

Institutes of National Importance

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The government is actively considering giving the Institute of National Importance tag to the National School of Drama, as well as re-developing its campus in Delhi, NSD Society chairman and actor Paresh Rawal said. He said the status of the Institute of National Importance would further strengthen the NSD, allowing it to award degrees, start new courses and set up new centres.

In news: Government actively considering Institute of National Importance tag for National School of Drama

Placing it in syllabus: Governance

Dimensions

- What are Institutes of National Importance?
- Benefits they enjoy
- Problems they face
- Suggestions

Content:

What are Institutes of National Importance?

- An Institute of National Importance (INI), in India is defined as one which serves as a pivotal player in developing highly skilled personnel within the specified region of the country/state.
- The Institute of National Importance is a status that may be conferred on a premier public higher education institution in India by an act of Parliament of India.
- These Institutes are declared as such by the Government of India by an Act of Parliament and are empowered to award degrees. In some cases, such Institutes are also

set up by the Government through an Act of State Legislation

- Only a chosen few institutes make it to this coveted list and are usually supported by the Government of India or even any other international institutes to develop centers of excellence in research, academics, and other such elite schools of education.
- In India, all of the IITs, NITs, AIIMS, NIPERs, ISI and some other institutes as Institutes of National Importance
- As of 2020, there are 159 institutes, declared as Institutes of National Importance under a distinct Act of Parliament. These INIs include 23 IITs; 15 AIIMSs; 20 IIMs; 31 NITs; 25 IIITs; 7 IISERs, 7 NIPERs; 5 NIDs; 3 SPAs; 5 central universities; 4 medical research institutes and 14 other specialized institutes.
- It is an institution which “serves as a pivotal player in developing highly skilled personnel within the specified region of the country / state “.
- Section 22 of The University Grants Commission Act 1956 enables ‘Degree Granting Status’ to such INIs established by an Act of Parliament for conferring or granting degrees.
- The admission to these institutes is through highly competitive examinations like the IIT-JEE/JMET/AIEEE/NIMCET etc.

Common Acts

- All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) are declared as Institutes of National Importance through the ‘All India Institute of Medical Sciences Act, 1956’ and its subsequent amendments
- Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) are declared as Institutes of National Importance through the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961 and its subsequent amendments.
- The National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and

Research (NIPER) are declared as Institutes of National Importance through the 'National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Act, 1998' and its subsequent amendments.

- National Institutes of Technology (NIT) are declared as Institutes of National Importance through the National Institutes of Technology Act, 2007 and its subsequent amendments.
- Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) are declared as Institutes of National Importance through the amendments in the National Institutes of Technology Act, 2007.
- Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT) are declared as Institutes of National Importance through the 'Indian Institute of Information Technology Act, 2014' and the 'Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Public-Private Partnership) Act, 2017' and their subsequent amendments.
- Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) are declared as Institutes of National Importance through the Indian Institutes of Management Act, 2017 and its subsequent amendments

Benefits they enjoy

- These institutions are largely funded and supervised, if not governed, by the Government of India, mostly through the Ministry of Education.
- They are academically autonomous and are not under any state or central university. This autonomy gives the institutes the freedom to operate their academic activities on their own without having to comply with the syllabus or schedule of other universities thereby allowing them to do what they feel is the best for their students.
- These institutions also enjoy certain tax related advantages.

- There are also scholarships schemes provided by the government of India that only apply to the Institutes of National Importance.
- It becomes easier to obtain 'Research and Development Grants (R & D Grants) if the proposal is from such an institution

Problems they face

INIs are given autonomy related to curriculum and assessment. This can be equated with dynamism and freedom that an institution will need to change the course structure and curriculum to fit the demands of the market forces.

However, they lack in other dimensions i.e. managerial, administrative, and financial autonomy due to bureaucratic or government interference.

There are regulatory restrictions with regard to mode of delivery; like distance education, source of funding, compliance of guidelines of multiple regulatory bodies affects governance of an educational institution.

Other issues include:

- External Controls on autonomous functioning of universities.
- Restrictions on academic autonomy as a consequence of the limitations of university Acts.
- Government's interference on vital issues like appointments of Vice-Chancellor, functioning of
- the Senate, Executive and Academic Council.
- States' authority over the universities through legislation.
- Wide powers vested in the Chancellors'.
- Appointment of political executives on university bodies.
- Laying down of service conditions.
- Financial aid as a tool to curtail the autonomy of the

universities.

- State control on opening of new colleges or grant of affiliation to new colleges.
- Frequent interference of the judiciary in matters relating to university affairs.

Institute of Eminence

Recently the govt. announced the list of Institutes of Eminence (IoE). Till date MHRD has declared 16 institutions as IoEs.

Every institute which has been accorded the status of Institute of Eminence will enjoy benefits which include additional funding, autonomy in recruitment, assessment patterns etc.

The detailed benefits have been listed out below:

- Government Institutions to get additional funding upto 1000 Cr.
- Freedom to recruit faculty from outside India (limit of 25% of its faculty strength for public institutions).
- Freedom to enter into academic collaborations with other Institutions within the country.
- Freedom to have its own transparent merit based system for admission of students.
- Freedom to admit additionally foreign students on merit subject to a maximum of 30% of the strength of admitted domestic students.
- Freedom to fix and charge fees from foreign students without restriction.
- The selected Institutions under IoE shall have complete academic and administrative autonomy.
- The Institutions of Eminence will have complete financial autonomy to spend the resources raised and allocated, subject to general conditions & restrictions of the Statutes and GFR.

- Academic collaborations with foreign higher educational institutions (in top 500) would be exempt from government approvals.
- Freedom to hire personnel from industry, etc, as faculty who are experts in their areas but may not have the requisite higher academic qualifications.

Suggestions

The concept of autonomy is a structural solution intended mainly to provide an enabling environment to improve and strengthen the teaching and learning process.

Autonomy alone may not guarantee higher quality, just as non-autonomy need not preclude better performance.

The essential factors for high quality education are:

- the caliber and attitudes of students towards learning,
- the competence and commitment of teachers towards educational processes,
- the flexibility and foresightedness of the governance system and
- the social credibility of the educational outcome.

Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) Committee suggested the following measures to ensure autonomy:

- The present system of assigning fixed number of positions of Professors, Readers & Lecturers to each department should be replaced by a system wherein the head of the institution should have the autonomy to determine both the rank and the number of these positions in accordance with the tasks envisaged in the development plan of the institution.
- All bodies and authorities in the universities and colleges should have representatives from the concerned stakeholders with an appropriate mix of elected and

nominated representatives from amongst academia.

- Funding to individual institutions should be provided on block grant patterns so that they have greater degree of freedom to set up their own priority.
- All institutions should have the provision to provide free-ships and scholarships to meritorious and deserving students coming from lower socio-economic strata of the society.
- The practice of financial disclosure standards should be introduced in self-financing institutions with a view to bringing greater levels of transparency in their financial management.
- The audit systems including the system of internal audit should be strengthened with a view to ensuring proper expenditure management and compliance of financial rules and regulations.

Mould your thought: What are the Institutes of National Importance? Evaluate the benefits and challenges faced by them. ***Approach to the answer:***

- Introduction
- Define INIs with examples
- Discuss their benefits
- Mention the challenges faced by them
- Offer solutions for improving the situation
- Conclusion