

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025: The Study of India's Higher Education Regulations

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Abstract

In order to address concerns about quality, governance, accessibility, and global competitiveness, the Indian higher education system has undergone ongoing reforms. In this regard, the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 is an important piece of legislation that aims to reorganize India's higher education regulations. By absorbing current regulators including the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), the Bill suggests creating a single regulating organization. Transparency, accountability, technology-driven governance, and outcome-based quality assurance are all highlighted in the Bill, which is in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The goals, organizational structure, possible advantages, difficulties, and consequences of the Bill for academic autonomy, federalism, governance, and higher education institutions are all critically examined in this essay. It critically examines the regulatory framework, governance mechanisms, and the potential impact on students, faculty, institutions, and the broader socio-economic environment. The study also situates the Bill within global higher education trends and evaluates its prospects for success. The study comes to the conclusion that although the Bill presents revolutionary possibilities for enhancing effectiveness and quality, its implementation must be inclusive, institutions must be ready, and Centre-State cooperation must be balanced.

Keywords: *Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, Regulatory Structure, Higher Education Reform, Scholarly Leadership, NEP 2020, Quality Control*

Introduction

India's higher education system has long been characterized by rapid expansion, diverse institutional structures, and challenges in quality assurance. By establishing a thorough regulatory framework that prioritizes inclusion, innovation, accountability, and global competitiveness, the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 aims to address these issues. This paper investigates the Bill's provisions and their potential to reshape the future of Indian higher education. On December 15, 2025, the Lok Sabha was presented with the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025. The bill's objective is to establish a regulatory body for higher education. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) will all be replaced by this entity. The three Acts that established these entities are repealed by the Bill. The Bill does not apply to medical and legal education. These will still be governed by different Acts. Higher education is crucial to a country's prosperity because it fosters human capital, innovation, research, and social reform. India has one of the biggest higher education systems in the world, yet it still has to deal with issues including complicated regulations, unequal institutional performance, bureaucratic delays, and quality differences. Over time, a number of regulatory organizations were established to supervise various educational programs, which resulted in overlapping jurisdictions and inefficient procedures. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 of higher education in India brought about a profound shift in the idea of government. In accordance with the larger goal of "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India), the Bill aims to create a simplified, transparent, and technologically enabled regulatory environment. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which demanded the separation of regulation, accreditation,

funding, and academic standard-setting, established the fundamental concepts that this legislative change relies upon. The purpose of this research paper is to examine the Bill's conceptual underpinnings, structural provisions, alignment with NEP 2020, and possible effects on Indian higher education institutions.

Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan:

- The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (the Commission) is established under the Bill as the highest regulating authority for higher education. The Commission will have three councils: the Regulatory Council, which will serve as a common regulator for higher education; the Accreditation Council, which will supervise the accreditation system; and the Standards Council, which will establish academic standards. The Commission's duties include: (i) offering strategic guidance for research and higher education; (ii) creating a plan for converting HEIs into sizable, multidisciplinary research and education institutions; and (iii) proposing plans for raising educational standards. To ensure coordination, the Commission may issue directives to the Councils. Additionally, it will give the Councils the money they need to operate effectively.
- Indian higher education has historically been regulated by a number of regulatory bodies, each with its own rules, regulations, and standards for compliance. Although these organizations were crucial in establishing standards, the system eventually became disjointed and more focused on compliance than quality.
- The NEP 2020 made a solid case for:
 - Reducing overbearing regulation
 - Improving institutional autonomy;
 - fostering interdisciplinary education;
 - guaranteeing accountability and openness; and
 - stimulating research and innovation
- A legislative answer to put these suggestions into practice is the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025. The Bill envisions a single overarching authority that maintains the separation of financial and academic content functions while concentrating on regulation and quality assurance.
- **The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 aims to:**

The following are the Bill's main goals:

- 1) Regulatory Framework Unification: To establish a single, cohesive authority for higher education in place of disparate regulatory agencies.
- 2) Promotion of Quality and Standards: Using quantifiable academic and institutional criteria, to guarantee outcome-based education.
- 3) Accountability and Transparency: To provide transparent, technologically advanced procedures for disclosures, monitoring, and approvals.
- 4) Bureaucratic Burden Reduction: To cut down on unnecessary compliance requirements and procedural delays.
- 5) Compliance with NEP 2020: To support academic flexibility, innovation, and trans disciplinary education.

