SBI Research

The State of Higher Education in India since 2014: A decade of proliferation with empowerment of women & marginalised sections…Time to include the right to free and fair education in Article 21

>> 32% growth in academic institutions (64,756 in FY24)
>> 36% growth in student enrolment in higher education (450 lakhs in FY24/women 220 lakhs)
>> 27% growth in number of teachers (17.3 lakhs in FY24/SC, ST & OBC teachers constitute 45%)
>> 27% growth in number & 50% growth in enrolment in institutions of national importance like IIT, IIM & NIITs for 7 year period ended 2025
>> Every 1 in 5 students in institutions of national importance are now women…1/3 in IIMs, 93% of students are placed
>> Median salary at Rs 34.6 lakhs in FY24 across institutions of national importance (105% growth since FY16)

WAY FORWARD… Need to ensure Private and Public Universities affordability and outcomes must have a convergence, Nearly one third of the facility positions in central universities are vacant and needs to be filled up.. Jumpstarting vocational training at a rapid scale (30.7% in FY25 /7.1% in FY18), Legal status of NTA (240 examinations and 5.4 crores candidates till 2024) should be rechristened only by an Act of Parliament with valuable learnings from China's Gaokao's paper security….Changes are must also for state public service commissions

Issue # 21, FY27 Date 30-September-2026

Please see the last page for disclaimer

Executive Summary…..(1/4)

- Higher Education in India has made a remarkable transformation for the decade ended 2024, building universities and colleges, expanding institutions of national importance, enrolling students particularly women, recruiting teachers, with particular focus on SC, ST & OBC candidates
  - Higher education infrastructure is proliferating. **As in FY24, India housed 1289 universities, 48,246 colleges and 15,221 stand alone institutes, an average growth of 47% over FY14**
  - Student enrolment has crossed 4.5 crore in FY24 with almost equal share of boys and girls & enrolment of girls expanding at 47% over FY14.. **SC, ST & OBC enrolment are at 62%, Girls outnumber boys in Science stream**
  - Enrolment in Ph.D. stood at 3.4 lakh in FY24 with almost equal share of women…43.7% enrolled in Engineering & Science
  - Total teachers stood at 17.32 lakh as of FY24, a growth of 27% over FY14 with share of female teachers at 45% **& share of SC, ST & OBC at 55%**
  - India's Pupils Teacher ratio (PTR) for Regular mode is 23, which is at par with international standards…Leading institutions in the US and Europe often function effectively with ratios ranging from 25:1 to 30:1 depending on the program of study and in this regard India's position is quite satisfactory

Executive Summary…..(2/4)

- The **performance of IIMs, IITs and NITs** is quite impressive:
  - The total number of IITs, IIMs and NIT has expanded from 59 in FY14 to 76 in FY26, with addition of 7 IITs, 9 IIMs and 1 NIIT… The combined students of IITs/NITs stood at ~2.44 lakh in FY24 against ~1.62 lakhs in FY18 / 27% growth
  - The total number of students (under all programs) in all IIMs has increased from 9,298 in academic year FY18 to almost double to 18,243 in FY24
  - Under IIM PG programme, 14 IIMs of whose information are available, the share of women students has increased from 26.3% in FY18 to 37.7% in FY24….The share of women students in IITs/NITs stood at ~20%, **Every 1 in 5 students are women in institutions of national importance like IIT/NIT in FY24, while every 1 in 3 students are women pursuing management in IIMs**
  - Placements from IIMs has increased from ~7,500 in FY16 to ~13,700 in FY24 while from IITs it has increased from ~9,500 to ~17,500 in the same period. In NITs, it increased from ~18,000 to ~29,000 in the same period..93% of students are placed
  - **The median salary has jumped by 105% in FY24 over FY16 across IIMs/IITs/NITs**. For IIMs, the median salary has crossed Rs 40 lakh mark in FY24
  - Students opting for higher studies at IIT and NIITs are at record high in FY24 to gain advanced research skills, access global career opportunities, and specialize in emerging tech fields

Executive Summary…..(3/4)

SCOPE FOR FURTHER CHANGES

- The share of budget expenditure on higher education as % of total expenditure has remained stagnant ~1.0% for the past two decades (declined from 1.6% in FY18).. Target it to increase to 1.5%
- 34% vacant position of teachers across institutions.. Maximum at professor position at 54%..Urgent need to increase R&D expenditure and establish academia-industry linkage. Industry should come forward and not merely lobby for policy changes
- Only 30.7% of Indians in FY24 aged 15-29 years are receiving vocational training, up from 7.1% in FY18 but significantly lower as compared to developed economies
- State-wide variations in PTR need to be rectified (while Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa have 14 students per teacher, the same ratio is 57 in the case of Bihar)
- Across Private and Public Universities, the affordability and outcomes differ sharply and there needs to be a convergence. While the outcome across reputed public and private universities does not differ significantly in terms of placements and higher studies barring few exceptions, **the costs are very high at private universities and could be as much as 6 times than India's NNI against an astonishing ~0.4 times of NNI in a prime Delhi University college**. There needs to be a rational fee structure for students who could pay for such colleges.. that could be used to build infrastructure at universities like Delhi, which are of prime importance today…and could also complement increased Government expenditure on Higher education

Executive Summary…..(4/4)

WAY FORWARD

- Lessons from some biggest exams in the world like Gaokao, China (where more than 12 million candidates appear) in logistics, implementation and scale can be put in practice

- **We propose an alternative legal and organizational design for NTA**, instead of it functioning as a society under Societies Act, 1860, it can be made a statutory body (by an act of parliament) with much more organizational capacity and institutional credibility and expertise

- **We propose whether Article 21 of Indian constitution can be amended** to support a right to free and fair educational opportunity. “Free” should mean freedom from fraud, discrimination and unreasonable barriers…The Constitution itself offers an institutional clue. Articles 315 and 320 created independent Public Service Commissions and entrusted them with examinations because access to public office was too consequential to be left to everyday executive convenience
  - Such change in constitutional amendment should also cover extensive reforms in state PSC exams that have seen recurring failures

Current State of Higher Education

Higher Education Infrastructure

Number of universities
FY14: 723 | FY24: 1289

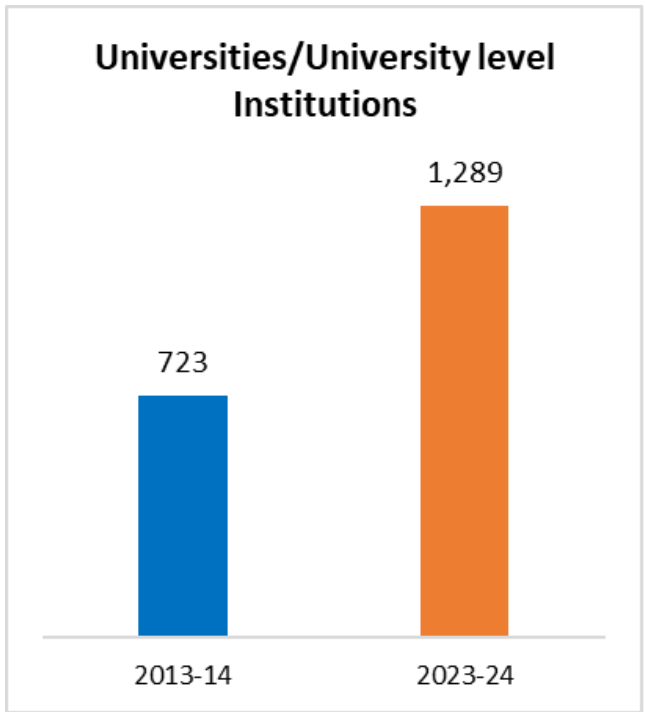
of which, 733 are Government managed and rest are Private

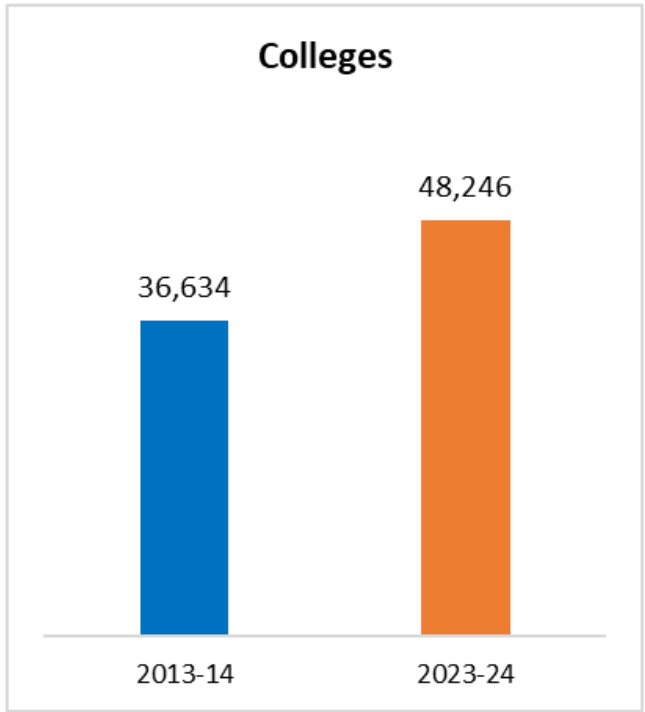
18 Universities exclusively for women

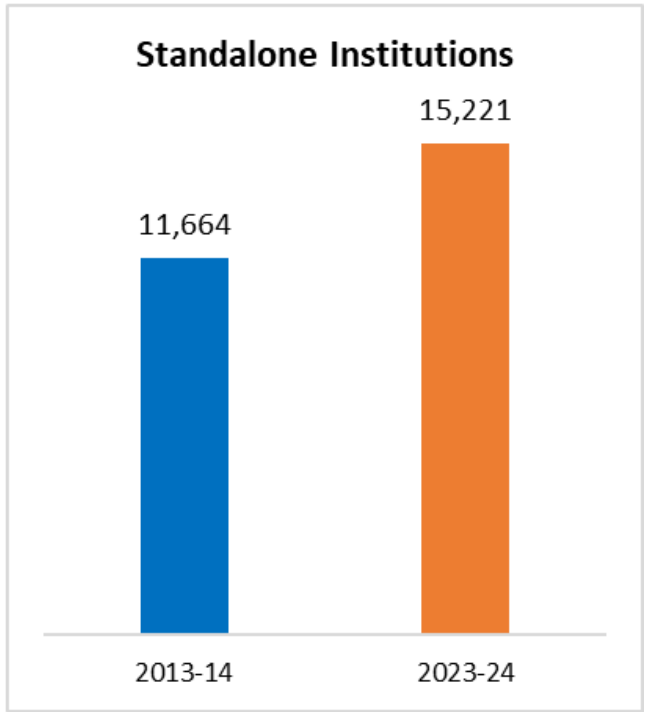
Number of colleges
FY14: 36,634 | FY24: 48,246

17.1% colleges are government Colleges, 12.9% are Private (Aided) and 70.0% are Private(un-aided)

