
Viksit Bharat @2047: With Special Reference to Higher Education

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Received: 22 May 2026 Accepted & Reviewed: 25 May 2026, Published: 31 May 2026

Abstract

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 represents India's collective aspiration to become a fully developed nation by the centenary of its independence. Higher education, as the cornerstone of human resource development, plays a pivotal role in realizing this vision. This paper examines the significance of higher education in shaping a knowledge-driven economy, analyses the current status and challenges, and explores the policy frameworks—particularly the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020—that align with India's developmental goals. It also discusses the transformative initiatives, opportunities, and a strategic roadmap towards achieving the objectives of Viksit Bharat @2047. The study concludes that an inclusive, technology-driven, and innovation-oriented higher education ecosystem is essential for transforming India into a globally competitive and self-reliant nation.

Keywords: Viksit Bharat, Higher Education, NEP 2020, Research, Innovation, India @2047, Skill Development

Introduction

India, the world's largest democracy and a rapidly growing economy, envisions a new developmental paradigm through the initiative Viksit Bharat @2047. This national vision seeks to transform India into a developed nation by 2047—the centenary of its independence. It aims to create a nation that is prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable. Among the key enablers of this transformation, education—particularly higher education—occupies a central position.

Higher education is not merely about knowledge transmission but also about nation-building, social transformation, and economic empowerment. It fosters innovation, research, and entrepreneurship, which are indispensable for global competitiveness. Thus, the transformation of the higher education system is fundamental to achieving the goals of Viksit Bharat @2047.

1. Vision of Viksit Bharat @2047

The concept of Viksit Bharat is rooted in four foundational pillars:

a. Economic Prosperity

Economic prosperity is the cornerstone of the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision. It aspires to position India among the world's leading economies through sustained, inclusive, and innovation-driven growth. The goal is not merely to increase GDP but to ensure that economic progress translates into improved quality of life for every citizen.

To achieve this, India aims to harness its demographic dividend, technological potential, and entrepreneurial spirit. The focus lies on modernizing agriculture, strengthening the manufacturing sector, and expanding the digital economy. Initiatives such as *Make in India*, *Digital India*, *Startup India*, and *Atmanirbhar Bharat* exemplify the government's commitment to self-reliance and industrial transformation.

A knowledge-based economy is also a key driver of prosperity. Higher education and research institutions play a crucial role in nurturing skilled human resources, fostering innovation, and supporting industries through technological advancements. By aligning educational curricula with emerging economic needs—such

as artificial intelligence, renewable energy, biotechnology, and data analytics—India can enhance productivity and global competitiveness.

Investment in infrastructure, trade, and financial inclusion further strengthens the economic foundation. Emphasis on sustainable practices ensures that growth remains resilient and environmentally conscious. Thus, economic prosperity under *Viksit Bharat @2047* envisions an inclusive, technology-led, and self-reliant economy that empowers citizens while contributing to global progress.

b. Social Inclusiveness

Social Inclusiveness is a vital pillar of the *Viksit Bharat @2047* vision, emphasizing that the benefits of development must reach every section of society without discrimination. A truly developed nation is not defined merely by its economic achievements, but by its commitment to equity, justice, and social empowerment.

The vision of *Viksit Bharat* seeks to create an India where every citizen, irrespective of caste, gender, religion, or region, has equal access to opportunities in education, healthcare, livelihood, and governance. This inclusiveness ensures that progress is not confined to a privileged few but becomes a shared national experience.

Government policies such as *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*, *PM Awas Yojana*, *Ayushman Bharat*, *Skill India*, and *Digital Inclusion* programs aim to uplift the marginalized and bridge the rural–urban divide. These initiatives focus on improving living standards, promoting gender equality, and empowering disadvantaged communities through education and skill development.

Higher education institutions play a transformative role in achieving social inclusiveness. By expanding access to quality education, offering scholarships for underrepresented groups, and encouraging diversity on campuses, the education system contributes to social mobility and empowerment. Moreover, inclusion of ethical values, civic responsibility, and gender sensitization in curricula helps shape a more equitable and tolerant society.

Ultimately, social inclusiveness in *Viksit Bharat @2047* envisions an India where growth is participatory, opportunities are equitable, and every individual contributes to and benefits from national progress.

c. Environmental Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability is an essential pillar of *Viksit Bharat @2047*, reflecting India's commitment to achieving development that is ecologically balanced and responsible. True progress cannot be sustained if it comes at the cost of environmental degradation. Hence, the vision of a developed India emphasizes the need to integrate environmental protection with economic and social advancement.

