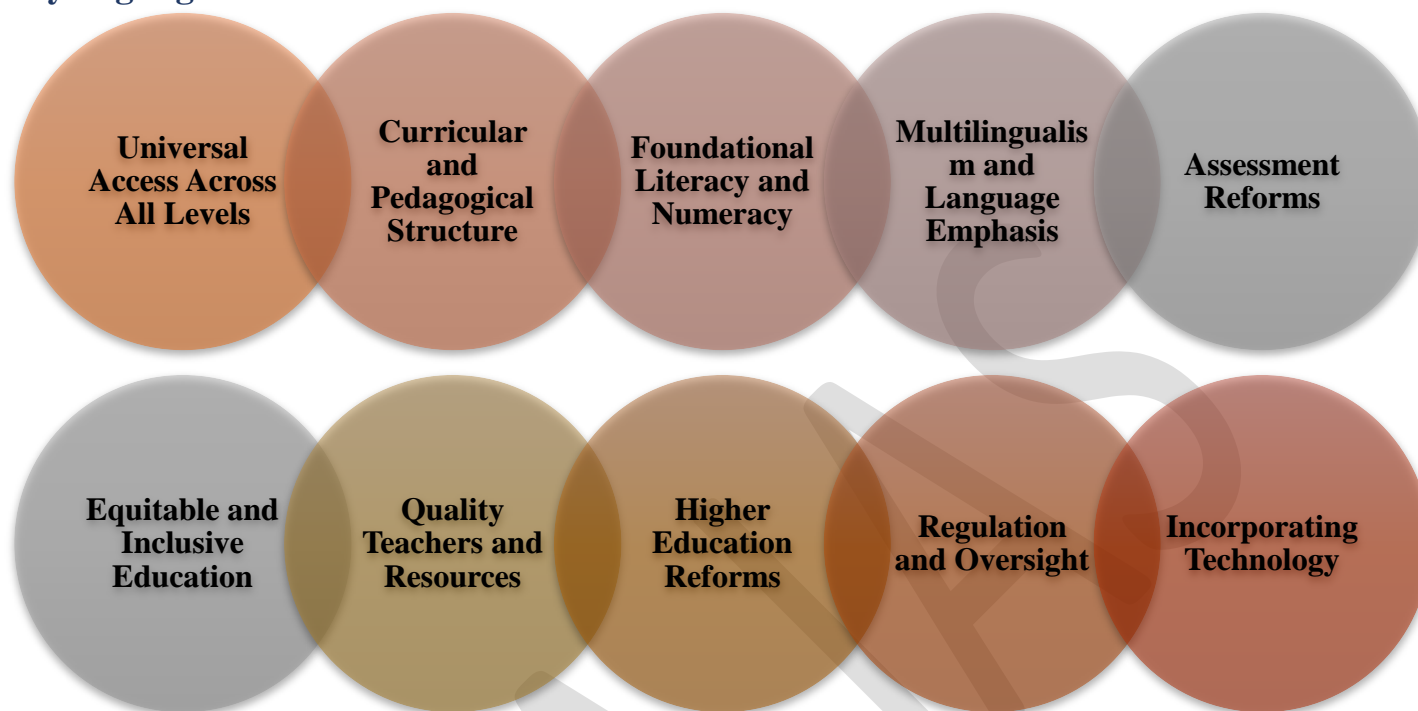
Elevating the Role of Teachers

- Central to the policy's vision is the pivotal role of teachers in shaping the next generation.
- The policy seeks to restore teachers' respect and status by empowering them and ensuring their effectiveness.
- By attracting the best minds to teaching and instilling quality control mechanisms, the policy aims to elevate the teaching profession.

Inclusivity and Equality in Education

- The policy underscores the importance of providing quality education to all, with a special focus on marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
- Education is recognized as a tool for social and economic mobility, fostering inclusion and equality.
- Initiatives are designed to offer targeted opportunities for historically underrepresented students to excel in the education system.

Key Highlights of NEP 2020



Universal Access Across All Levels

- The policy prioritizes universal access to education from pre-primary to Grade 12.
- It emphasizes quality early childhood care and education for children aged 3-6.

Curricular and Pedagogical Structure

- The 5+3+3+4 structure replaces the traditional divisions, integrating arts and sciences, and curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- There's no separation between vocational and academic streams.

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

- The establishment of a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy is designed to enhance foundational skills.

Multilingualism and Language Emphasis

- The policy promotes multilingualism and suggests teaching in the mother tongue or local language up to at least Grade 5, preferably till Grade 8.

Assessment Reforms

- Board exams are to be held twice a year, with one main examination and one improvement exam.
- The National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, is introduced for holistic development assessment.

