

---

## REVOLUTIONIZING INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: ANALYSING THE VIKSIT BHARAT SHIKSHA ADHISHTHAN BILL AGAINST THE CHALLENGED LEGACY OF UGC, AICTE, AND NCTE

---

Ayush Singh, Student, School of Law, CHRIST (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERISTY)

### ABSTRACT

*The paper assesses the new Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill (December 2025) and its revolutionary impact on India's higher education system by providing a single unified apex authority (VBSA) that is intended to replace the disjointed existing regulatory bodies currently in place - UGC (1956), AICTE (1987) and NCTE (1993). Using scholarly critiques, research studies, and academic literature, this analysis identifies systemic issues in India's higher education system, such as bureaucracy leading to slow and inefficient approvals, ineffective UGC standards leading to loss of institutional autonomy and an emphasis on compliance versus outcomes leading to increased disparity between the centre and the states, stifling innovation; AICTE's emphasis on the number of approved institutions leading to rote learning, poor employability, and exorbitant fees; and NCTE's lack of enforcement of adequate teacher preparation standards inhibiting developing human capital and providing equal educational opportunity. Similar to NEP 2020, VBSA's three councils will also incorporate technology into the approval process, merit-based funding by the Ministry; enhance penalties for infractions, and increase an emphasis on interdisciplinary programs, specifically in the area of Artificial Intelligence and sustainability. The new regulatory framework should promote equity, autonomy and competitiveness and increased levels of research, global rankings and attraction of talent while eliminating the existing divides in India's higher education system. However, for this transformational project to be successful, effective implementation will be critical. Lessons from other countries, such as NCHER in India or the UK's Office for Students and Australia's TEQSA, demonstrate that stakeholder engagement and evaluation against best practice models are critical for success. There are many nuances to successful implementation, including differences in educational requirements due to the principles of federalism, urban/rural populations, and differences in existing resources. If successful, this new regulatory framework will help develop a knowledge economy in India by 2047 that supports excellence, equity, and socio-economic development throughout the country.*

**Key Words:** - Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, Higher Education Reform, Regulatory Framework, Institutional Autonomy, Knowledge Economy 2047

## INTRODUCTION

The Indian government has brought out the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill during December 2025, which is a revolutionary legislation that plans to drastically transform the existing education system in Indian higher education institutions.<sup>1</sup> The proposed bill is establishing the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA), effectively making it the apex body that will absorb the functions of the University Grants Commission (UGC), the National Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).<sup>1</sup> The proposed bill has taken form on the lines of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which proposes establishing three expert councils for regulation, accreditation, and education,<sup>2</sup> promising a harmonized and simplified system that will encourage autonomy, innovation, and competitiveness at a global level. Although this is a major positive move towards imparting quality education in Indian institutions, what makes this legislation valuable is that it will correct many inherent deficiencies that existed under the previous system. The blog will discuss the deficiencies of the previous system, quoting scholarly views, along with how this new bill plans to correct them, guiding Indian education towards excellence.<sup>3</sup>

## FRAGMENTED REGULATION AND OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS UNDER THE OLD REGIME

The current system, controlled by autonomous organizations like UGC (formed in 1956)<sup>4</sup>, AICTE (formed in 1987)<sup>5</sup>, and NCTE (formed in 1993)<sup>6</sup>, has been criticized in academic literature for many years as it functioned in isolation. This resulted in overlapping in control and bureaucratic complexities. For instance, UGC was formed to coordinate university-level higher education in India.<sup>4</sup> The disbursement of funds in universities has been marred with issues of time taken to release the funds in governments accounts. Analysis of university finances in India indicates systemic issues in the disbursement of grants from the UGC when it relates to rigid accountability.<sup>7</sup> <sup>9</sup> This has led to resource gaps in universities, where state universities have been major sufferers.<sup>7</sup> Added to this, there have been many question marks over autonomy and academic freedom under the UGC. As scholars argue, the top-down approach of the commission takes away institutional independence; it has made universities an extension of the government's policy machinery, not intellectually vibrant institutions.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, one critical review saw the

interventions of the UGC as intrusive, with the commission seeming to prescribe curriculum and appointments without consultation with adequate stakeholders, thereby stifling innovation and responsiveness to the imperatives of society.<sup>3</sup> Quality assurance remains shallow, with regulations centered around procedural compliance rather than substantive outcomes. This results in the mushrooming of low-quality institutions. The funding woes also worsen this, as has been shown in studies conducted on higher education financing where the reports of UGC hardly touch these bottlenecks procedurally, while the gap between central and state institutions in their growth perspective increases.<sup>7 9</sup> These defects are reflected in India's low standing globally, with many of its universities unable to attract talent or produce good research output.<sup>8</sup>