Number of standalone Institutions
FY14: 11,664 | FY24: 15,221







Source: AISHE Reports

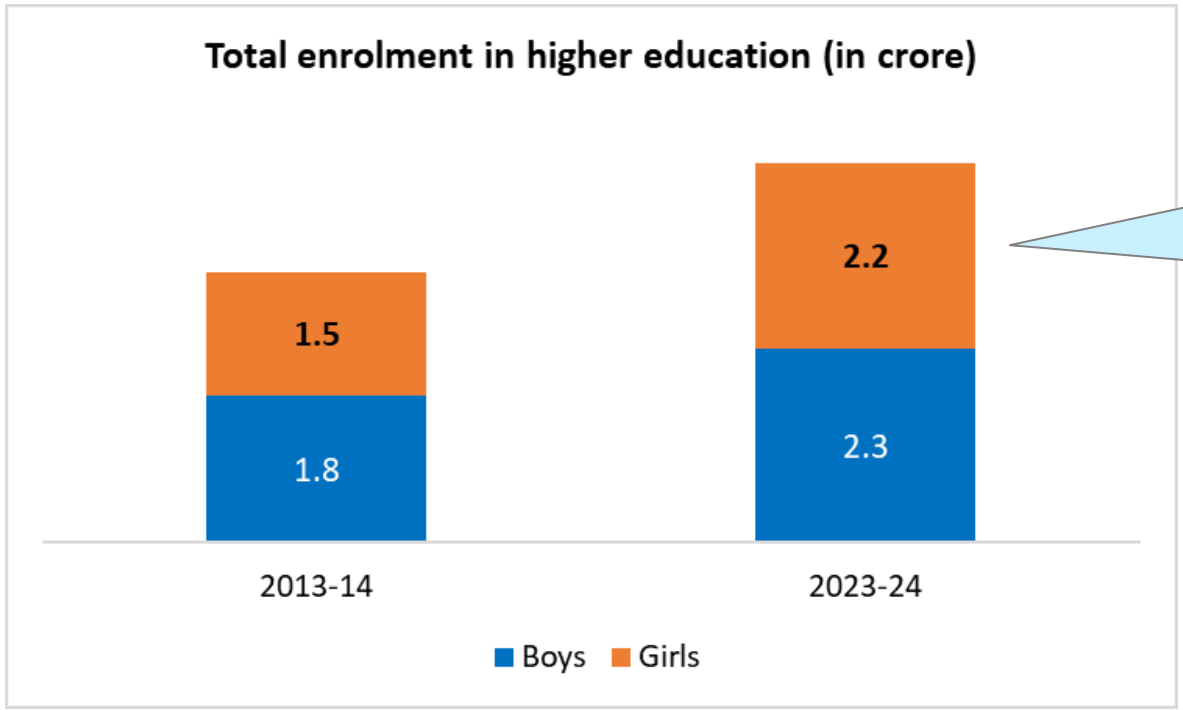
State-wise Higher Education Infrastructure (2023-24)

Top 5 states (led by Uttar Pradesh and followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka) have accounted for:

34% of total Universities
54% of total colleges
60% of standalone institutes

States-wiseTotal Number of Institutions Registered (2023-24)				
States/UTs	Unversities	Colleges	Standalone Institutions	All Institute
All-India	**1,289**	**48,246**	**15,221**	**64,756**
Uttar Pradesh	103	8,625	3,264	11,992
Maharashtra	87	5,380	2,426	7,893
Karnataka	91	4,529	1,825	6,445
Rajasthan	93	4,344	791	5,228
Tamil Nadu	65	2,983	888	3,936
Madhya Pradesh	89	2,713	440	3,242
Andhra Pradesh	52	2,587	469	3,108
Gujarat	107	2,521	385	3,013
Telangana	33	2,160	471	2,664
West Bengal	59	1,588	788	2,435
Odisha	44	1,524	636	2,204
Kerala	25	1,564	501	2,090
Bihar	39	1,261	362	1,662
Haryana	58	1,149	291	1,498
Punjab	40	1,051	311	1,402
Chhattisgarh	36	1,039	69	1,144
Assam	34	673	168	875
Jharkhand	38	434	313	785
Uttarakhand	41	563	179	783
Jammu and Kashmir	16	336	184	536
Himachal Pradesh	29	369	89	487
Delhi	31	194	110	335
Goa	4	66	18	88
Source: AISHE Reports				

Enrolment in Higher Education



Source: AISHE Reports

Total: 4.5 crore (FY24)

15.5% belong to SC, 6.4% belongs to ST, 40.1% are from OBC and remaining 38.0% students are from other communities

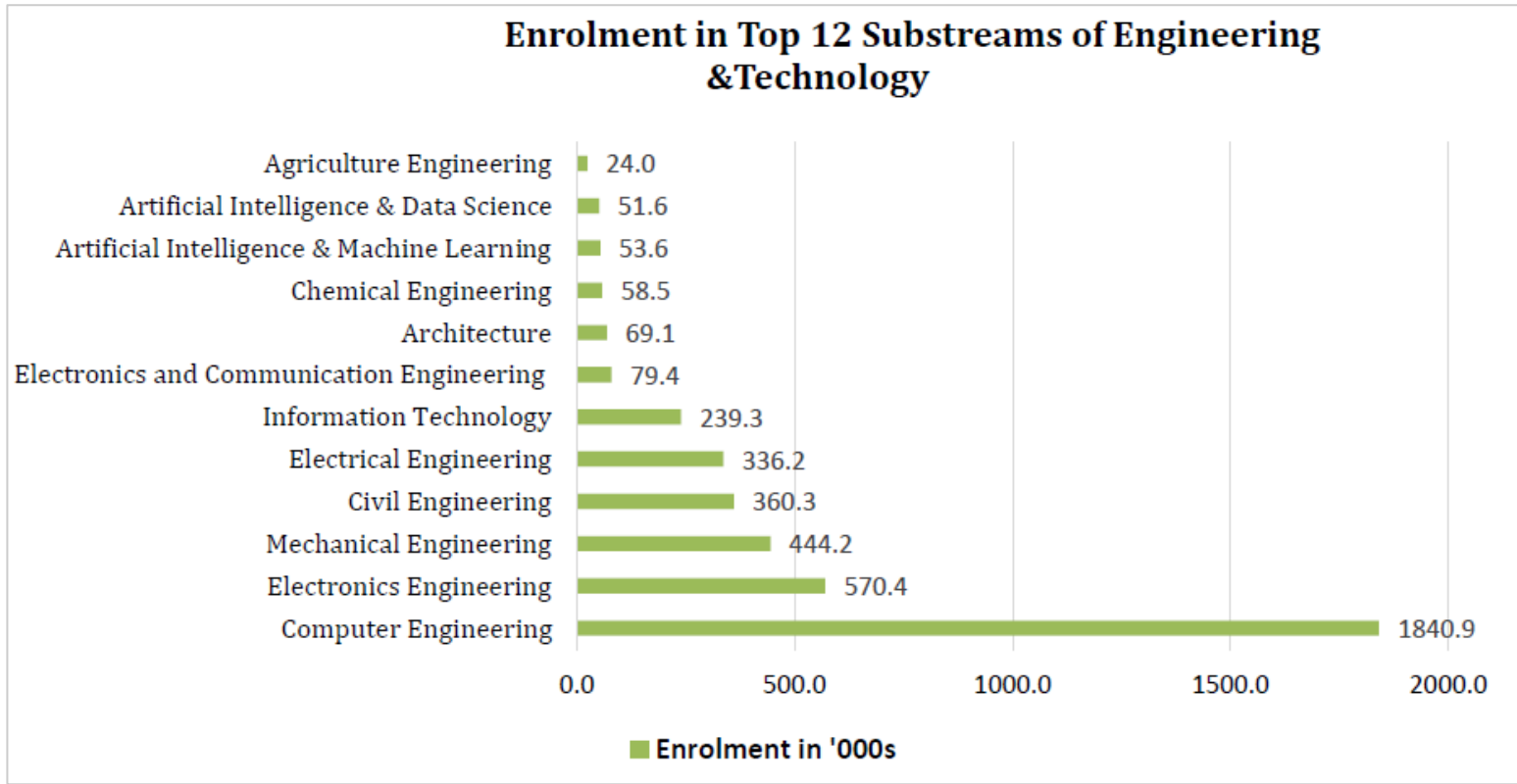
At UG level (FY24), enrolment is highest in Arts (32.1%), followed by Science (13.5%), Engineering & Technology (12.9%) and Commerce (12.0%)

In Science stream females have out-numbered males

Enrolment in Engineering and Technology Stream

For Engineering and Technology, overall enrolment in all UG, PG, Integrated, M.Phil. and Ph.D. levels, is 46.3 lakh (FY24)

Of these, the highest enrolment is in Computer engineering followed by Electronics Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil engineering, Electrical engineering, Information Technology etc.

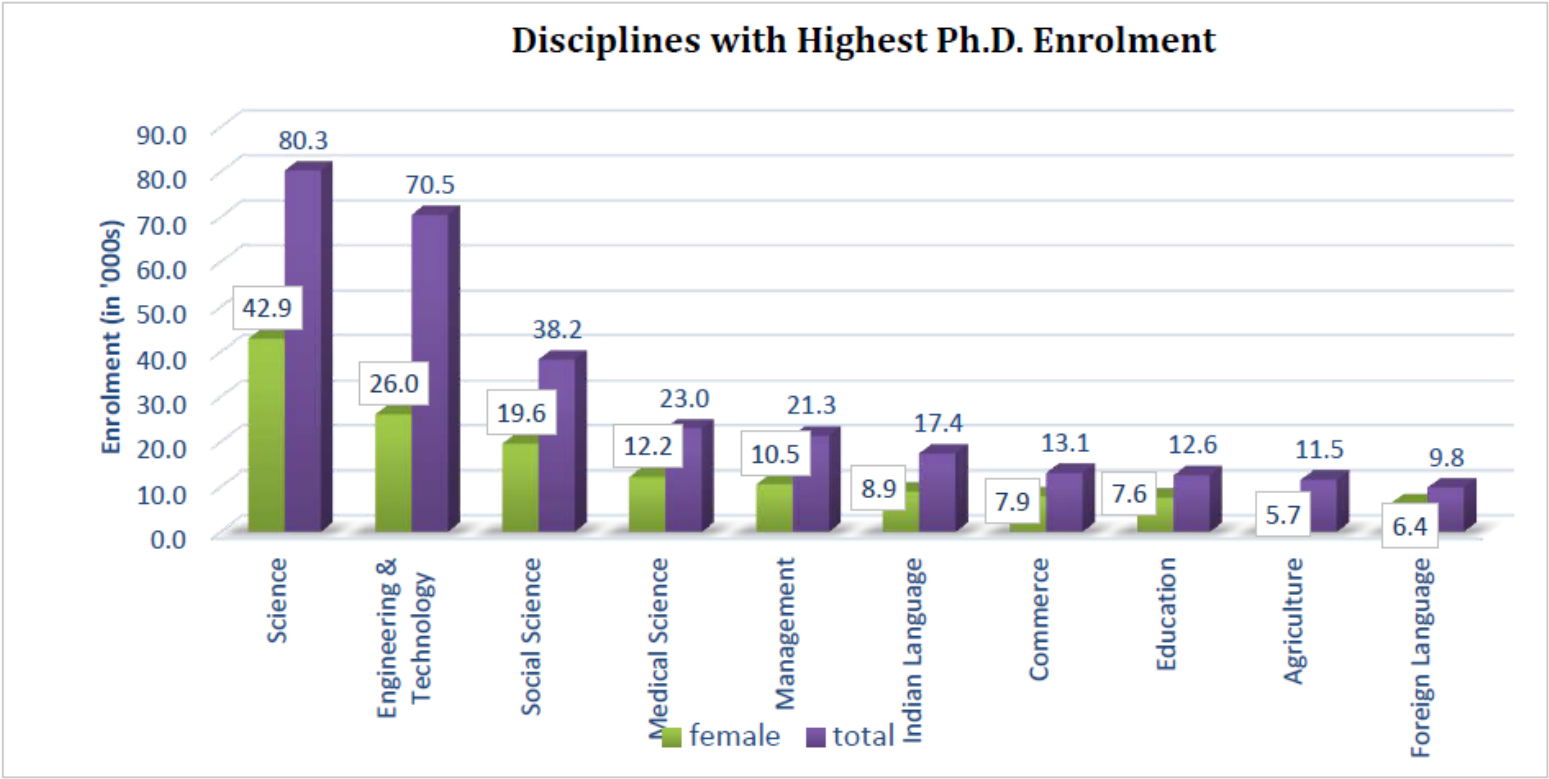


Source: AISHE Reports

Disciplines –wise Enrolment in Ph.D.