- **Composition of Councils:** Each council shall have a maximum of 14 members and be presided over by a president. The Council Presidents must have at least ten years of experience, which is equivalent to that of a professor, and they must be individuals of distinction and reputation in the field of higher education or research. Prominent specialists, one nomination from the Union Department of Higher Education, and nominees from the other two Councils will make up the Council members. On a rotating basis, state

governments will also nominate one member to the Regulatory Council and Standards Council. On the advice of an investigation and selection committee, the President of India will appoint the presidents and full-time members of the Council. Two distinguished specialists and the central government's Higher Education Secretary will make up the group. The group will be led by a distinguished specialist.

▪ **Composition of the Commission:** A chairperson and twelve members will head up the Commission. A distinguished individual with a good reputation will be chosen to serve as the Chairperson in an honorary role. The Commission is composed of five distinguished specialists, two distinguished academicians from state HEIs, the presidents of the three Councils, and the central government's Higher Education Secretary. The President of India will appoint the members and the chairperson based on suggestions from the national government.

▪ **Terms and conditions of service:** The initial term of appointment for the Commission Chairperson and the Council Presidents will be three years, with the possibility of a five-year extension. For a period of three years, additional Commission and Council members will be selected. Additionally, they will all be qualified for reappointment for an additional term. Additionally, a 70-year-old age limit will be in effect, with the exception of the Commission Chairperson. State governments will appoint nominees to the Regulatory and Standard Councils for a one-year term. Salary, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment will be set by the central government.

▪ **Penalties on HEIs:** HEIs that violate the Act may be subject to fines from the Regulatory Council. The range of the penalty is Rs 10 lakh to Rs 70 lakh. The federal or state governments may also be advised by the Regulatory Council to: (i) terminate the employment of a liable individual; (ii) review and amend the HEI's degree of autonomy; (iii) withhold grants; (iv) alter the HEI's authority to grant degrees; (v) withdraw affiliation; or (vi) order the closure of a HEI. A penalty of at least two crore rupees would be imposed for establishing a university without prior clearance. An adjudicatory system will be established by the Regulatory Council in accordance with the central government's instructions.

▪ **Adherence with the 2020 National Education Policy (NEP):** The Bill substantially resembles NEP 2020's operational and philosophical foundation. Important areas of agreement consist of:

- **Autonomy-Based Regulation:** More academic and administrative autonomy is anticipated for institutions that consistently perform well.
- **Interdisciplinary Education:** Colleges can become interdisciplinary institutions with the help of streamlined regulations.
- **Technology Integration:** Efficiency is increased through digital platforms for reporting, monitoring, and approvals.
- **In outcome-based education:** learning outcomes and graduation competencies take precedence over inputs (infrastructure, staffing rules).

In order to convert NEP 2020 from policy vision into regulatory practice, the Bill might be seen as a legislative tool.

Objectives of the Study:

The objective of this study is to critically analyze The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 in the context of India's larger higher education regulatory reforms. The following are the study's particular goals:

1. To evaluate the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025's legislative objective and conceptual foundation.
2. To compare the Bill's suggested functional architecture and regulatory structure with India's current higher education regulatory framework.
3. To evaluate how closely the Bill adheres to the fundamental ideas and suggestions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
4. To assess how the Bill would affect higher education institutions in terms of accountability, quality control, academic autonomy, and governance.