### **PROBLEMS WITH AICTE**

The people in charge of education, which is the AICTE are also getting a lot of criticism. When you look at what the experts say about the AICTE they think it is not fair to everyone. It takes a long time to make changes. The AICTE has a process for approving schools that is very hard to get through which helps the schools that are already established and hurts new ideas.<sup>3</sup> This is what we see when we look at how the AICTE has handled changes in engineering education. It is very slow. The AICTE is also not doing a job of stopping private technical schools from charging too much money, which is not fair to everyone.<sup>7</sup> The AICTE is supposed to make sure everything is fair. It is not doing a good job and this is creating big problems. The AICTE needs to do especially when it comes to technical education because this is what the AICTE is responsible, for. The way technical education is governed is a problem. A report talks about the AICTE on how it is supposed to make sure everything is fair and the same everywhere. It has actually made things worse.<sup>3</sup> The AICTE has a lot of power. It has not used it well. Some private schools are charging fees that they do not tell people about.<sup>7</sup> This is not the issue. The AICTE and the UGC do some of the things like dealing with programs that combine many subjects. This makes things confusing. Slows down the process of approving new programs. Schools have to follow rules and this is a big burden for them. The AICTE has been more concerned with getting students into engineering programs than making sure they are good programs. It has approved thousands of engineering seats. But this focus on quantity, over quality has led to problems. Many graduates do not have jobs and the skills they learned in school do not match the skills that

employers need.<sup>7</sup> Scholars critique this as an identity crisis, where technical education prioritizes rote learning over practical, industry-aligned skills.<sup>3</sup>

## **PROBLEMS WITH NCTE**

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) which is in charge of teacher education does not do any better when it comes to being looked at in an academic way. The NCTE has some problems. When you look at the bigger picture and the things that need to be changed you can see that the NCTE has some of the same issues as other places. The NCTE has been criticized for not having standards, which means that a lot of bad teacher training programs are allowed to exist.<sup>10</sup> These programs do not teach teachers the things they need to know to work with students who're different from each other.<sup>10</sup> The NCTE also has to work with groups like the University Grants Commission and the All India Council For Technical Education on things, like educational technology. This can make it hard to get things done because there are a lot of people involved and they all have to agree. Research on how colleges and universities are run shows that the NCTE plays a part in making teaching a job that people do not think is very important.<sup>10</sup> The NCTE does not do a job of making sure people follow the rules so we end up with teachers who are not qualified.<sup>10</sup> This leads to problems that affect everyone like some kids not getting a fair chance to learn. The NCTE and the problems it causes have an impact making the basics of school education weaker and hurting India's ability to develop the skills of its people, which is what the NCTE is supposed to help with the development of India's human capital, through better school education and better teachers.<sup>10</sup> These organizations do things on their own. This

has created a lot of rules and regulations that are hard to understand. People have suggested that we should have one commission that oversees everything like the National Commission for Higher Education and Research.<sup>2</sup>

## **HOW THE NEW BILL ADDRESSES THE PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT REGIME**

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill is a change. It fixes the problems we have now. The old laws are. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill is here, with three new groups.<sup>1 2</sup> These

groups make things easier. They get rid of the confusion. Now we have one place to go for everything. This place uses computers to make decisions. The Bill helps because it stops people from waiting for a time. Schools and colleges do not have to go to different offices. The Regulatory Council gives licenses. The Accreditation Council checks the quality of schools and colleges. The Standards Council decides what is good. What is not. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill makes the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill work better. The autonomy of performing Higher Education Institutions is really improved.<sup>3</sup> This is done by giving them the freedom to make their decisions about what they teach and how they are run, which helps to reduce the University Grants Commissions interference.<sup>3</sup> The money, for Higher Education Institutions now comes from the Education Ministry.<sup>7 9</sup> This change helps to make sure that the money is given out in a transparent way, based on the merit of each Higher Education Institution and it solves the problems that the University Grants Commission had with giving out grants.<sup>7 9</sup>