India's approach to sustainability is guided by the principles of "Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)", which encourages responsible consumption and harmonious coexistence with nature. The focus is on adopting green technologies, renewable energy sources, sustainable agriculture, and efficient waste management systems to reduce the ecological footprint of growth.

Government initiatives such as the *National Solar Mission*, *Green Hydrogen Mission*, *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, and *National Action Plan on Climate Change* represent concrete steps toward building a low-carbon, resilient economy. These policies aim to mitigate the impacts of climate change, conserve biodiversity, and ensure the responsible use of natural resources.

Higher education institutions also play a significant role in promoting environmental sustainability. Through research, innovation, and environmental education, they foster awareness and develop solutions for pressing ecological challenges. Universities and colleges can lead sustainability efforts by implementing green campuses, renewable energy systems, and community-based environmental projects.

Thus, environmental sustainability under *Viksit Bharat @2047* envisions a nation that balances its developmental aspirations with the preservation of nature—ensuring that economic progress today does not compromise the well-being of future generations.

d. **Good Governance:** Transparent, technology-enabled, and accountable administration. Good Governance forms the foundation of the *Viksit Bharat @2047* vision, as effective governance is essential for ensuring that policies and development initiatives translate into tangible outcomes for citizens. It embodies the principles of transparency, accountability, efficiency, and citizen-centric administration, which together strengthen the trust between the government and the people.

The goal of good governance is to create a system where decision-making is guided by public interest, resources are managed responsibly, and services are delivered efficiently. The integration of technology in governance—through e-Governance, Digital India, and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)—has transformed public administration into a more transparent and accessible framework. These initiatives have reduced corruption, enhanced service delivery, and empowered citizens to actively participate in governance processes.

Participatory democracy is another key dimension, ensuring that citizens' voices are heard in policymaking. Decentralization of power through Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies promotes local-level governance, empowering communities to take charge of their own development. Moreover, administrative reforms and performance-based evaluation systems are enhancing efficiency and accountability across public institutions.

Higher education also contributes significantly to the promotion of good governance. Universities serve as centers for civic education, leadership development, and policy research. By fostering ethical values, critical thinking, and administrative competence, higher education prepares a generation of responsible citizens and visionary leaders capable of driving institutional reforms.

Thus, Good Governance in *Viksit Bharat @2047* envisions an India where governance is transparent, technology-driven, responsive, and participatory, ensuring that every policy initiative contributes effectively to the nation's journey toward holistic and inclusive development.

Higher education contributes to all four pillars by creating skilled human resources, driving innovation, promoting social equity, and generating sustainable solutions through research.

2. Current Scenario of Higher Education in India

India has one of the world's largest higher education systems, comprising over 1,100 universities, 50,000+ colleges, and 1.5 crore enrolled students. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has increased to around 28% (2023), with the target of reaching 50% by 2035, as envisioned in NEP 2020. Despite this expansion, quality, access, and global competitiveness remain major concerns.

3. Achievements of Higher Education in India

Higher education in India has witnessed remarkable progress since independence, contributing significantly to the nation's socio-economic development and global standing. The expansion, diversification, and modernization of higher education have laid the foundation for a knowledge-based economy, aligning with the vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047*.

i. Expansion and Accessibility

India today possesses one of the largest higher education systems in the world, with over 1,100 universities and more than 43,000 colleges (as per recent UGC data). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has steadily increased, reflecting enhanced access and participation across regions and communities. Establishment of Central, State, and Private Universities, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions, and skill-based programs has democratized higher education, reaching rural and marginalized populations.

ii. Strengthening of Research and Innovation

Indian higher education has made notable strides in research, innovation, and technology development. Initiatives such as the National Research Foundation (NRF), Innovation Cell (MIC), and Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) encourage scientific inquiry, start-up culture, and collaboration between academia and industry. Prestigious institutions like the IITs, IISc, and IISERs have gained global recognition for excellence in science, technology, and innovation.

iii. Policy Reforms and Quality Enhancement

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative milestone in Indian higher education. It emphasizes multidisciplinary learning, flexibility in curricula, outcome-based education, and internationalization. Accreditation mechanisms through NAAC and NBA have strengthened quality assurance and institutional accountability. The introduction of digital platforms such as SWAYAM, NPTEL, and e-PG Pathshala has expanded access to quality learning materials and online education.