The total enrolment for Ph.D. Programme is 3.4 lakh (FY24)

At Ph.D. level, around 23.4% enrolments are in the Science discipline and 20.5% enrolments are in the discipline Engineering & Technology. Social Science (11.1%), Medical Science (6.7%), Management (6.2%) etc. are some other major disciplines where students opt to pursue for Ph.D. level academic programs



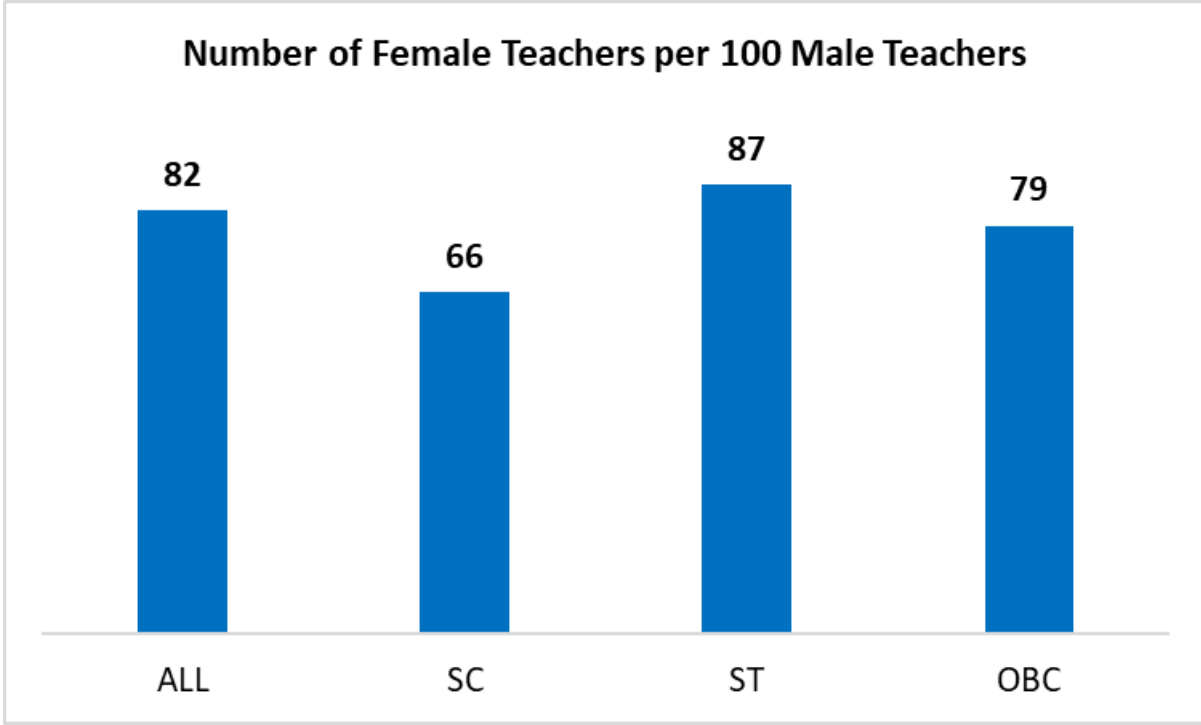
Male: 1.72 lakh
Female: 1.71 lakh

Source: AISHE Reports

Status of Teaching Position

The number of teachers has increased from 13.7 lakh in 2013-14 to 17.3 lakh in 2023-24
The share of female teachers has increased to 45% (per 100 male teachers there are 82 female teachers)
Over the years, the share of teachers belongs to SC/ST and OBC categories has increased significantly

Status of Teaching Position		
	2013-14	2023-24
Number of Teachers	13,67,535	17,32,294
Of which, Gender-wsie Distribution		
Male	61%	55%
Female	39%	45%
Of which, Social Category-Wise Distribution		
SC	6.9%	10.0%
ST	2.0%	3.0%
OBC	23.5%	32.0%
Others	67.6%	55.0%
Source: AISHE Reports		



Source: AISHE Reports

India's Pupils Teacher Ratio is at International Standards

Considering University and Colleges institutions together, the Pupils Teacher ratio (PTR) for Regular mode is 23

Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa have best PTR of 14 (regular mode only) in all institutions

Conversely, Bihar and Jharkhand have worst PTR

Leading institutions in the US and Europe often function effectively with ratios ranging from 25:1 to 30:1 depending on the program of study and in this regard India's position is quite satisfactory

However, according to the Standing Committee on Education, Women Children, Youth and Sports (2023), the ideal PTR in higher education is 15:1

States Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Higher Education (Regular Mode) in FY24			
Major States	All Institutions	University & Colleges	University & its Constituent Units
Andhra Pradesh	15	15	19
Assam	24	25	17
Bihar	57	61	25
Chhattisgarh	23	23	23
Delhi	20	20	22
Goa	14	14	16
Gujarat	26	27	22
Haryana	22	23	20
Himachal Pradesh	23	25	17
Jammu and Kashmir	21	21	15
Jharkhand	48	54	29
Karnataka	16	16	16
Kerala	14	14	13
Madhya Pradesh	27	28	21
Maharashtra	21	23	16
Odisha	23	24	20
Punjab	16	17	15
Rajasthan	25	26	19
Tamil Nadu	14	15	16
Telangana	17	17	22
Uttar Pradesh	33	35	20
Uttarakhand	22	23	21
West Bengal	27	28	20
All India	**22**	**23**	**19**
Source: AISHE Reports			

IIMs/IITs/NITs: Engines for India's Modernization & Economic Growth and Institutions of National Importance

Backdrop

- In May 1951, the first IIT at Kharagpur was established. After a decade the first IIM established was established in November 1961 at Calcutta (now Kolkata) and closely followed by IIM Ahmedabad in December 1961
- India's first PM, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru viewed the IITs and IIMs as crucial engines for India's modernization and economic growth
- We are endeavoring here the performance of IIMs and IITs using the NIRF reports, aggregate numbers are calculated from the individual numbers for institutes in the report. Gender composition is also reported for UG + PG programmes in IITs and PG programmes in IIMs
- **In the last 12 years, number of IITs increased from 16 to 23, number of IIMs increased from 13 to 22. Apart from this 31 NITs are now providing quality education**

Ancient Wisdom

One of India's earliest convocation addresses appears in the Taittiriya Upanishad. As the student leaves the teacher, the instruction is: satyam vada, dharmam chara, svādhyāyān mā pramadaḥ, which roughly translates to speak the truth, follow the right path and do not neglect your own learning. It is a remarkably modern conception of education. Graduation is not presented as the completion of learning, but as the beginning of a lifelong responsibility to remain capable

Methodology : How we built the analysis on a fixed panel data using Python

Official records from 2016–2025, compared on the same basis.

75

institutes in the database

23 IITs
21 IIMs
31 NITs

Where the data came from

NIRF submissions, AISHE, Ministry and Parliamentary records, JoSAA and JEE Advanced reports, institute annual reports and placement disclosures.

Comparisons over time

When we compare two years, we keep only institutes that reported in both. This is the fixed panel.

Student counts

Admissions count students joining in that year. Enrolment counts everyone studying across programme years. We keep the two measures separate.

Placements and missing data

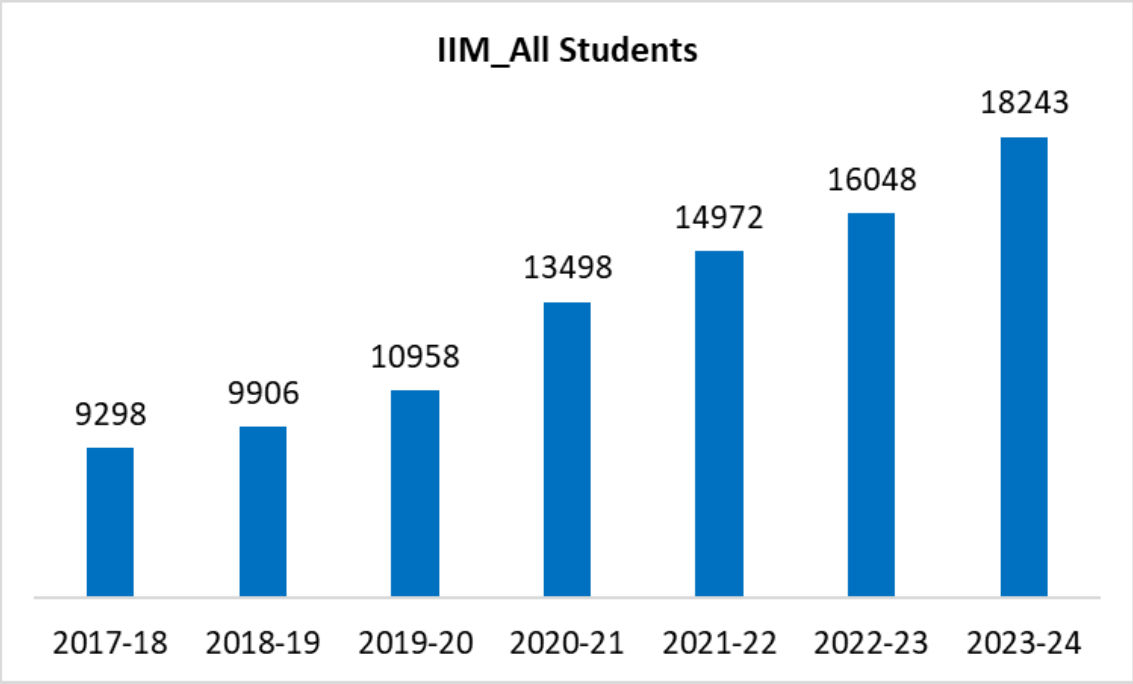
“Students placed” counts people not job offers.

