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# Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill 2025: Replacing UGC, AICTE and NCTE with a Single Higher Education Regulator

15 March 2026

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# Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill 2025: Replacing UGC, AICTE and NCTE with a Single Higher Education Regulator

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## ✍ WHY IN NEWS

On **12 March 2026**, representatives of the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** and the **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** appeared before the **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)** examining the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025** and expressed support for the legislation. The Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha on **15 December 2025** by Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan**, proposes to replace UGC, AICTE, and the **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)** with a single apex body.

India's higher education regulation has long been criticised for fragmentation, duplication, and an overly compliance-driven approach that stifles institutional autonomy. A university must typically interact with UGC for academic and funding matters, AICTE for technical programmes, NCTE for teacher education, the Accreditation Council (NAAC) for quality, and state regulatory bodies for affiliation — creating a multi-

regulator burden that falls most heavily on smaller institutions. The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025** is the government's most ambitious attempt since the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to restructure this architecture.

## WHAT THE BILL PROPOSES

### The New Apex Body – Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA)

The Bill proposes to establish the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA)** as a single-window apex regulatory body for higher education. The VBSA will replace UGC, AICTE, and NCTE – three bodies with separate enabling Acts, separate chairpersons, separate bureaucracies, and overlapping mandates. The three existing Acts (UGC Act 1956, AICTE Act 1987, NCTE Act 1993) would be repealed.

### The Three Councils

Under the VBSA, the Bill creates three subsidiary Councils, each with a distinct function:

The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Viniyaman Parishad** (Regulatory Council) handles licensing, compliance monitoring, and the granting or withdrawal of institutional recognition. This replaces the primary regulatory functions of all three existing bodies.

The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Gunvatta Parishad** (Accreditation Council) manages academic quality assessment, replacing **NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council)** and the accreditation wings of AICTE and NCTE.

The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Manak Parishad** (Standards Council) sets norms and standards for curriculum, faculty qualifications, infrastructure, and institutional categorisation.

**Important exemption:** The Bill explicitly **exempts legal and medical education** from its purview. These will continue to be regulated under their separate Acts – the Bar Council of India Act and the National Medical Commission Act, respectively.

### Governance Structure

The VBSA will be governed by a **12-member central governing body**. The Bill reduces the government's direct day-to-day control compared to UGC's current structure, while retaining the Ministry's authority to issue policy directives and appoint the chairperson.

## WHY THIS BILL, AND WHY NOW

### The NEP 2020 Mandate

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** — the first comprehensive education policy revision since 1986 — explicitly called for replacing the fragmented multi-regulator architecture with a **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** as a single overarching body. The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill is the legislative fulfilment of that NEP recommendation. It has taken five years from NEP to Bill — partly because of the complexity of merging three statutory bodies with different cadres, pension structures, and mandates.

### The Problem with the Current System

UGC was established by the **University Grants Commission Act, 1956** primarily to disburse grants and coordinate university education. AICTE was established by the **AICTE Act, 1987** to regulate technical education. NCTE was created by the **NCTE Act, 1993** for teacher education. Each has developed a large compliance apparatus that has been more effective at creating paperwork than improving quality.

A 2022 standing committee report estimated that a university with programmes spanning arts, science, engineering, and teacher education would be required to comply with **three separate inspection regimes, three separate accreditation processes, and three separate sets of norms** — with no coordination between the bodies. For state universities with hundreds of affiliated colleges, this burden is substantial.

## WHAT UGC AND AICTE SAID BEFORE THE JPC

The appearance of UGC and AICTE representatives before the JPC on 12 March 2026 was notable in that both bodies expressed **support for the consolidation**, despite the Bill proposing to abolish them as independent institutions. Their support likely reflects recognition that the multi-regulator fragmentation has weakened, not strengthened, each body's effectiveness.

However, witnesses also raised concerns about the **transition period** — particularly the status of staff, pending recognition cases, and ongoing accreditation cycles during the shift from three bodies to one. These are legitimate implementation concerns that the JPC is expected to address through its recommendations.

## CONCERNS AND CRITICISMS

The Bill has drawn substantive criticism from higher education experts and institutional stakeholders.

**Centralisation risk:** Replacing three independent statutory bodies with a single apex body controlled by a 12-member board appointed substantially by the government concentrates regulatory power. Critics argue this could make the entire regulatory system vulnerable to a single point of political influence, whereas the current fragmented system at least creates some diffusion of control.

**Teacher education concerns:** The NCTE, which regulates teacher education and teacher eligibility, has a very different mandate from UGC or AICTE. Merging it into a single body risks teacher education losing its regulatory priority as engineering and traditional universities dominate the new body's attention.

**State universities' position:** Over 80% of India's higher education enrolment is in state universities and their affiliated colleges. These institutions are regulated through state-level authorities in addition to central bodies. The Bill's relationship with state higher education regulators and the **federal dimension** of education (Entry 25 of the Concurrent List) will require careful drafting.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

*Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA), UGC Act 1956, AICTE Act 1987, NCTE Act 1993, NEP 2020, NAAC, Joint Parliamentary Committee, Dharmendra Pradhan, Entry 25 Concurrent List. **Mains GS-2:** Higher education governance in India; regulatory bodies and their reform; NEP 2020 implementation; federalism in education; Parliament and legislative procedure (JPC process).*

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### THE BILL — CORE FACTS:

**Full name:** Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025

**Introduced:** 15 December 2025, Lok Sabha

**Introduced by:** Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for Education

**Referred to:** Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for examination

**JPC hearing (March 2026):** UGC and AICTE representatives appeared on 12 March 2026

### BODIES BEING REPLACED:

**UGC** (University Grants Commission) — established by UGC Act, **1956**

**AICTE** (All India Council for Technical Education) — established by AICTE Act, **1987**

**NCTE** (National Council for Teacher Education) — established by NCTE Act, **1993**

### NEW STRUCTURE UNDER VBSA:

**VBSA (apex body):** 12-member central governing body

**Viniyaman Parishad:** Regulatory Council (licensing, compliance, recognition)

**Gunvatta Parishad:** Accreditation Council (quality assessment; replaces NAAC function)

**Manak Parishad:** Standards Council (curriculum norms, faculty qualifications)

### POLICY CONTEXT:

**NEP 2020** recommended a single Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) — VBSA is its legislative form  
Previous NEP: **1986** (revised 1992)

Education in **Concurrent List (Entry 25)** — both Centre and States legislate

**Exempted:** Legal education (Bar Council of India) and medical education (National Medical Commission) remain under separate regulators

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Over **80%** of India's higher education enrolment is in state universities and affiliated colleges

India has ~1,168 universities and ~45,473 colleges (AISHE 2021-22 data)

UGC, AICTE, and NCTE currently operate separate inspection, accreditation, and compliance regimes with no coordination

NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) is a separate body under UGC — its status under VBSA is absorbed into the Gunvatta Parishad

Sources: [PRs India](#), [PIB](#), [Business Standard](#), [APAC News](#)

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