The new education bill is a thing because it helps to make sure that the All India Council for Technical Education is fair to everyone and that schools do not charge too much money.<sup>5 7</sup> The bill says that if schools do something they will be punished and this punishment will get worse if they keep doing wrong things. This helps to make sure that schools are honest and that everyone can go to school no matter how money they have. The bill also helps subjects like artificial intelligence and sustainability to work together which can lead to new and interesting ideas.<sup>2</sup> The NCTE has some problems. The Standards Council helps to fix these problems by making sure that teacher education is good and similar to what it is in other countries.<sup>10</sup> This helps to make sure that teachers are well trained and can do a job. The bill also includes some things that're good for students like a system for dealing with problems and programs that help students learn many different things.<sup>2</sup> These things help more students to go to school and learn the skills they need which's what the National Education Policy is trying to achieve.<sup>2</sup> The National Education Policy wants to make sure that education is good and available to everyone and this bill is a step, in the direction.<sup>2</sup> The old way of doing things in education had some big problems.<sup>3</sup> All these problems have kept education from moving forward.<sup>3</sup> The new bill is trying to solve this problem by bringing everything.<sup>1</sup> It wants to make sure that people trust each other and that everyone is working towards being excellent. The new bill will only be successful if it is put into action correctly. We have to make sure that we do not make the mistakes that were made in the past like what happened with NCHER and all the redundant things they did.<sup>2</sup> Indian education needs to

learn from these mistakes so that it can really move forward and be better. The new bill and Indian education are. The success of Indian education depends on the new bill being implemented correctly.

## CONCLUSION

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill passed in December 2025 will restructure India's higher education dramatically. The bill will remove the fragmented structures of higher education that currently exist with UGC, AICTE, and NCTE to create a unified Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Act with three councils for Regulatory, Accreditation, and Standards that will be aligned with NEP 2020. The bill will address several historical issues with higher education such as bureaucratic overlap, regulations that inhibit autonomy of institutions, delays in funding, an emphasis on quantity rather than quality with the delivery of technical education, the absence of standards for teacher training and issues identified through academic research.

In addition, the bill will also provide for streamlined approval processes to be in place through technology-enabled systems, align funding from the Ministry of Education to be on the basis of merit, develop a mechanism for punishment through penalties for unethical practices such as charging hidden fees in addition to providing incentives for multidisciplinary innovation in industries such as AI and sustainability with the expectation that it will support freedom, equity and global competitiveness for institutions that participate in VBSA. Therefore, the expectation is that research output, rankings and attraction of talent available through Indian HEIs will be improved, linking central and state governments and aligning the skill sets of higher education graduates to the needs of the industry.

To be successful, implementation must proceed in a manner that avoids the pitfalls experienced in previous initiatives such as NCHER, and will incorporate the ideas of all stakeholders and examples from successful models used in other countries such as the UK Office of Students. If the bill is implemented correctly, India is well on its way to becoming a dynamic, inclusive model of a knowledge economy by 2047 through excellence and human capital development.

## References

1. *Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025* (proposed Dec. 2025) (on file with the Ministry of Education).
2. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, *National Education Policy 2020*  
[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf).
3. Devesh Kapur & Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "Indian Higher Education Reform: From Half-Baked Socialism to Half-Baked Capitalism," 54 *Economic & Political Weekly* 38 (2019).
4. *University Grants Commission Act, 1956*, No. 3 of 1956.
5. *All India Council for Technical Education Act, 1987*, No. 52 of 1987.
6. *National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993*, No. 73 of 1993.
7. Pawan Agarwal, *Higher Education in India: The Need for Change*, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations Working Paper No. 180 (2006).
8. NITI Aayog, Government of India, *Strategy for New India @75* (2018).
9. The World Bank, *Higher Education Financing in India* (Report), available at: <https://documents.worldbank.org> (last visited on February 1, 2026).
10. Anil Sadgopal, "Teacher Education Reforms and the Crisis of Regulation," 48 *Economic & Political Weekly* 15 (2013).