iv. Global Recognition and Collaboration

Indian universities are increasingly gaining global visibility through international collaborations, exchange programs, and research partnerships. Institutions like IIT Bombay, IISc Bangalore, and Delhi University have achieved positions in global rankings. The government's Study in India initiative and GIAN (Global Initiative of Academic Networks) have attracted international faculty and students, enhancing the global academic ecosystem.

v. Promotion of Equity and Inclusion

Special focus on women's education, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) through scholarships, reservations, and outreach programs has made higher education more inclusive. Initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Gender Champions Scheme have improved female enrolment and participation in higher education institutions.

vi. Digital and Skill-Based Transformation

Digital transformation has revolutionized the higher education landscape. The adoption of ICT-based learning, digital libraries, and online assessment systems has enhanced the teaching-learning process. Skill-based education through Skill India Mission, National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF), and collaboration with industries has improved employability and entrepreneurship among graduates.

The achievements of higher education in India reflect a robust movement toward access, excellence, and global competitiveness. The synergy between education, research, and innovation is driving India's transformation into a knowledge-driven and self-reliant economy, paving the way toward realizing the vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047*.

4. Role of NEP 2020 in the Vision of Viksit Bharat

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides the structural and philosophical foundation for India's educational transformation. It aligns directly with the *Viksit Bharat @2047* objectives through the following key reforms:

| Area | NEP 2020 Focus | Expected Contribution to Viksit Bharat |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Access & Equity | Universal access to higher education, increased GER | Inclusive and participatory growth |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Quality & Excellence | Multidisciplinary, flexible curricula | Holistic and globally competitive graduates |
| Research & Innovation | Establishment of National Research Foundation (NRF) | Promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship |
| Internationalization | Global collaborations, foreign universities in India | Knowledge exchange and competitiveness |
| Skill Development | Vocational training, internships, life-long learning | Employment-ready and self-reliant youth |
| Digital Education | National Digital University, online learning ecosystems | Democratization of education |

Thus, NEP 2020 acts as the roadmap for educational reforms required to achieve the vision of a developed, knowledge-driven India by 2047.

5. Challenges of Higher Education in India

Despite significant achievements and expansion, the higher education system in India continues to face several structural, qualitative, and administrative challenges. Addressing these issues is essential to transform India into a global knowledge hub and realize the vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047*.

i. Quality and Relevance of Education

One of the foremost challenges is maintaining the quality and relevance of higher education. While the number of institutions has increased rapidly, many still lack adequate infrastructure, qualified faculty, and modern curricula. A gap persists between academic learning and employability skills, leading to a mismatch between education and industry needs. Continuous curriculum revision and practical exposure are required to align education with contemporary global standards.

ii. Research and Innovation Deficit

Although India has made progress in research, overall investment in research and development (R&D) remains below global benchmarks. Many universities have limited research facilities and low output in high-impact journals. The lack of strong industry-academia collaboration, insufficient funding, and bureaucratic hurdles further constrain innovation. Strengthening research culture and encouraging interdisciplinary studies are vital for knowledge-driven growth.

iii. Access and Equity

Despite improvements in access, regional, gender, and socio-economic disparities continue to affect enrolment rates. Students from rural areas, economically weaker sections, and marginalized communities often face barriers in pursuing higher education due to financial constraints or lack of infrastructure. Bridging these gaps requires inclusive policies, affordable education, and expansion of institutions in underserved regions.

iv. Faculty Shortage and Development

A major concern is the shortage of qualified and motivated faculty. Many institutions operate with large numbers of vacant teaching positions, adversely affecting academic quality. Limited opportunities for faculty training, low remuneration in certain institutions, and inadequate research incentives hinder professional

development. Regular faculty development programs (FDPs) and exposure to global best practices are necessary for improving teaching standards.

v. Governance and Regulatory Issues

India's higher education governance structure is often criticized for being complex, rigid, and fragmented, with multiple regulatory bodies such as UGC, AICTE, and various professional councils. This multiplicity sometimes leads to overlapping functions and delayed policy implementation. Ensuring autonomy, accountability, and institutional flexibility is essential to promote innovation and academic freedom.

vi. Financial Constraints

Public expenditure on higher education remains below the recommended levels. Many institutions depend heavily on government funding, which limits their ability to upgrade infrastructure and invest in research. Encouraging public-private partnerships, alumni contributions, and endowment funds could help diversify financial resources and promote sustainability.

vii. Technological and Digital Divide

While digitalization has advanced rapidly, there exists a digital divide between urban and rural learners. Limited access to the internet, digital devices, and technological literacy hinders the effectiveness of online education. Strengthening digital infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to e-learning resources are crucial for inclusive growth.