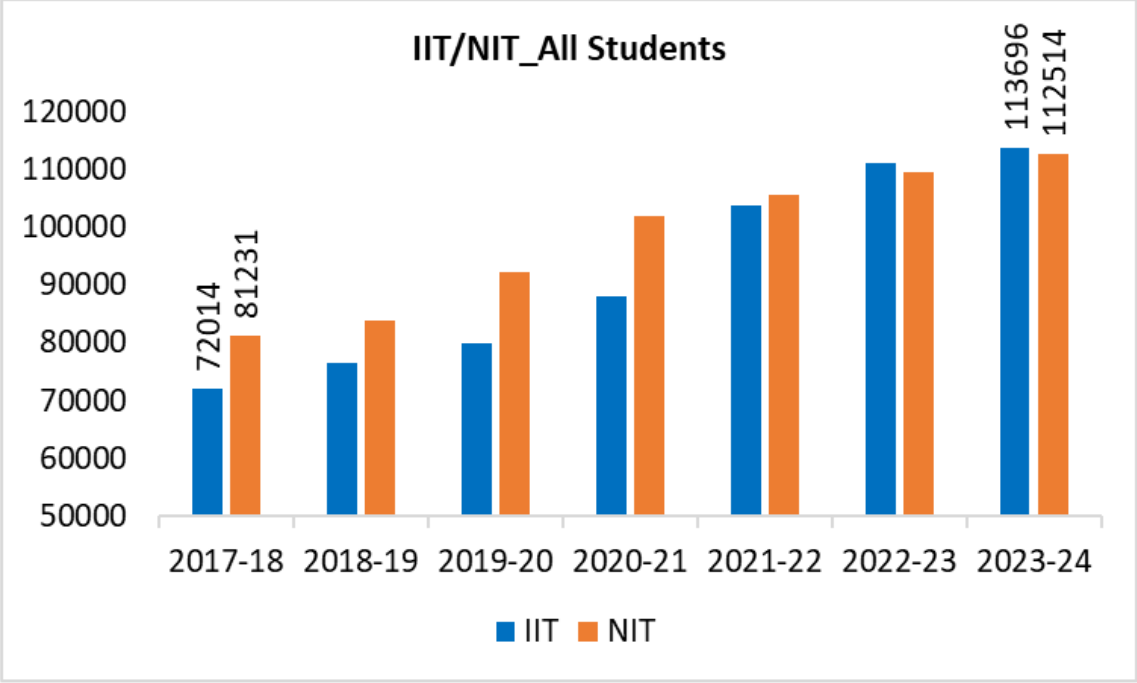
All the reports and PDFs were pulled using Python script that allowed us to analyse the scattered data quickly

Number of Students are increasing…

As per NIRF reports, the total number of students (under all programs) in all IIMs has increased from 9,298 in academic year 2017-18 to almost double to 18,243 in 2023-24

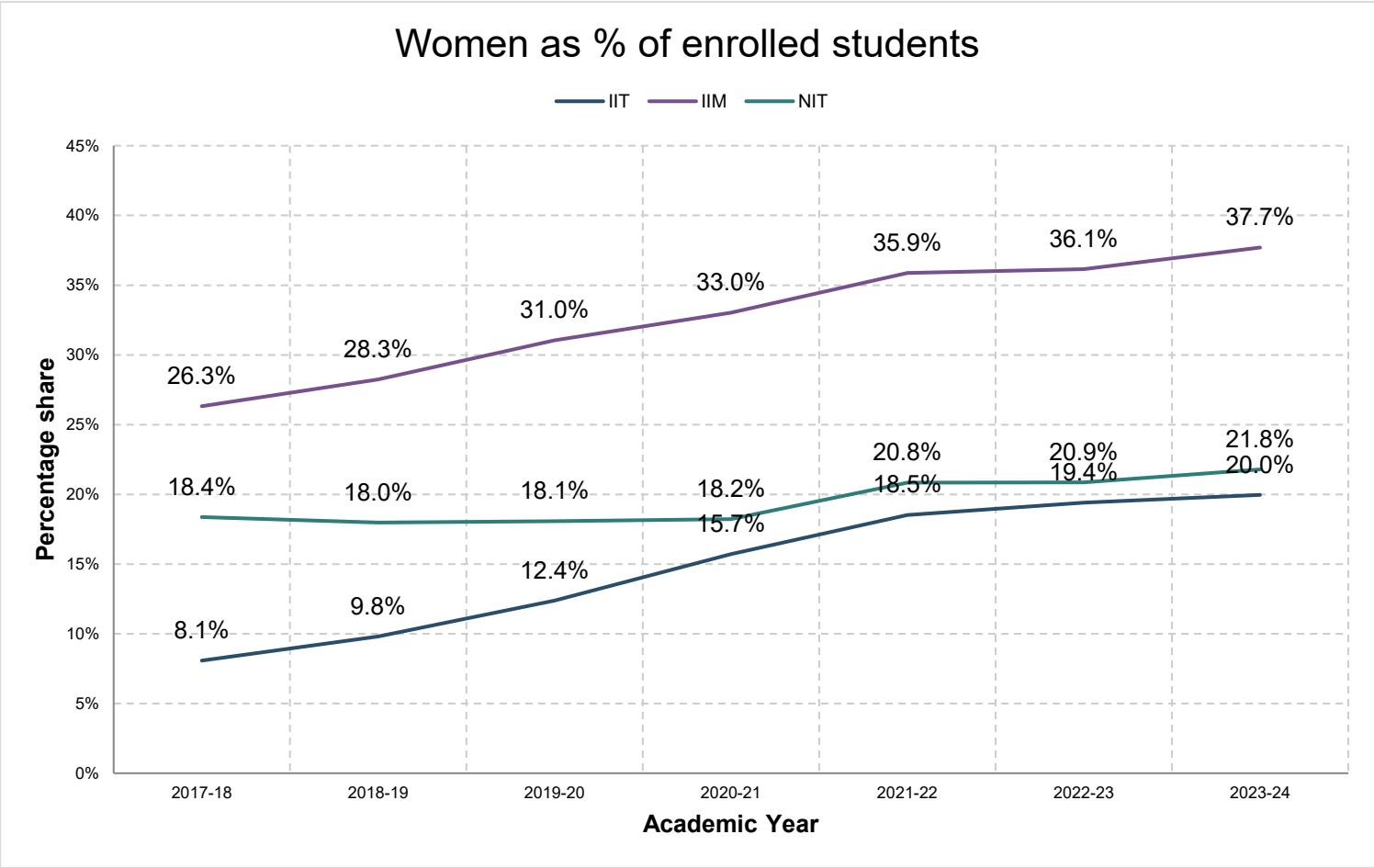
The combined students of IITs/NITs stood at ~2.44 lakh in academic year 2023-24 against ~1.62 lakhs in FY18





Source: NIRF

….and along-with the share of Women Students also increasing



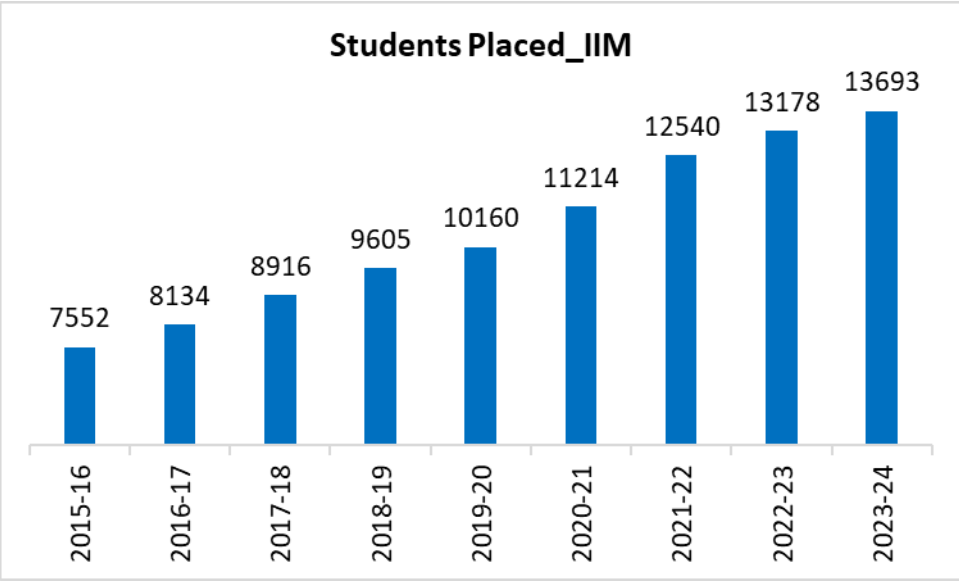
Under IIM PG programme(14 IIMs), the share of women students has increased from 26.3% in 2017-18 to 37.7% in 2023-24

The share of women students in IITs/NITs stood at ~20%

Source: NIRF Reports and SBI Research

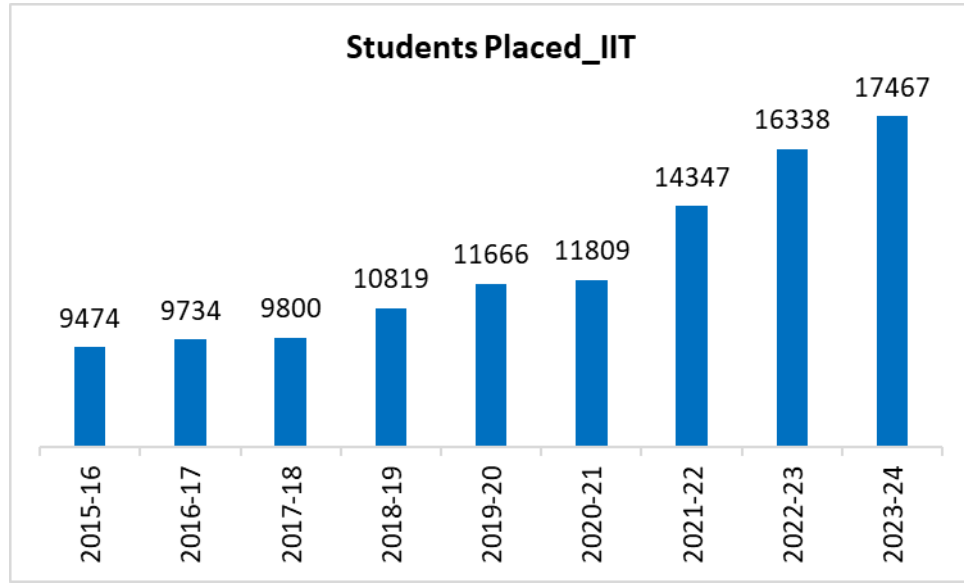
….How many of them are placed….93% are placed on an average across all such institutes

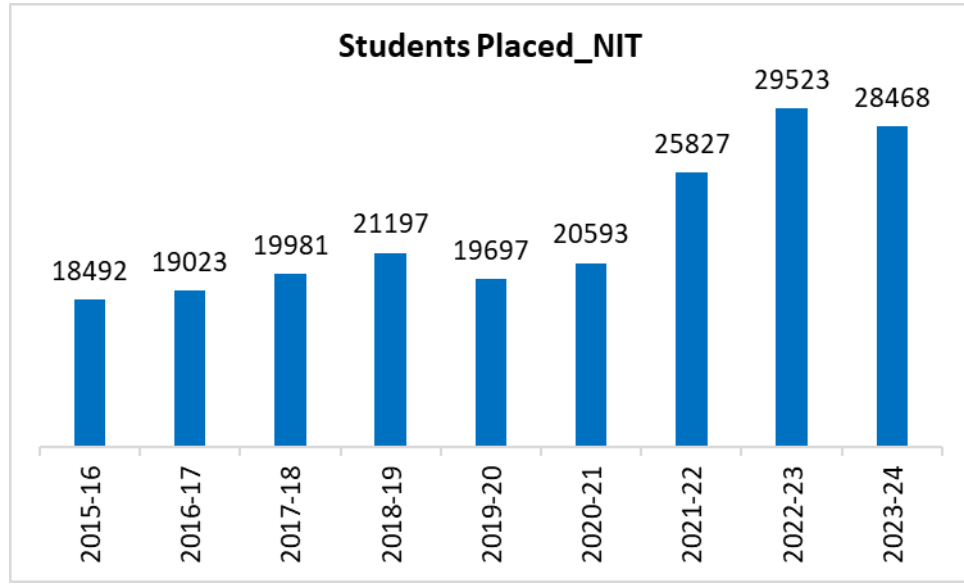
Placements from IIMs have increased from ~7500 in academic year 2015-16 to ~13,700 in academic year 2023-24



