

Q-1 What is your opinion on recent decision of the government to allow foreign universities to open their campuses in India ? Critically comment.

Approach

In this question candidates need to write their opinion on recent govt decision on opening foreign university campuses in India and examine it critically .

Introduction

The government and the University Grants Commission's decision to allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India is a welcome move. The initiative will not only provide access to our students to global quality education but create healthy competition between institutions.

Body

The Indian government is set to welcome foreign universities — such as Harvard, Oxford and Yale to India.

- Foreign universities ranked in the Top 500 globally, as well as other "reputed" foreign higher education institutions, can set up campus in India — as outlined in the country's National Education Policy (NEP), which was adopted in 2020.
- Unveiling the plans last week, University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman pointed out that foreign universities with Indian campuses can only offer full-time programs "offline" and not online or through distance learning.

Pros -

- The government and the University Grants Commission's decision to allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India is a welcome move.
- The initiative will not only provide access to our students to global quality education but create healthy competition between institutions.
- In this milieu, professionalization of the functioning of HEIs has become a top priority for Indian universities.
- Other challenges facing Indian higher education include coping with demographic structures, poor performance, adherence to traditional systems, digital divide, and struggles in scaling up. Over-centralization and a lack of accountability and professionalism are the other issues.
- The burden of academic and administrative responsibilities has also significantly increased, diluting the core agenda of higher education, i.e., imparting knowledge, quality teaching and research, lack of domain expertise in academic administrators in improving governance structures has also hindered the progress of education reforms.
- A primary reason management reforms are not prioritized in India is that university leadership and academic administrators may not have the domain expertise to improve the internal governance structures, processes, and managerial approaches.
- Meanwhile, the uncertainty over higher education funding, ever-increasing student enrolment, global competition, the continuation of conventional

systems, prioritizing digitization and the continuing marketisation of higher education signal the need for complete modernization and professionalization of higher education institutions systems.

Cons -

- A report by India-based business consulting firm Red seer on higher education abroad estimates that the number of Indian students opting for higher education abroad grew from 440,000 in 2016, to 770,000 in 2019. That is set to grow to around 1.8 million by 2024.
- Overseas spending was poised to grow from current annual \$28 billion to \$80 billion (€18.5 billion to €74 billion) annually by 2024.
- Many students opt to go abroad for the experience, and for the income opportunity overseas which is not available in India.
- However, some educators are not sure how much of an impact the move will have, and believe the more immediate need is to reform the current university system, where individuality is suppressed.
- It isn't clear that the top foreign institutions that are being targeted by this scheme would have any interest in coming to India, nor that the current political situation is conducive to their doing .
- Currently, the space for any independent, critical analysis has been considerably restricted. This would certainly be on the minds of those who lead the foreign universities that are being invited here.
- Establishing universities and campuses is a challenging proposition, not to mention developing courses, creating research facilities, hiring faculty workers and relocating international workers, among other considerations.
- The new regulation allows the foreign institution free play, and they are given more freedom, which is not given to the Indian institution
- "For instance, they can fix their fees, the admission norms, and have full freedom in faculty appointments
- The decision by the UGC to permit foreign universities to establish branches in India will "harm" the nation's higher education system.
- "The policy will harm, dilute and destroy the Indian higher education system, leading to commercialization.
- This decision will make education expensive and Dalits, minorities and the poor will be adversely affected. The decision is a reflection of the government's pro-rich approach," it said.
- Setting up of foreign universities here was unavoidable in the age of globalization, and given that the barriers for exchange of goods, services and ideas is happening it was inevitable that education would be the last frontier, where all barriers would be dismantled.

Conclusion -

The proposal in the New Education Policy 2020 to allow foreign universities to set up offshore campuses in India can significantly alter the dynamics of higher education in India. It can also save India significant amounts of foreign exchange and, over time, also become a source of foreign exchange earnings if overseas students also choose to enrol at these campuses.