Equitable and Inclusive Education

- Focus on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) through a separate Gender Inclusion fund and Special Education Zones.

Quality Teachers and Resources

- Transparent teacher recruitment processes and merit-based performance evaluations are highlighted.
- Resource availability through school complexes and clusters is ensured.

Higher Education Reforms

- The policy aims to increase Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50%.
- Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) and National Research Foundation (NRF) are established.

Regulation and Oversight

- The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is introduced to regulate and promote higher education.
- Single bodies oversee standard setting, funding, accreditation, and regulation.

Incorporating Technology

- The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) is created to integrate technology into education effectively.
- Technology is seen as a means to enhance learning, assessment, planning, and administration.

What is PM-USHA?

The Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), launched in June 2023, is a transformative initiative that builds upon the foundation of the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).

- The scheme is aligned with the National Education Policy and seeks to bolster higher education institutions across India by addressing key challenges and enhancing their quality, accessibility, and relevance.

Origins and Evolution: RUSA to PM-USHA

- ✓ The Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) was introduced as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in October 2013.
- ✓ It aimed at providing vital financial support to higher education institutions at the state and union territory levels.

PM USHA SCHEME

Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), launched in June 2023, is a transformative initiative that builds upon the foundation of the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

PM-USHA



- Scheme Name: Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA)
- Initial Launch: Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in 2013
- Renamed as PM-USHA: June 2023

Scheme Type

Type: Centrally Sponsored scheme
Ministry: Ministry of Education



Purpose of PM-USHA Scheme

- Purpose: Enhance the quality and accessibility of higher education across the country
- Alignment: Aligned with National Education Policy 2020
- Funding: 90:10 ratio for certain states and 60:40 for others UTs without Legislature receive 100% central funding.