Placements from IITs have increased from ~9500 in academic year 2015-16 to ~17,500 in academic year 2023-24

Students placed from NITs are in the range of 28-29k per year

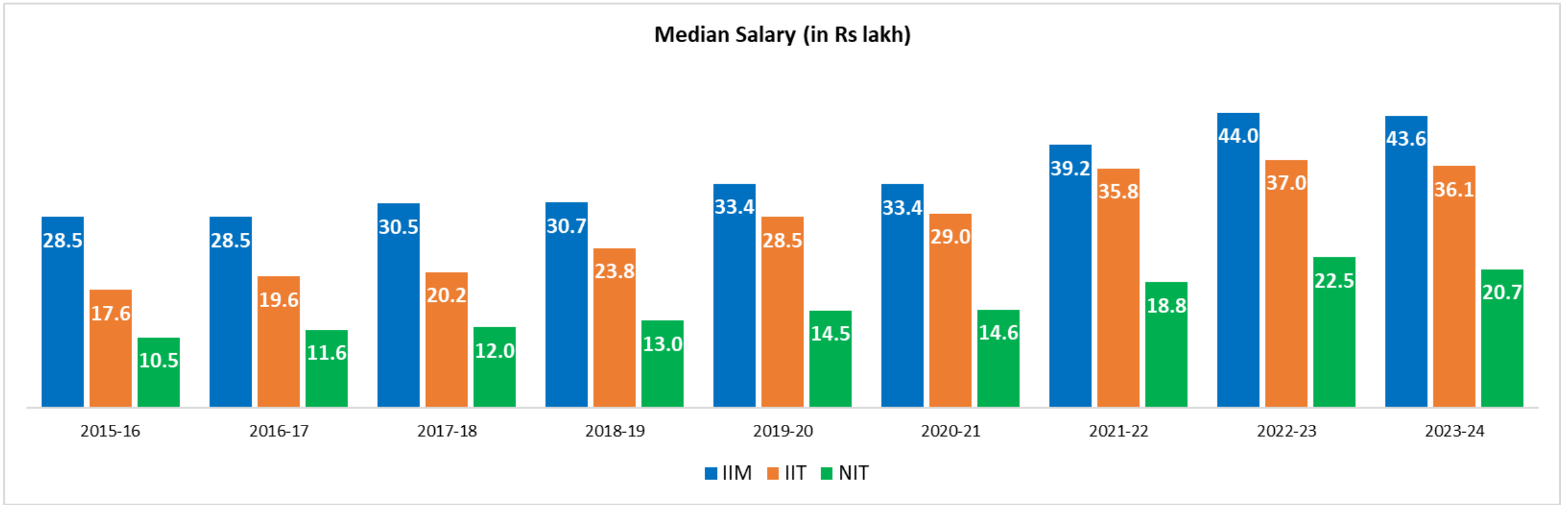




Source: NIRF Reports and SBI Research

With the Median salary of…

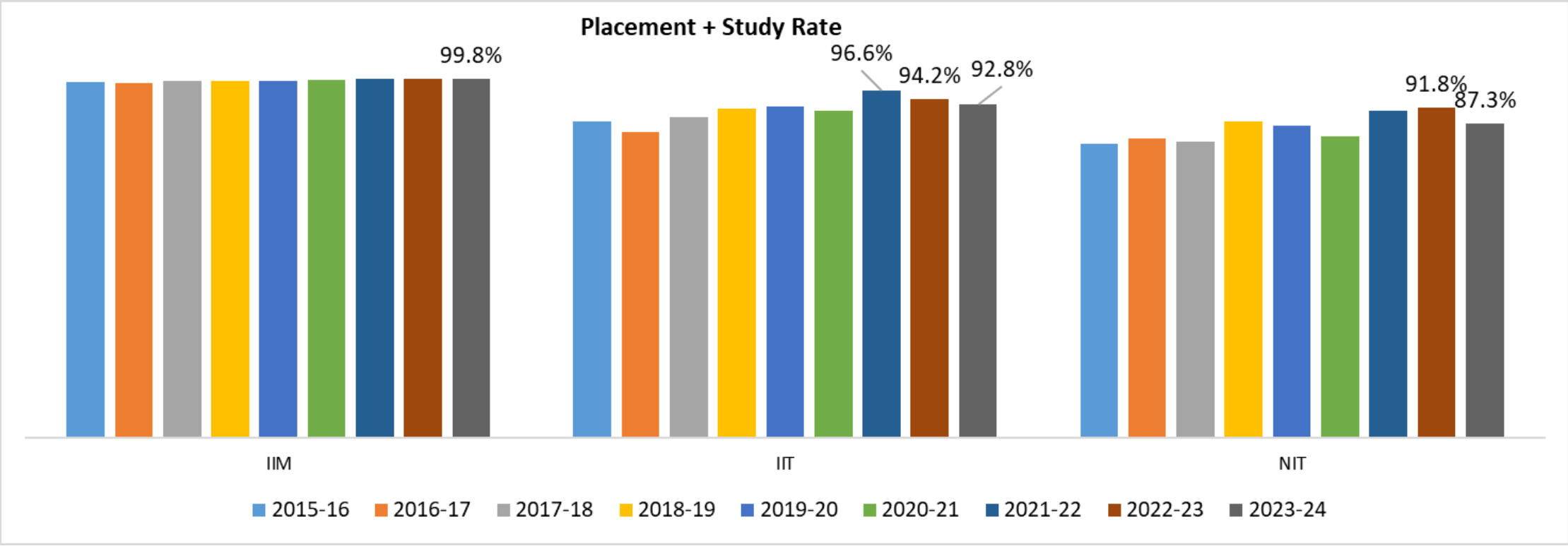
Median salary of IIMs crossed Rs 40 lakh mark
Median salary of IITs and NIITs has became double in past 9 years



Source: NIRF Reports and SBI Research

Placement + Study Rate

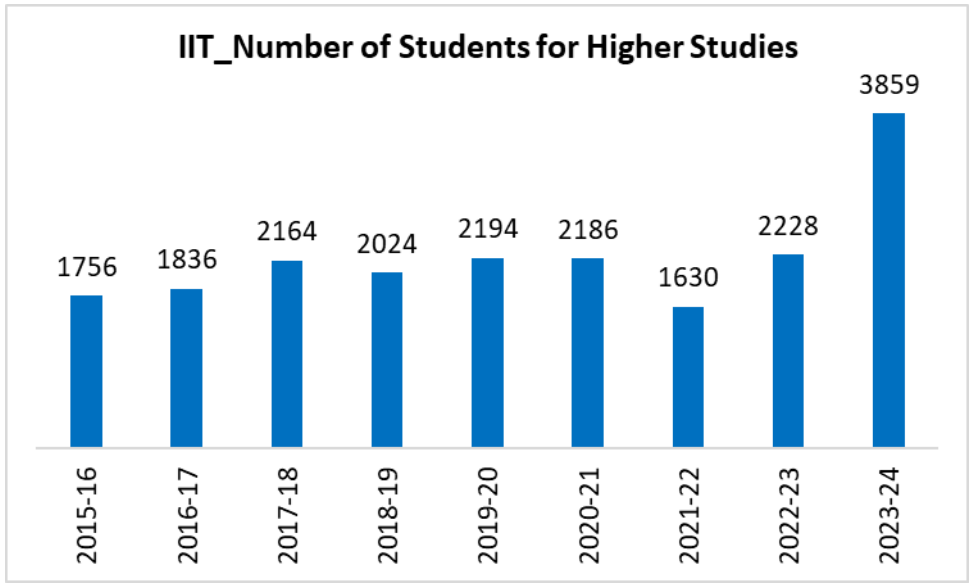
The placement + study rate of IIMs is almost 100%
In IITs, the placement + study rate is more than 90%, same with the NIITs, defying the myth that Engineers are not getting jobs in India

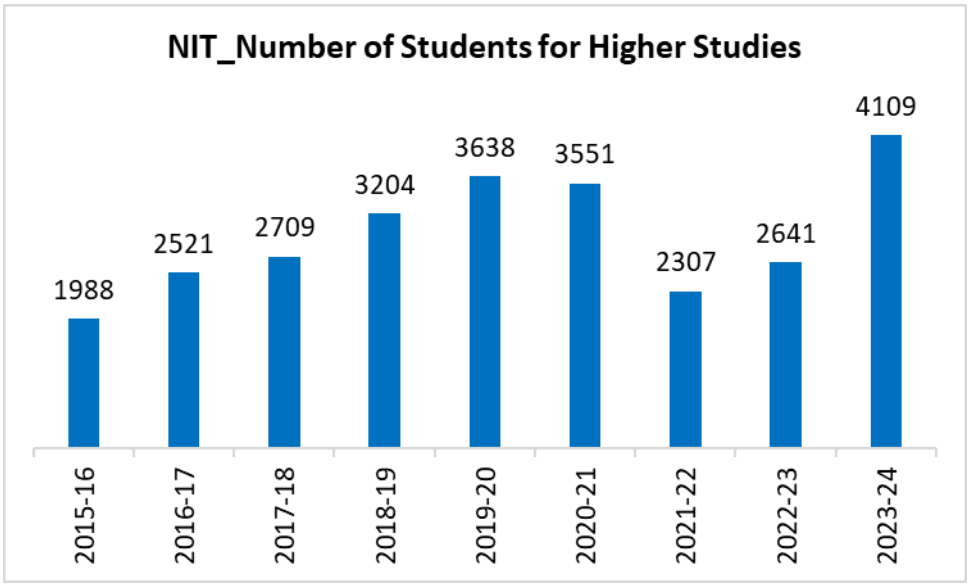


Source: NIRF Reports and SBI Research

Students are increasingly opting for Higher Studies

Students opted for higher studies at IIT and NIITs are at record high in academic year 2023-24, to gain advanced research skills, access global career opportunities, and specialize in emerging tech fields