5. To determine the main advantages and difficulties of establishing a single regulatory body for higher education in a federal and heterogeneous educational system like India.
6. To investigate how internal quality assurance systems and institutional leadership contribute to a successful transition

Research Methodology:

The current study focuses on qualitative policy analysis using a descriptive and analytical research design. The study is solely dependent on secondary data sources because it looks at a legislative and policy framework. Secondary data has been gathered from official government papers including the National Education Policy 2020 and the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, as well as publications released by organizations that oversee and accredit higher education. Peer-reviewed journal papers, edited volumes, policy briefs, and academic publications about regulatory reforms and higher education governance have also been consulted. The goals, provisions, and ramifications of the proposed Bill have been interpreted through the use of content analysis and critical review techniques. The proposed unified regulatory structure and the current regulatory framework have been compared using a comparative analytical approach. Additionally, important concerns pertaining to academic autonomy, quality assurance, transparency, federal balance, and institutional preparation have been identified through theme analysis. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025's possible effects on India's higher education reforms can be thoroughly and methodically understood thanks to this analytical approach.

Consequences for Institutions of Higher Learning:

Academic Autonomy: The Bill has the potential to enhance institutional autonomy by reducing micromanagement and encouraging self-disclosure and accountability.

Governance and Leadership: Institutional leadership, particularly Principals and Vice-Chancellors, will play a more strategic role in quality assurance, data management, and compliance.

Quality Assurance: A standardized quality framework aligned with accreditation processes such as NAAC can help institutions focus on continuous improvement.

Research and Innovation: Simplified regulatory norms may encourage institutions to invest more in research, interdisciplinary programs, and industry collaboration.

Issues and Difficulties:

The Bill has sparked a number of concerns despite its promise for transformation:

- **Centralization of Power:** Opponents contend that state autonomy in education and federal ideals may be compromised by a single national regulator.
- **Institutional Preparedness:** Data-driven and outcome-based criteria may be difficult for many colleges to achieve, particularly in rural and semi-urban settings.
- **Penalty-Oriented Approach:** Rather than fostering a culture that encourages progress, the possibility of severe financial penalties may cause compliance anxiety.
- **Stakeholder Representation:** For fair governance, teachers, states, and academic experts must be well represented.
- **Implementation Capacity:** Issues with the effectiveness of bureaucracy.
- **Equity Concerns:** Access may be impacted by commercialization.
- **Academic Freedom:** Regulation and autonomy may clash.
- **Regional Disparities:** States' disparate levels of development.

Institutional Leadership's Role in Implementation:

Proactive institutional leadership will be crucial to the Bill's successful execution. Academic administrators and principals are required to:

- Boost Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC)
- Encourage the use of evidence-based planning
- Curriculum should be aligned with learning objectives.
- Encourage teacher growth and digital preparedness
- Make sure disclosures are timely and transparent.

Building leadership capacity will consequently be a crucial factor in determining the Bill's long-term success.

Relative Overview:

Regulations governing higher education have been streamlined or harmonized in numerous nations worldwide. Simplified regulation can improve institutional performance and global competitiveness when paired with robust quality assurance, as models from the UK, Australia, and some areas of Europe show. While adjusting to the size and diversity of India, the VBSA model seems to take inspiration from such systems.

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths

1. **Unified Regulatory Framework:** The Bill proposes a single apex body for higher education, replacing multiple regulators (UGC, AICTE, and NCTE). This reduces regulatory overlap, duplication, and bureaucratic delays.
2. **Alignment with NEP 2020:** It operationalizes key NEP 2020 goals such as multidisciplinary education, institutional autonomy, outcome-based learning, and global competitiveness.
3. **Separation of Functions:** The three-council structure (Standards, Regulation, and Accreditation) ensures clarity of roles, minimizing conflict of interest and enhancing governance efficiency.
4. **Transparency and Digital Governance:** Mandatory disclosures and a technology-driven single-window system promote transparency, accountability, and data-based accreditation.
5. **Focus on Quality and Global Standards:** Emphasis on accreditation outcomes, research performance, and academic benchmarks can improve the global ranking and reputation of Indian institutions.

Weaknesses

1. **Over-Centralisation of Authority:** Concentration of regulatory power at the national level may dilute institutional autonomy and reduce the role of states in higher education governance.
2. **Absence of Grant-Giving Powers:** Unlike the UGC, the proposed Regulatory Council lacks financial support functions, which may disadvantage public and rural institutions dependent on government funding.
3. **Compliance Burden on Institutions:** Increased reporting, disclosures, and penalties could strain smaller or resource-constrained institutions.
4. **Transition Challenges:** Dissolution of existing regulators and migration to a new system may create temporary confusion, administrative delays, and capacity gaps.
5. **Limited Clarity on Academic Freedom:** While autonomy is promised, concerns remain regarding government influence in appointments and policy directions.

