

India

National Higher Education Equity Policy

Governance

The Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resource Development (http://mhrd.gov.in/higher_education) is responsible for defining national policies in higher education. Higher education policies are implemented by the University Grants Commission (UGC), which operates under the Ministry of Human Resource Development until 2018. The UGC is to be replaced soon by the Higher Education Commission of India

Higher Education Policy Documents

What are the current official documents defining the national higher education strategy / policies?

- Inclusive and Qualitative Expansion of Higher Education. 12th Five-Year Plan, 2012-17
- 1992 National Policy on Education
- An updated National Education Policy is currently being drafted.

Equity Policy Documents

What broad and specific equity objectives do the policy documents identify?

- Equity is expected to be one of the five pillars of the forthcoming New Education Policy (Annual Report 2016-17)
- UGC Equity Regulations focus on establishing norms against discrimination and harassment as follows:
 - Safeguard interests of students regardless of caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender and disability
 - Eliminate discrimination and harassment
 - Promote equality among students

Equity Targets

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents?

- Low-income students
- Gender groups

- Minority groups: religion, caste, locality, language, ethnicity
- Students with disability

India does not have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups.

India has a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education, in the form of UGC Regulation 2012 on the Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions, and the 12th Five Year Plan.

What specific interventions and/or instruments of equity promotion are included in the official strategy and policy documents (monetary and non-monetary)?

Monetary Policy Instruments

- Needs-based scholarships and grants
- Student loans
- Support to institutions with many scheduled castes, minorities, etc.
 - The government supports universities in expanding their capacity in order to accommodate “other backward classes”
- General Development Grants are provided to universities to support work towards access and equity (UGC Annual Report 2016-17)
- Funds to support the establishment of Equal Opportunity Centers across universities (UGC Annual Report 2016-17)

Examples of programs and instruments (source: *Nurturing Social Equity*)

- Indira Gandhi Post Graduate Scholarships for Single Girl Child
- Residential Coaching Academies for Minorities,
- Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowships for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes
- Maulana Azad National Fellowships for Minorities
- Post-Doctoral Fellowships for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Women

Some problems have been identified regarding the implementation of some of the equity measures (for example, scholarships being delayed, new classification of “Institutes of Eminence” allow the selected institutions to bypass some equity regulations such as affirmative action policies (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/03/opinion/india-higher-education-modi-ambani-rss-trouble.html>)).

Non-Monetary Policy Instruments

- Outreach and bridge programs
- Retention programs: coaching, residential coaching academies for minorities
- Creation of centers to study social inclusion and exclusion (with financial support from UGC)
- Special cells for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (to monitor, collect data on the implementation of reservations and government policies regarding these protected groups)
- MOOC (Swayam Project): free classes available online to all residents of India. This government programs strives to bring education to all through this online platform for courses (<https://swayam.gov.in/About>).

Financial Resources

What financial resources does the country devote to equity promotion measures?

- Not available

Quality Assurance

The quality assurance criteria do not take equity elements into consideration.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Not available

Antidiscrimination or anti-harassment Measures

- UGC Regulations (2015) on the prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students in higher educational institutions

Dedicated Equity Promotion Agency

India does not have an agency dedicated to equity promotion in higher education.

Sources

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