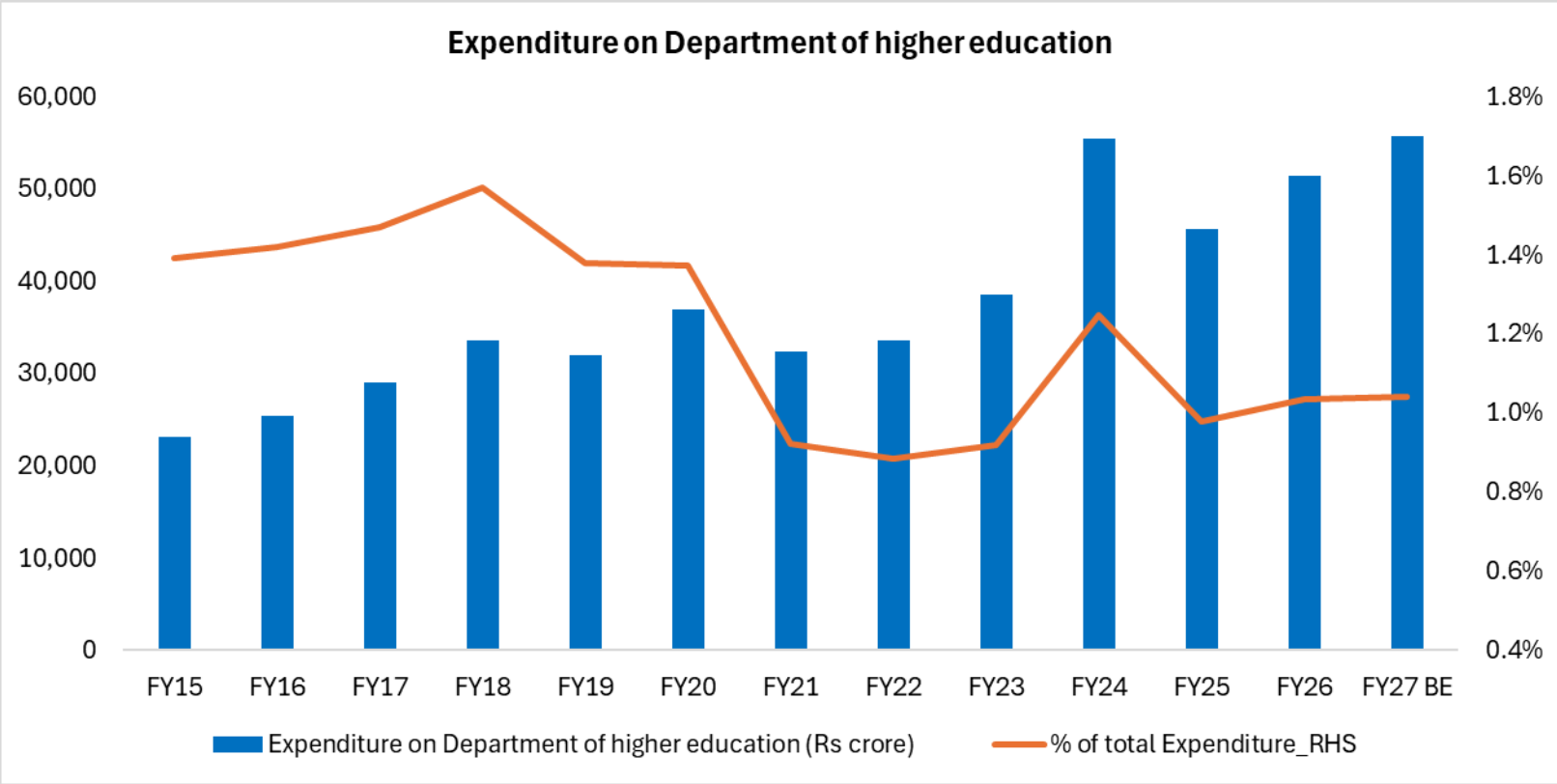


Source: NIRF Reports and SBI Research

Higher Education In India can progress more in these areas

Stagnant Share for Higher Education in Total Expenditure

While the budget expenditure on higher education has increased from Rs 23,152 crore in FY15 to Rs 55,727 crore in FY27 (BE), its share in total expenditure has remained stagnant ~1.0% for the past few years (it declined from 1.6% in FY18 also)



Source: Union Budget Documents

High Vacancy Rate of sanctioned positions

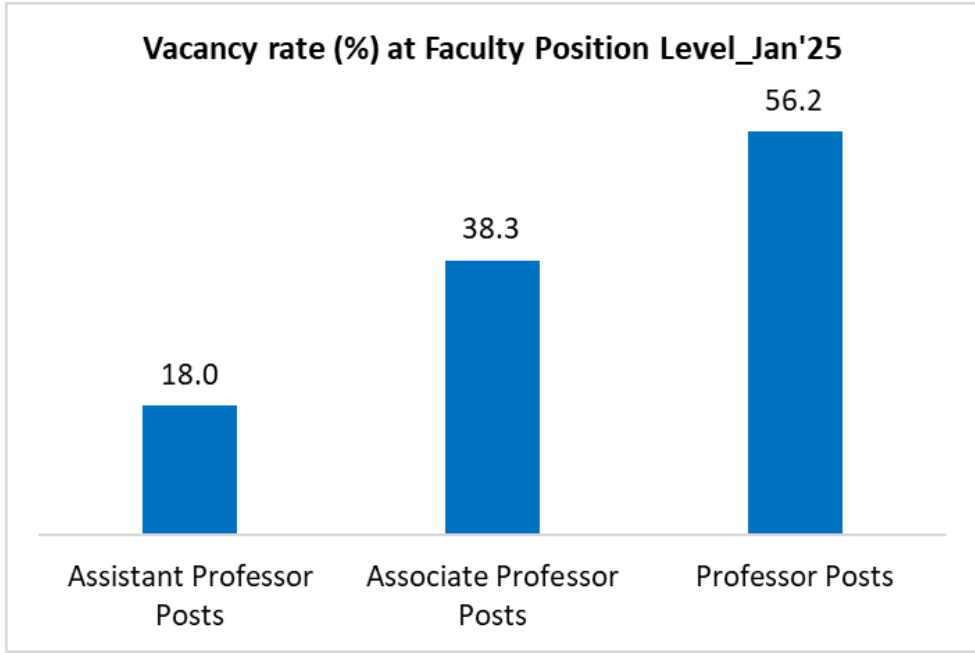
One-third of sanctioned positions in centrally funded universities/institutes are vacant

In IIITs, ~54% of positions are vacant

At position-wise, 56.2% of professor posts are vacant in India

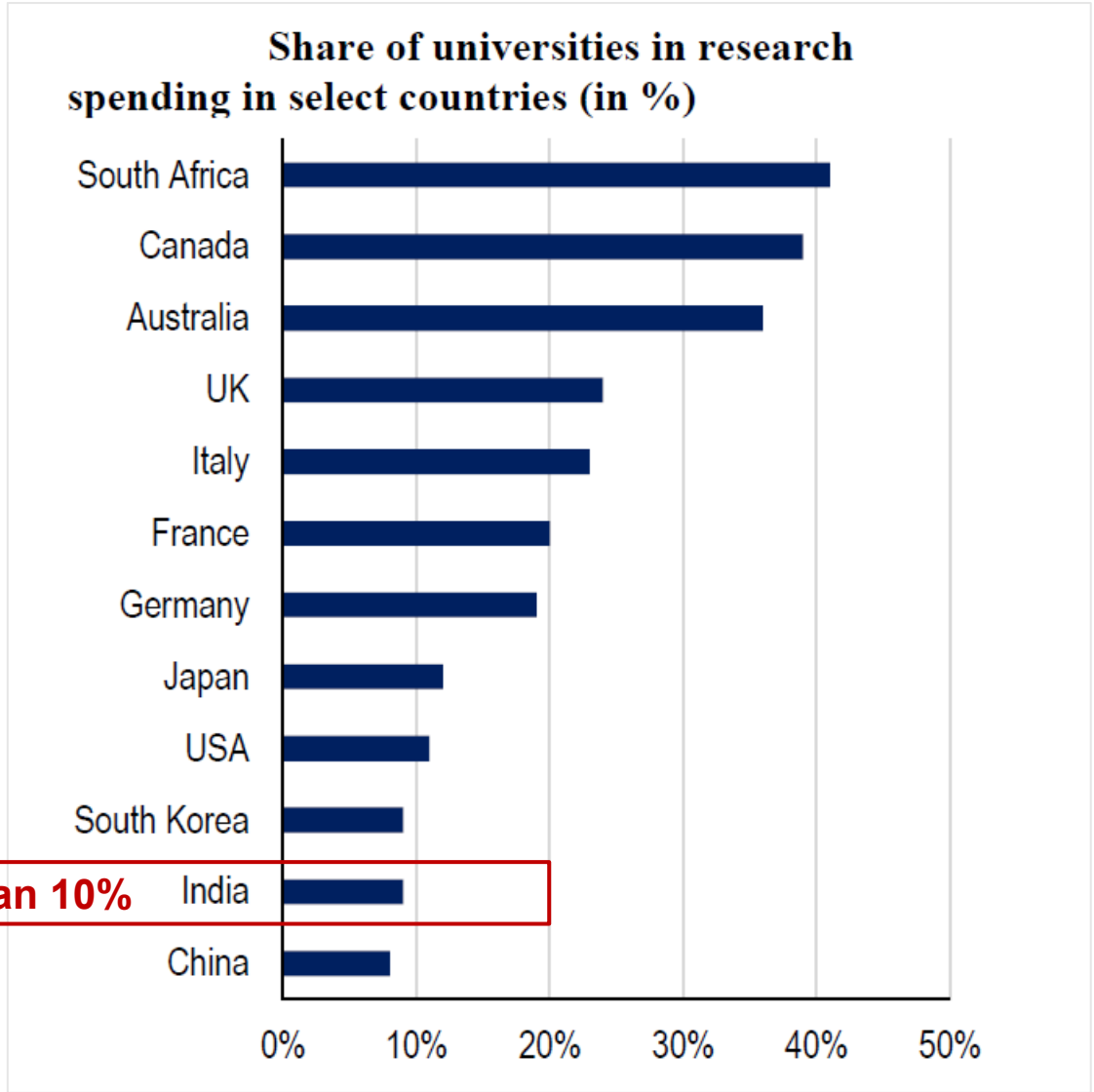
Vacancy rate in centrally funded universities (March 2023)				
Institution	**Sanctioned**	**Filled**	**Vacant**	**Vacancy (in %)**
Central Universities	18,956	12,776	6,180	33%
IITs	11,292	6,712	4,415	39%
IIITs	1,315	599	705	54%
NIT	7,483	5,277	2,206	29%
IIMs	1,570	1,086	484	31%
IISER	735	683	52	7%
Total	**41,351**	**27,133**	**14,042**	**34%**

Sources: 348th Report, Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, March 2023; PRS



Source: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports tabled the report titled “2025–26 Demands for Grants of the Department of Higher Education”

