

1. Global Synergy in Higher Education

Context:

- India aims to become a five trillion economy by 2024-25. The realisation of this goal is incumbent upon the capability of its education and training institutions to equip young Indians with knowledge and skills relevant to an evolving job market.

Brief Background:

- India's draft National Education Policy aims at increasing the **gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education to at least 50 per cent by 2035**.
- The current **GER stands at just 26.3%** and doubling it in the next 15 years will require significant reforms at planning and execution level.
- India's GER is lower than the **Global Average of 36.7%**.

Critical challenges for India in Higher Education:

- India enjoys a demographic dividend. It is world's youngest country with an **Average age of 29**. This opportunity is also a challenge.
- The Indian youth need education and skills, and the current Indian system has to be well equipped to handle it.
- Private colleges cater to 66.4% of the total enrolment in higher education.
- Merely 22% of government colleges are catering to a disproportionately large number of poor students who could not afford to seek in private institutions.
- Increasing social aspirations have made the education divide between urban and rural centres more obvious.
- The opportunity cost of higher education (commute, hostel fees etc.) for disadvantaged section is often too high and hinders the education process.
- **Low employability of graduates, poor quality of teaching, weak governance, insufficient funding and complex regulatory norms** continue to affect the Indian higher education sector.
- India caters to less than one per cent of all international students. The outflow of Indian students for education abroad is itself more than 15 times the inflow of international students to India.

Government Initiatives for Global Synergy in Higher Education:

- Recently released draft National Education Policy 2019 proposes inviting the top 200 global universities to establish foreign branch campuses in India.

-
- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has developed a Five-year vision plan **‘Education Quality Up gradation and Inclusion Programme’ (EQUIP):**
 - ✓ It aims at ushering transformation in India’s higher education system by implementing strategic interventions in the sector over 2019-24.
 - ✓ It sets out to deliver on principles of access, inclusion, quality, excellence and enhancing employability in higher education.
 - NITI Aayog recently favoured the development of Exclusive Education Zones (EEZs) akin to SEZs in few select cities to boost growth in the inflow of foreign students.
 - Linkages between higher education institutions and industries with diversified course offerings can prepare students for the Job Market.

Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN):

- Aims at improving the quality of higher education in the country through international collaboration
- Facilitate participation of high quality international academicians for delivering short-term courses and programs in Indian institutions
- Initially 500 international faculties will be engaged in conducting courses and later in subsequent years 1000 faculties would be engaged under GIAN throughout India
- These courses will be webcasted live for students across the country through web portal designed by IIT Kharagpur.
- Conclusion:
- The education landscape is changing vigorously. So increased focus on vocational and profession led education can help India find ways to up-skill 400 million workers by 2022.