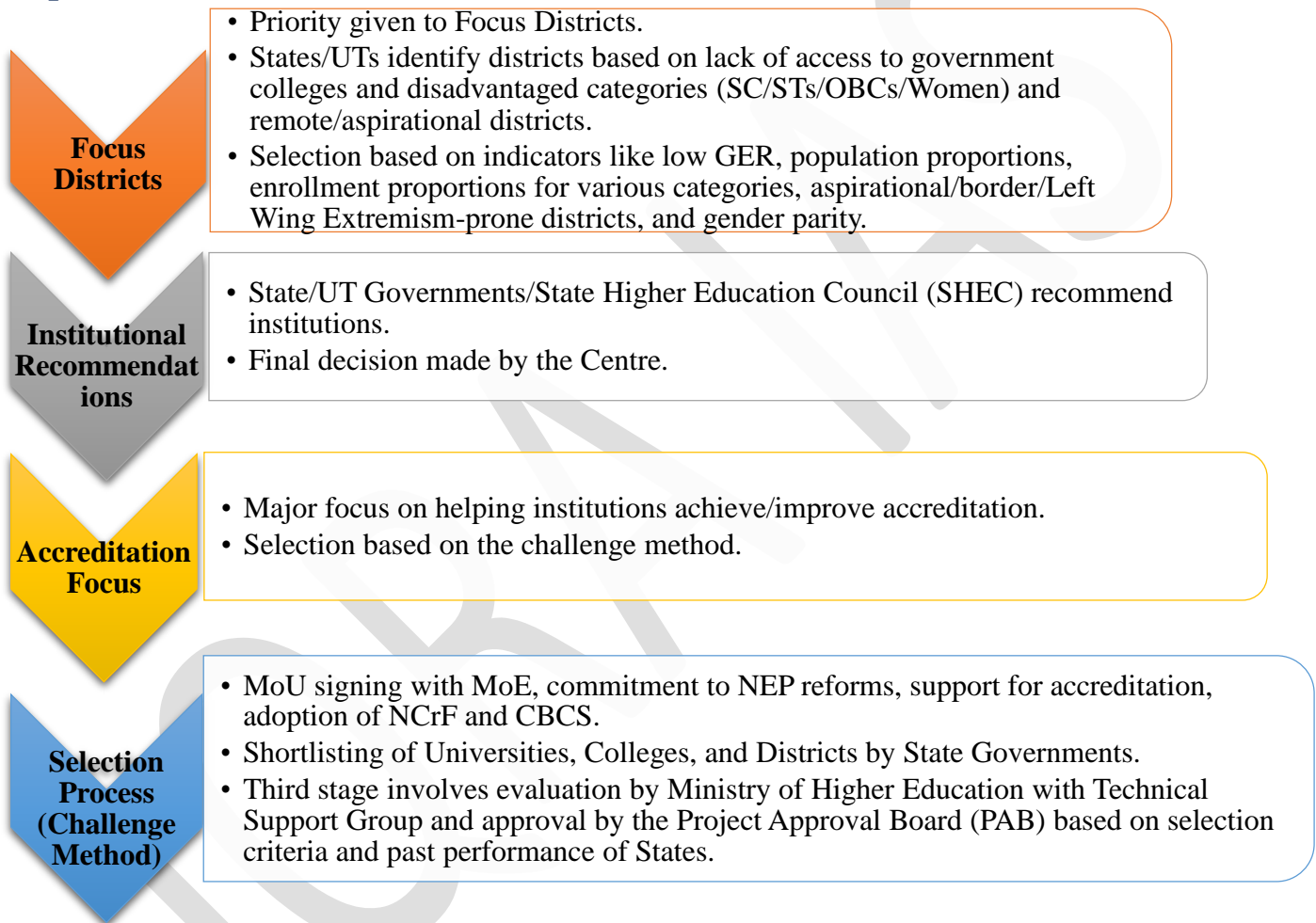
Eligibility for PM-USHA Funding

- Colleges of any discipline under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act
- Minimum of 10 years of active administration required
- Grade A NAAC accreditation or a good NBA score is required for eligibility.



- ✓ The primary objectives were to promote accessibility, equity, and quality within the higher education landscape.
- ✓ RUSA was implemented in two phases, with the second phase commencing in 2018.
- ✓ With the advent of the National Education Policy, RUSA has evolved into the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA).
- ✓ This transformation reflects a renewed commitment to further elevate the quality and relevance of higher education in India.

Scope of PM-USHA



Objectives of PM-USHA

The Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) is designed with a set of multifaceted objectives:

Enhancing Quality and Standards

Governance and Reforms

Promoting Research and Innovation

Enhancing Quality and Standards

- PM-USHA aims to improve the overall quality of existing state higher educational institutions by ensuring they adhere to prescribed norms and standards.
- The adoption of accreditation as a quality assurance framework is a central focus, enhancing the credibility of institutions.

Governance and Reforms

- The scheme seeks to usher in governance, academic, and examination reforms within state higher education institutions.
- It establishes connections with school education and the job market, fostering self-reliance and contributing to an Atma-Nirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).

Promoting Research and Innovation

- PM-USHA endeavors to create an environment conducive to research and innovation within higher education institutions.
- This objective aligns with India's aspirations to emerge as a global hub for cutting-edge research and innovation.

Key Features of PM-USHA



MERU (Multidisciplinary Education and Research University) Transformation

- The scheme supports accredited state universities with substantial funding to facilitate multidisciplinary education and research.
- Each of these universities receives Rs 100 crore to foster innovation and excellence.

Model Degree Colleges

- PM-USHA provisions the establishment of new model degree colleges.
- These institutions are aimed at setting new benchmarks for quality education.

Strengthening Universities

Grants are allocated to strengthen universities, enabling them to provide better facilities and resources for students and faculty.

Focus on Marginalized Areas

- PM-USHA specifically targets remote areas, Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) affected regions, aspirational districts, and areas with low Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER).
- This focus aims to bridge educational gaps and ensure equitable access to quality education.