Opportunities

1. **Globalisation of Indian Higher Education:** Simplified regulation can attract foreign universities, international collaborations, and global research funding.
2. **Innovation and Multidisciplinary Growth:** Institutions can design flexible curricula, integrate vocational and professional education, and promote industry-academia collaboration.
3. **Improved Student Decision-Making:** Public access to institutional performance data empowers students to make informed choices.
4. **Strengthening Research Ecosystem:** Outcome-based accreditation and performance metrics can boost research quality, patents, and innovation.

5. **Enhanced Employability:** Quality assurance and skill-oriented education may improve graduate employability and alignment with national development goals.

Threats

1. **Federal Resistance and Legal Challenges:** Opposition from state governments may delay implementation and lead to constitutional or political disputes.
2. **Risk of Excessive Regulation:** Strong penalty provisions may create a fear-driven compliance culture rather than encouraging academic innovation.
3. **Marginalisation of State and Regional Priorities:** Uniform national standards may overlook regional, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity.
4. **Institutional Closures and Student Impact:** Strict penalties or closure of non-compliant institutions could disrupt students' academic continuity.
5. **Implementation Capacity Risks:** Without adequate manpower, training, and digital infrastructure, the ambitious framework may underperform in practice.

Overall Assessment:

The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill, 2025** is a **transformative reform** with strong potential to modernize India's higher education system. However, its success will depend on **balanced implementation**, respect for **federal principles**, adequate **financial support mechanisms**, and safeguarding **academic autonomy** alongside regulation.

Conclusion:

The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill, 2025** represents a radical and progressive transformation in the governance and regulatory architecture of higher education in India. By proposing a unified regulatory framework and dismantling fragmented oversight mechanisms, the Bill seeks to streamline regulatory functions, reduce bureaucratic complexities, and enhance transparency and accountability across higher educational institutions. Its emphasis on quality assurance, outcome-based accreditation, and digital governance aligns closely with the vision and objectives of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which advocates autonomy, multidisciplinary education, research orientation, and global competitiveness.

The Bill has the potential to transform higher educational institutions into **independent, accountable, and innovation-driven centres of learning**. By encouraging institutional autonomy coupled with performance-based evaluation, it aims to foster academic excellence, curricular flexibility, and research-led growth. Enhanced disclosure norms and accreditation mechanisms can empower students, stakeholders, and policymakers with reliable information, thereby improving trust and decision-making within the higher education ecosystem.

However, for this ambitious reform to achieve its intended outcomes, several critical prerequisites must be addressed. **Inclusive and consultative policymaking** is essential to ensure that the interests of diverse stakeholders—students, faculty, institutions, and state governments—are adequately represented. Given that education is a concurrent subject, **balanced Centre-State coordination** is vital to preserve federal principles while ensuring uniform national standards. Additionally, **institutional capacity building**, particularly for public, rural, and resource-constrained institutions, is necessary to enable effective compliance and meaningful participation in the new regulatory framework.

A key concern lies in the regulatory approach adopted by the Bill. For long-term success, there must be a shift from a **punitive, compliance-oriented regulatory regime to a developmental and facilitative model of governance**. Excessive reliance on penalties could inhibit innovation and academic freedom, whereas a supportive framework emphasizing mentoring, guidance, and continuous improvement would better serve the goals of educational excellence and equity.

If implemented with sensitivity, transparency, and foresight, the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill, 2025** can play a pivotal role in reshaping India's higher education system and advancing the national vision of a **knowledge-driven, globally competitive "Viksit Bharat."** While challenges related to governance, coordination, and implementation remain, the Bill's focus on quality, inclusivity, and innovation provides a robust foundation for sustainable growth. Ultimately, the success of this landmark reform will depend on

effective execution, collaborative engagement among stakeholders, and sustained political and institutional commitment.

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