Low R&D at University Level



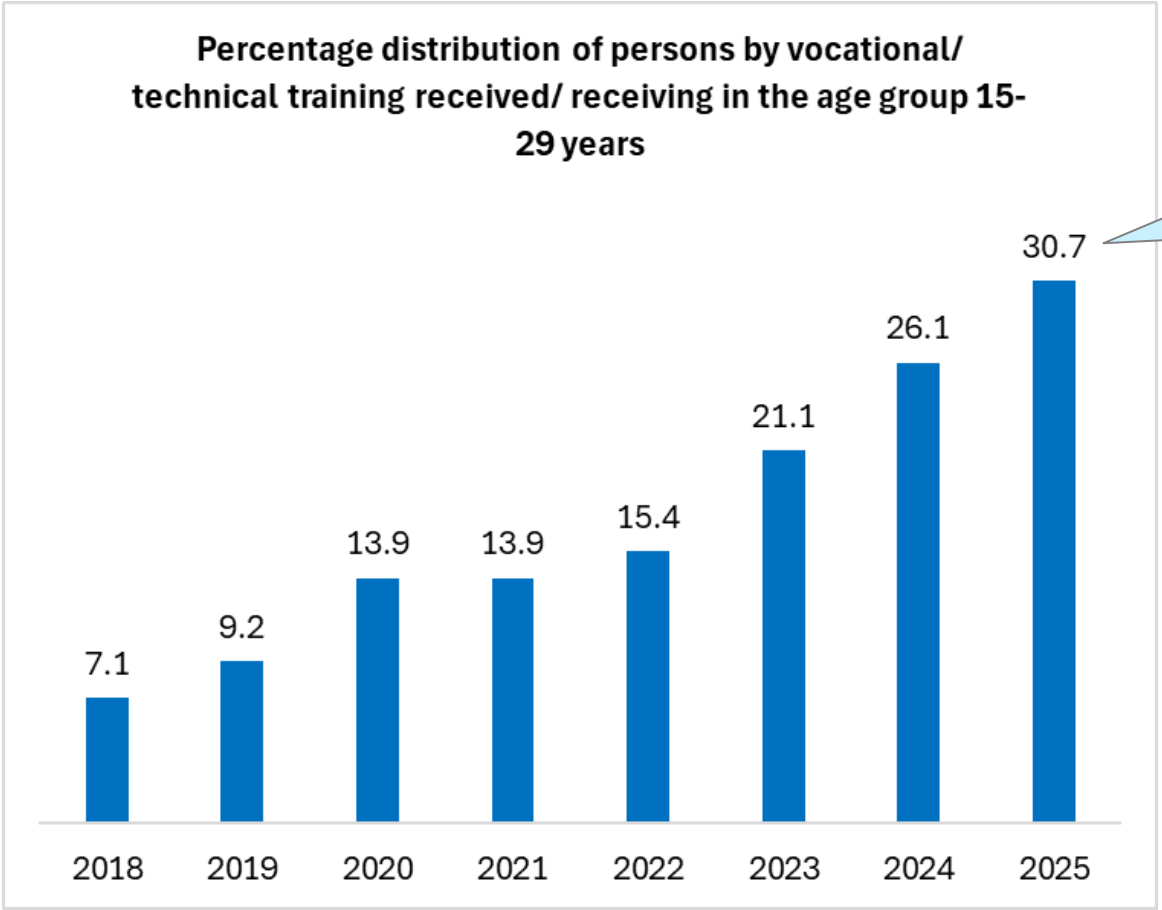
Sources: Research and Development Statistics at a glance 2022-23, Ministry of Science and Technology; PRS

Only ~31% of Indians are vocationally trained

Vocational education refers to training in manual or semi-skilled roles

According to PLFS (2025), 30.7% of Indians aged 15-29 years received/receiving vocational training (increased from merely 7.1% in 2018)

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2020) observed that in developed economies such as Japan (80%), USA (52%), UK (68%), share of young people with formal vocational training is significantly higher



Source: PRS; PLFS

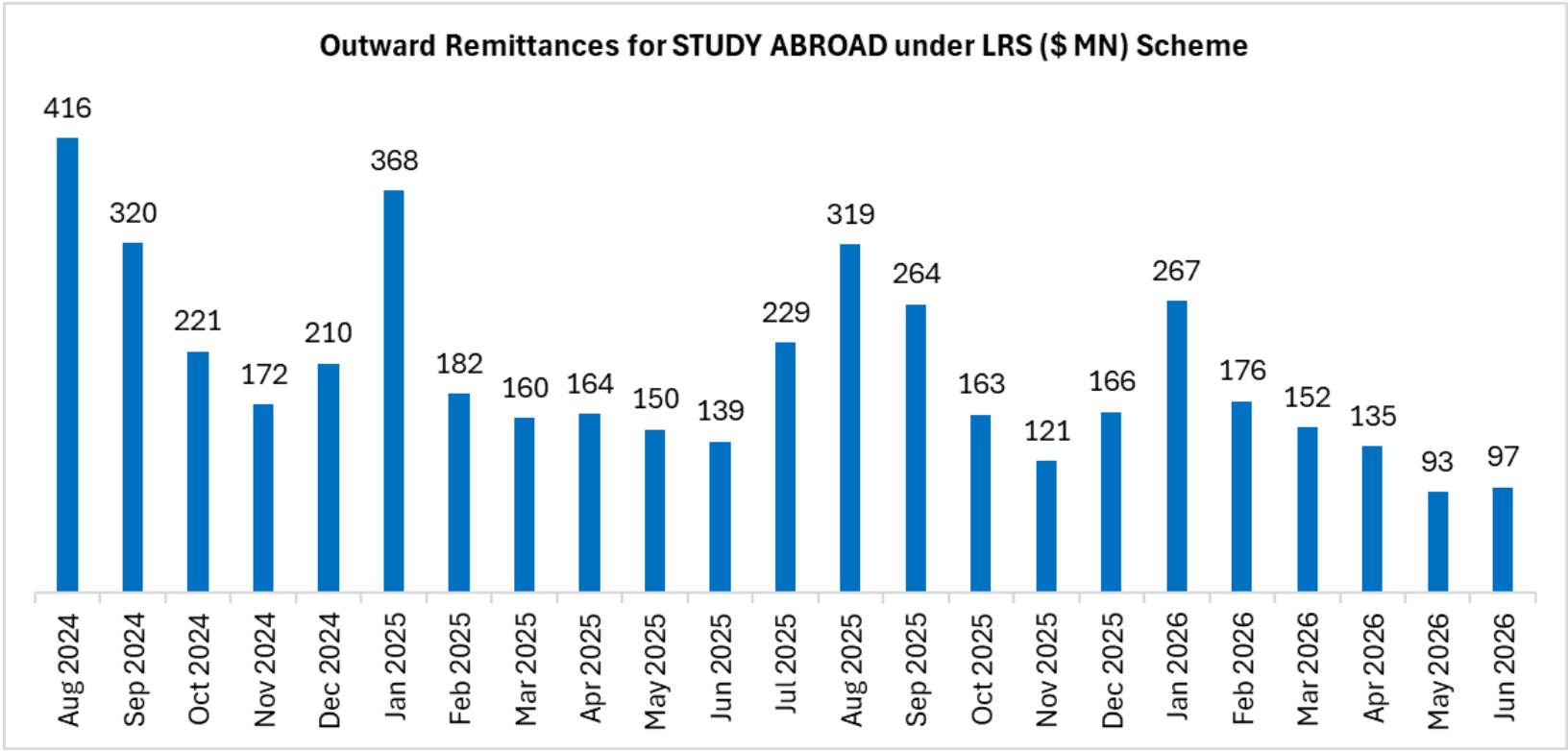
Private and Public Universities: Affordability and outcomes differ sharply

Parameters	Ashoka University (private)	Shiv Nadar University (private)	Azim Premji University (private)	JNU (public)	DU: Miranda House (public)
Educational model	Liberal arts and sciences. Exploration before specialisation, with research and internships.	Research-led multidisciplinary curriculum with a common core, electives and dissertation.	Social-purpose liberal education combining disciplines, fieldwork and occupational learning.	Research-led public university built around interdisciplinary schools and specialised programmes.	Broad public arts and science education, with a strong focus on women's advancement.
Estimated 4-year full-pay cost	2026 intake: ≈₹52.5L at published rates. ≈₹56.6–59.1L if recurring charges rise 5–8% a year.	2026 intake: ₹26.4–34.4L at published rates, depending on programme. Up to ₹29.6–38.6L with 8% annual increases.	2026 intake: ≈₹21.2–21.9L including tuition, housing, food and field or academic costs.	≈₹1.6L with hostel and mess at 2025 prices. Hostel allotment is not guaranteed.	₹0.64–0.82L in college fees. ≈₹3.0–3.2L with hostel and mess, if allotted.
Financial aid	AY 2024–25: 46% of UG students received aid. Highest awards cover tuition, residence and meals.	2026 intake: family income below ₹3L may qualify for full tuition and hostel support. Overall reach is not published.	AY 2024–25: 62% received tuition or accommodation aid. 30% received food aid.	Merit-cum-Means: tuition waiver plus ₹2,000 a month for residents or ₹800 for non-residents. Income and merit rules apply.	Need-based support and scholarships. One fund supports 70 students with family income below ₹1.5L.
Published outcome signal	**UG, AY 2024–25: 61 of 606 placed, median ₹8.75L. 528 entered higher study. The new four-year degree had no graduate cohort.**	**Four-year UG, AY 2024–25: 446 of 659 placed, median ₹12.7L. Another 143 entered higher study.**	**Six UG batches: 34% working or in fellowships and 41% in higher study. No comparable UG median salary is published.**	**UG, AY 2024–25: 12 of 467 placed, median ₹7.4L. 391 entered higher study. CITD MA 2022–23 reported 23 placements.**	**Placement Cell 2025: 200+ placed, median ₹8.8L, average ₹9L and highest ₹24L. The full-cohort rate is not disclosed.**
View and affordability	Highest cost. Value rests on breadth, networks and postgraduate pathways. **First-year core cost ≈6.3× per-capita NNI.**	Strongest published private UG employment signal. **First-year core cost ≈3.1–4.1× per-capita NNI.**	Broad private aid and a social-sector mission**. First-year core cost ≈2.2–2.3× per-capita NNI.**	Lowest financial risk. Most UG graduates continue to higher study. **First-year core cost ≈0.2× per-capita NNI.**	Exceptional public value, but this is a women-only proxy with limited hostel and outcome coverage. **First-year core cost ≈0.4× NNI.**

Sources: official university fee schedules, annual reports, NIRF 2026 submissions and placement reports. NNI benchmark: ₹2.08L per person in 2025–26. Costs are approximate; see notes.