Despite progressive policies, India faces multiple challenges in strengthening its higher education system like quality Concerns (Many institutions lack global academic and research standards), research Deficiency (Limited funding, infrastructure, and faculty support hinder innovation), faculty Development (Shortage of qualified and trained teachers in emerging fields), digital Divide (Inadequate access to digital resources, especially in rural areas), funding Constraints (Heavy dependence on government funds limits institutional autonomy), employability Gap (Mismatch between academic curriculum and market demands), regulatory Overlap (Complex governance structures slow down institutional reforms). Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that higher education acts as a transformative force in India's development.

The challenges facing higher education in India call for systemic reforms, innovative governance, and sustained investment. Overcoming these obstacles will require collaboration between the government, academia, industry, and society. A forward-looking approach focusing on quality, inclusivity, research, and global integration will enable India to fully harness its demographic potential and achieve the vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047*.

6. Opportunities and Strategic Directions

The pathway to *Viksit Bharat @2047* presents a wide array of opportunities for higher education institutions:

1. Technology-Enabled Learning to integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Data Science, and Machine Learning for personalized and adaptive learning.
2. Industry-Academia Collaboration to strengthening ties with industries to promote innovation, research, and entrepreneurship.
3. International Partnerships to encouraging global collaborations, student exchanges, and joint research programs.
4. Research Excellence Frameworks to establishing research clusters and innovation hubs aligned with national priorities.
5. Inclusive Education to bridging gender, regional, and socio-economic disparities through targeted schemes and digital inclusion.

6. Green and Sustainable Education to embedding environmental consciousness and sustainability in curricula.

7. Skill and Vocational Integration to aligning education with India's evolving employment landscape.

7. Role of Teachers and Educational Institutions

Teachers and institutions are the catalysts of educational transformation. Their responsibilities include:

1. Promoting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving among students.
2. Encouraging interdisciplinary research and ethical learning.
3. Using technology for effective pedagogy and evaluation.
4. Building institutional cultures that value innovation and accountability.
5. Establishing incubation centers and entrepreneurship cells to foster startups.

A teacher in the Viksit Bharat era must act not only as a transmitter of knowledge but also as a mentor, researcher, and innovator.

8. Government Initiatives Supporting Higher Education Transformation

The Government of India has launched several key initiatives to align education with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047:

1. PM-USHA (University Support and Higher Education Transformation) to enhancing quality, equity, and governance in universities.
2. National Digital University (NDU) to providing online and blended learning opportunities for all.
3. Research and Innovation Framework (RIF) to promoting research linked to national developmental priorities.
4. Study in India Program to positioning India as a global higher education destination.
5. Skill India Mission & PMKVY to focusing on employability and entrepreneurship.
6. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to creating innovation and incubation ecosystems in higher education institutions.

These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to building a world-class education system by 2047. It is believe that India have great potential to become developed nation by making their youth skilled.

9. Roadmap to 2047

A phased and systematic approach is essential for achieving Viksit Bharat @2047 through higher education.

| <u>Phase</u> | <u>Goals</u> | <u>Key Indicators</u> |
|--------------|---|---|
| 2025–2030 | Full NEP implementation; strengthen digital and research infrastructure | GER 35%, National Research Foundation operational |
| 2030–2040 | Global partnerships, top-tier universities, innovation-led campuses | Indian universities in top 100 global rankings |

2040–2047

Knowledge-driven, Developed, self-reliant, and
 sustainable, inclusive equitable India
 education ecosystem

10. Conclusion

The dream of Viksit Bharat @2047 is not only an economic or political aspiration but a civilizational commitment to build a prosperous, equitable, and enlightened nation. Higher education will be the foundation upon which this dream is realized. A transformed education system—characterized by quality, innovation, inclusivity, and global relevance—can empower India’s youth to lead the world in science, technology, culture, and governance.

By effectively implementing NEP 2020, leveraging technology, and nurturing research and creativity, India can evolve into a knowledge superpower. The journey from a developing to a developed India depends on how well higher education transforms human potential into national progress.

“Education will be the true architect of Viksit Bharat — the bridge between aspiration and achievement.”

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