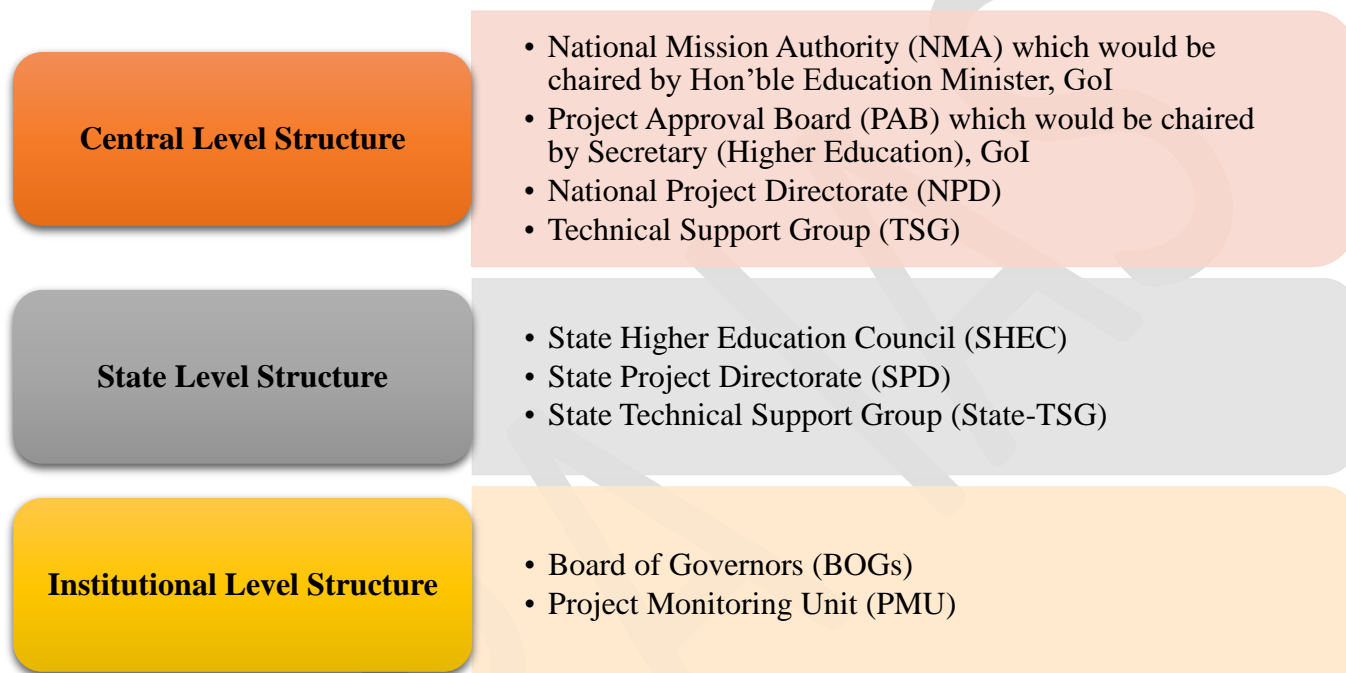


Gender Inclusion and Employability

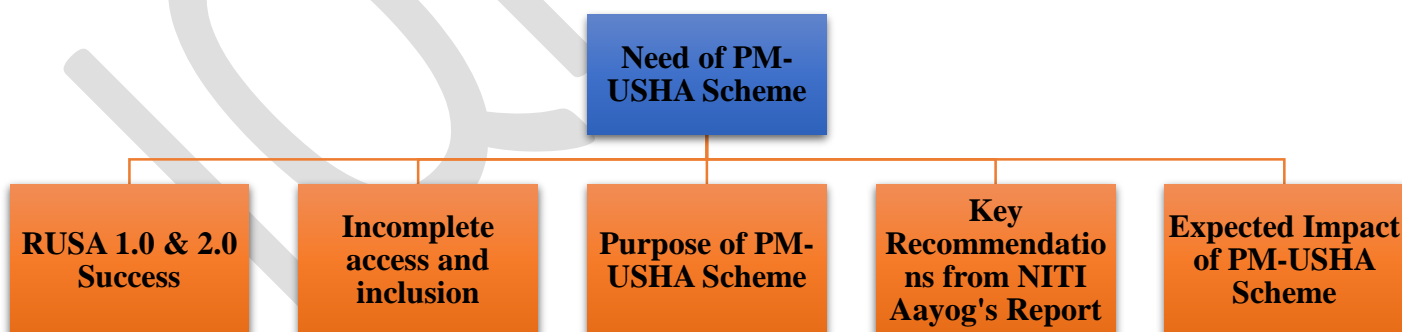
- The scheme supports state governments in promoting gender inclusion and equity.
- Additionally, it contributes to skill enhancement and better employability through the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Institutional Structure of PM-USHA

PM-USHA is implemented and monitored through bodies at Central, State, and institutional levels.



Need of PM-USHA Scheme



RUSA 1.0 & 2.0 Success

- Addressed approximately 2500 institutions.
- Enhanced access, equity, and quality through 16 components.
- Positive impact on higher education indicators (GER, Accreditation, Student-Teacher ratio).
- Persisting Gaps in Higher Education.

Incomplete access and inclusion

- Enrollment disparities.
- Quality improvement challenges.
- Skill development and employability gaps.
- Technology integration shortcomings.

Purpose of PM-USHA Scheme

- Bridging gaps and achieving improved outcomes.
- Addressing NITI Aayog's Evaluation Report recommendations.

Key Recommendations from NITI Aayog's Report

- Scheme redesign for higher impact and rationalization.
- Emphasis on graduate employability.
- Funding market-linked courses.
- Establishing industry connections.
- Supporting student internships.
- Robust tracking of Higher Education Institution (HEI) employability outcomes.
- Introduction of skill-based education.
- Addressing critical gaps in education.
- Offering vocational courses aligned with job market needs.
- Promotion of technology and Open Distance Learning.
- Enhancing access and quality through technological integration.
- Support for NAAC accreditation grade enhancement.
- Quality initiatives promotion.
- Adoption of e-learning methods.
- Rigorous outcome tracking.
- Encouragement of community participation and gender sensitization.

Expected Impact of PM-USHA Scheme

- Enhanced employability of graduates.
- Improved access and equity in education.
- Elevated quality of higher education through accreditation.
- Technological advancement in teaching and learning.
- Strengthened community engagement and gender sensitivity.