Less Students going abroad…it means we need more Quality Institutes

As per RBI data, the Outward Remittances for study abroad under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme has plunged from as high as $416 million in Aug'24 to merely $97 million in Jun'26, this indicate that we need quality education to retain these students in India



Source: RBI, SBI Research

World Largest Examinations

& Lessons for India

World's Largest Examinations by Applicant Volume

World largest Exam ex India (in terms of number of candidates)			
Exam Name	Country	# of candidates (Approx. in Million	Purpose
Gaokao	China	12.9	Higher-education selection
ENEM	Brazil	4.8	School assessment + higher-ed access
Central civil-service examination (Guokao)	China	3.7	Civil-service recruitment
National master's entrance examination	China	3.4	Postgraduate admission
YKS	Türkiye	2.4	Higher-education selection
UTME	Nigeria	2.2	Higher-education admission
SAT	US / international	2.0	Admissions benchmark
SSC and equivalent examinations	Bangladesh	1.8	Grade-10 certification
ACT	US	1.4	Admissions benchmark
HSC and equivalent examinations	Bangladesh	1.2	Grade-12 certification
Source: SBI Research			

India' Position	
NEET-UG	~2.5 million
JEE-Main	~1.0 million
UPSC-CSE	~1.2 million
UPSC-NET	~0.8 million

How China conducts Gaokao

- China's national college-entrance examination ‘Gaokao’ combines national standards with provincial delivery

- In 2026, 12.90 million (1.29 crore) candidates registered. Arrangements comprised 7,981 centres, 348,000 examination rooms and 21,000 reserve rooms; more than 14,000 candidates with disabilities received accommodations

- Exam papers are drafted and printed in designated, highly secure locations such as state prisons under 24/7 surveillance. Papers are moved in armored, GPS-tracked vehicles accompanied by armed police, SWAT escorts, and live-stream monitoring that triggers alarms for any route deviation. Upon arrival at test centers, papers are stored in steel-reinforced rooms with motion sensors and alarms linked directly to local police

- Candidates face identity and prohibited-item checks, with video monitoring in examination rooms. Interdepartmental support covers traffic, noise, food, healthcare and severe weather; reserve rooms and emergency power support continuity

- Incidences of documented theft, cheating and disruptions show that it is not entirely failure-proof

Lessons for India

- Gaokao's paper security, marking controls and emergency arrangements offer lessons for India. India should adapt accountable administration and recovery procedures while protecting candidate rights, rather than assume that surveillance alone prevents failures:
  - **Audit responsibility and custody**: Name accountable officials, accredit centres, certify staff and verify dual-authorisation handovers. Test controls against insider failures as well as candidate cheating
  - **Prepare remedies before disruption**: Specify postponement and re-test criteria, secure reserve papers, alternative venues, accessible formats and replacement staff: Protect disrupted candidates in admissions schedules
  - **Strengthen marking and redress:** Pilot anonymous double marking for written components, audit automated scoring and publish understandable moderation rules and time-bound appeals. Provide alternatives when identity technology fails
  - **Publish evidence and evaluate**: Distinguish advance leaks, in-exam sharing and fabricated claims in incident reports. Track disruptions, re-tests, scoring corrections, appeals and costs. Assess inclusion by gender, disability, rurality and SC/ST/OBC category where lawful and privacy-safe

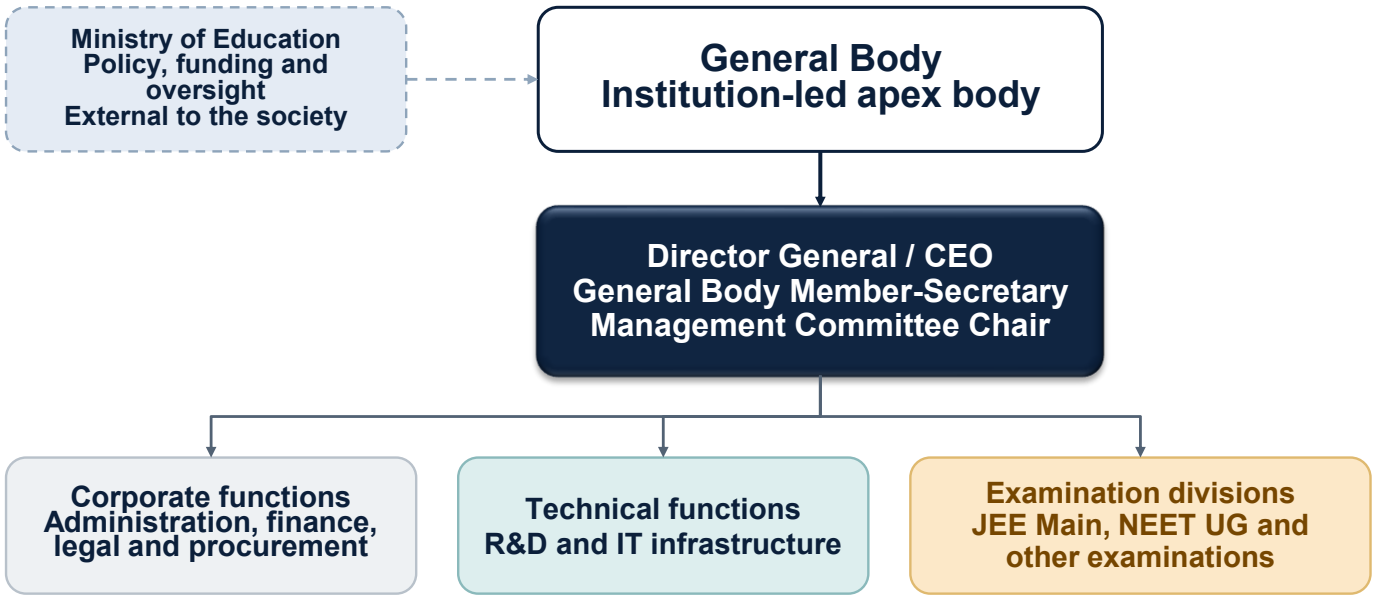
Existing Structure of NTA and Proposed Changes

Existing Structure of NTA

LEGAL STATUS | **Registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. Registration S/ND/914/2018, 15 May 2018.**

By July 2024, NTA reported more than 240 examinations serving more than 5.4 crore candidates.

Governance and operating chain

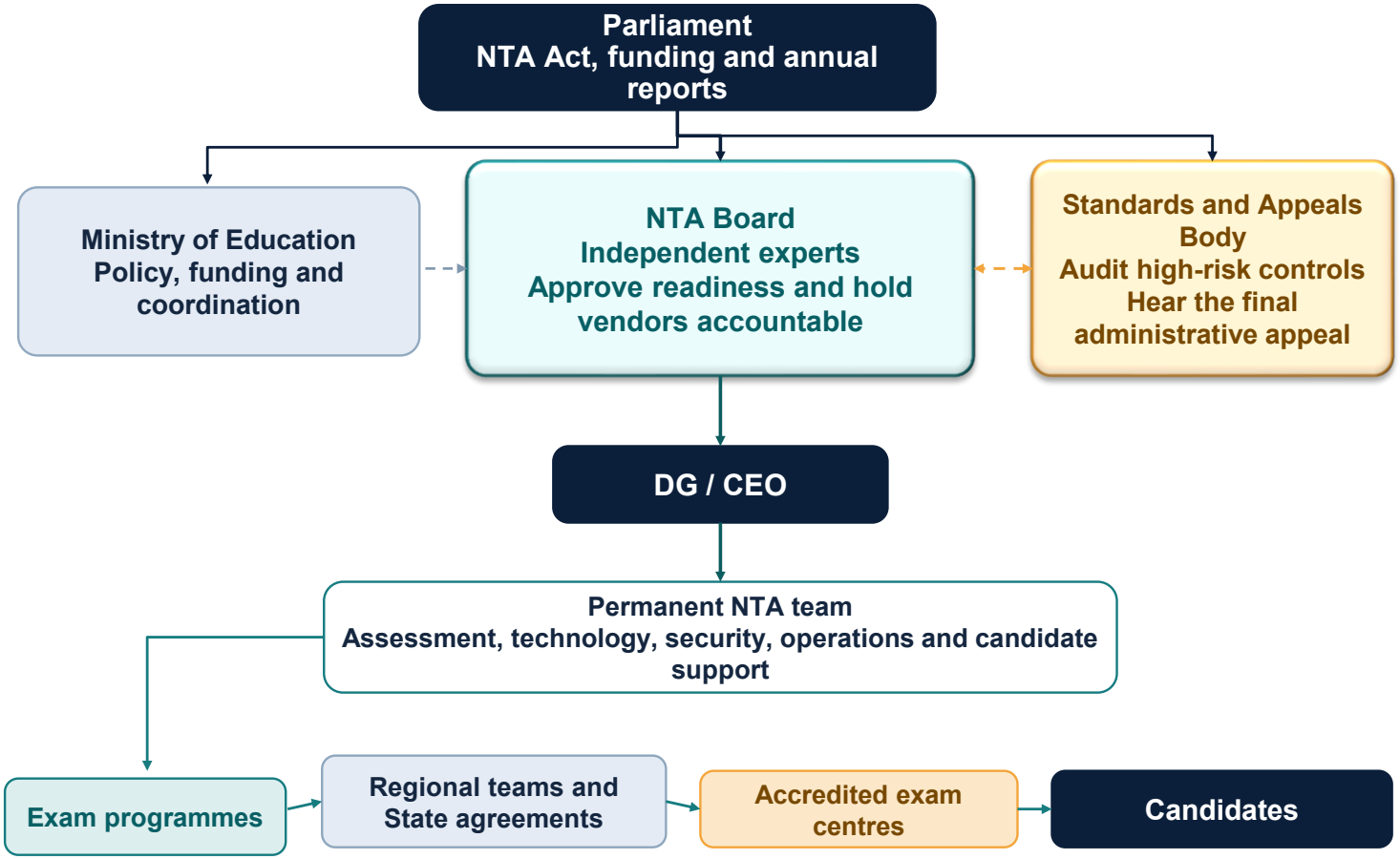


- No NTA Act sets institution-specific duties, candidate rights
- The DG combines the chief executive, General Body Member-Secretary and Management Committee Chair roles
- **171 of 194 disclosed personnel were contractual or outsourced in July 2024, approximately 88%**
- Contractors and distributed centres widen the delivery chain and make accountability harder to trace
- The published design does not establish a general external administrative appeal for candidates
- Public sources do not show exam-wise budgets or a clear rule for financing resilience

We propose a stronger NTA: clear law, permanent expertise and independent review

The 2024 anti-cheating law punishes fraud. A separate NTA law would define how the agency is governed—and what candidates can expect when an exam goes wrong.

How our recommended model would work



What will change in practice

- **Duties in law.** Parliament defines NTA's role, reporting and responsibility for contractors.
- **Expert Board.** Assessment, technology, security, logistics and accessibility specialists approve exam readiness and monitor vendors.
- **Core work in-house.** NTA controls question design, scoring, core technology, security and candidate support.
- **Independent review.** A separate body sets standards, audits serious risks and hears the final administrative appeal.
- **Candidate Charter.** Public deadlines cover answer-key challenges, score corrections, postponements, re-tests and accessibility failures.
- **Public accountability.** Exam-wise accounts, CAG audit and annual data show incidents, appeals and vendor performance.

SBI Research proposal.

State PSC exams: recurring failures, practical reforms

The problem is not only a leak. Delays, divided responsibility and weak candidate remedies (might be constitutional reforms?) make every failure more costly

Where the system breaks

1. **Recruitment starts late**
   Vacancies or service rules reach the Commission late or incomplete, so the cycle can stall before the exam begins.
2. **The cycle is too slow**
   Long gaps between notification, examination and result leave posts empty and candidates waiting.
3. **Leaks and cancellations break trust**
   Weak paper custody, insider access or poor centre controls can waste a candidate's entire year.
4. **Responsibility is fragmented**
   Departments, vendors and centres handle different steps, but ownership at each handover can be unclear.
5. **Candidate remedies are uncertain**
   Answer-key, eligibility, re-test and result disputes may move slowly and end up in court.

Example: MPPSC advertised 28 of 44 planned exams; audited selections were delayed by 1–25 months (2018–23).

Rajasthan Sub Inspector recruitment paper leak and interview controversy

What States should change

1. **Plan once, publish early**
   Verify vacancies and service rules, then issue one annual recruitment calendar. Avoid mid-cycle rule changes.
2. **Put a clock on every stage**
   Set deadlines from notification to final advice. Show progress and explain every delay or cancellation.
3. **Secure the full chain**
   Keep security under PSC control: vet vendors, limit access, log every handover and assign liability in contracts.
4. **Build a permanent exam team**
   Retain specialists in assessment, languages, cyber security, accessibility, procurement and law.
5. **Give candidates clear remedies**
   Publish responses and provisional keys; decide objections, corrections and appeals within fixed timelines.
6. **Make leadership accountable**
   Use public merit and integrity criteria, fill vacancies promptly and report performance each year.

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