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Odisha Announces Free Education From KG to Postgraduate Level

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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Odisha Announces Free Education From KG to Postgraduate Level

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Source: ujjyari.com — Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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WHY IN NEWS

On **June 12, 2026**, marking two years of his government, **Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi** announced **free education from kindergarten (KG) to postgraduate (PG) level** across all government schools and colleges in the state. Odisha has positioned the move as making it the first state to offer free education across the entire KG-to-PG span in government institutions.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN BRIEF

DETAIL	PARTICULARS
Scope	Free education, KG to PG, in government institutions
Announced by	CM Mohan Charan Majhi
Occasion	Two years of the state government
Education allocation (2026-27)	About Rs 42,565 crore
Share of state budget	About 13.7 percent

The measure extends free provision well beyond the **elementary stage** that the central Right to Education framework guarantees, into secondary, higher-secondary and higher education.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL BACKDROP

PROVISION	WHAT IT SAYS
Article 21A	Right to free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 (a Fundamental Right, added by the 86th Amendment, 2002)
RTE Act, 2009	Operationalises Article 21A for the elementary stage
Article 41 (DPSP)	The State shall make effective provision for education within its economic capacity
Article 45 (DPSP)	Early childhood care and education for children below six
SDG 4	Inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

A state offering free education up to the postgraduate level is going **beyond the constitutional minimum**, treating access to higher education as a matter of state policy and equity rather than a guaranteed right.

THE ANALYSIS: AMBITION MEETS AFFORDABILITY

- ① **Equity and access.** Free education up to PG can widen access for first-generation learners, girls, and students from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and economically weaker backgrounds, for whom cost is a major barrier to staying in education.
- ② **Fiscal sustainability.** The central question is whether a universal free-education guarantee, especially in higher education, is fiscally sustainable over time, and whether universal subsidy is the most efficient use of funds compared with targeted scholarships for those who cannot pay.
- ③ **Quality versus access.** Removing fees addresses access but not quality; the impact depends on whether the saved demand-side cost is matched by supply-side investment in teachers, infrastructure and learning outcomes.
- ④ **Competitive federalism.** Welfare announcements of this kind are part of a wider pattern of states competing on social-sector provision, a feature of Indian federalism that can drive a “race to the top” but also raises questions of fiscal prudence.

The way forward is to pair free access with **outcome tracking**, so that the policy translates into higher enrolment, retention and learning, not only lower fees, and to weigh universal provision against targeted support within the state’s fiscal envelope.

UPSC RELEVANCE

- **GS Paper 2 (Governance and Social Justice):** education policy, the right to education, welfare schemes, cooperative and competitive federalism.
- **Prelims:** Article 21A, the 86th Amendment, the RTE Act, the relevant Directive Principles.
- **Mains:** fiscal sustainability of universal welfare; access versus quality in education.

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THE ANNOUNCEMENT:

Odisha: free education KG to PG in government institutions, announced June 12, 2026

CM Mohan Charan Majhi; education allocation about Rs 42,565 crore (13.7 percent of the budget)

THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAME:

Article 21A: free and compulsory education, ages 6 to 14 (86th Amendment, 2002)

RTE Act, 2009, operationalises it for the elementary stage

Directive Principles: Articles 41 and 45; SDG 4 on quality education

THE WIDER POINT:

Free education up to PG goes beyond the constitutional minimum; reflects competitive federalism in the social sector

Sources: *Business Standard, The Hindu*

Source: Odisha Announces Free Education From KG to Postgraduate Level — Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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