Q.2 Critically assess the efforts of the central government in recent years to address extreme hunger and malnutrition in India.

Approach

Start with basic intro with referring to the scramble of Africa try to analyze how it led to the competition among European powers.

Introduction

In a bid to tackle malnutrition and hunger, government working with several programmes like MDM, POSHAN and POSHAN Atlas ensuring the nutrition of children, women, and pregnant mothers in impoverished areas and the government seems to be looking at community management of the problem.

Body

Efforts of central government to address extreme hunger and malnutrition:

- Cash transfers seem to be a favoured solution for several social sector interventions which includes the health and nutrition sectors. Example: use of JAM trinity (Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar, Mobile).
- Targeting the right beneficiaries: i.e pregnant women and families with children under the age of five is possible.
- Expanding choice at the household level: They make decisions on what to put on their plates.
- Food Fortification: Food Fortification or Food Enrichment is the addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.
- National Nutrition Strategy: The Strategy aims to reduce all forms of malnutrition by 2030, with a focus on the most vulnerable and critical age groups.
- Saksham Anganwadi: It seeks to work with adolescent girls, pregnant women, nursing mothers and children below three.
- Child stunting in India declined from 54.2% in 1998–2002 to 34.7% in 2016–2020, whereas child wasting remains around 17% throughout the two decades of the 21st century.
- Stunting has reduced from 38.4% to 35.5%, wasting from 21.0% to 19.3% and underweight prevalence is down from 35.8% to 32.1%.

Failure of government efforts:

- India already has two robust national programmes addressing malnutrition the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) and the National Health Mission but these do not yet reach enough people.
- Despite several efforts as per NFHS-5, from 2019 to 21, 35.5% of children under the age of five had stunting, 19.3% had wasted, and 32.1% had an underweight condition.

- Regarding its global standing as a crucial indication of human development, the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022 has handed India more dismal news. India came in at position 107 out of 121.
- The delivery system is also inadequate and plagued by inefficiency and corruption. Some analysts estimate that 40 per cent of the subsidised food never reaches the intended recipients.
- The current policies have encouraged modern agri-food systems to price healthy diets many times more than diets that rely on staple cereals.
- These restrictions have made low-cost foods with a high energy density and little nutritious value more popular.
- Pulses are a major contributor to address protein hunger. However, there is not enough budgetary allocations done to tackle the problem.
- With Eggs missing from menus of Mid-day Meals in various States, an easy way to improve protein intake is lost.
- Though the government has surplus of foodgrains, there is calorific deficiency because the allocation and distribution is not proper. Even the yearly budget allocated is not fully utilised.

Wayforward

- Getting schemes right: It requires greater involvement of local government and local community groups in the design and delivery of tailored nutrition interventions.
- A comprehensive programme targeting adolescent girls is required if the intergenerational nature of malnutrition is to be tackled.
- Child nutrition: The need of the hour is to make addressing child malnutrition the top priority of the government machinery, and all year around.
- Convergence with other Schemes: Nutrition goes beyond just food, with economic, health, water, sanitation, gender perspectives and social norms contributing to better nutrition.

Q.3 With the help of suitable examples, describe the significance of digital technologies to improve the efficacy of public services.

Approach

Candidates can start the answer by basic definition digital governance with use of technologies. Also try to substantiate with relevant examples.

Introduction

Use of digital technology to perform government activities and achieve the objectives of public services is done at huge level in India. Through e-governance,

government services are made available to citizens and businesses in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner.

Body

Digital technology in governance and public service:

- Digital technologies have made it easier to collect and collate data and convert it into meaningful information using various algorithms. For example: Different surveys like census, NFHS etc. for deciding policy intervention.
- Digital technology can enable data sharing and monitoring in real time, helping in identifying bottlenecks and undertaking necessary reforms. For example: online dashboards for tracking status of project implementation.

Different digital governance programmes improving efficacy of public service:

- UIDAI collects minimal biometric data in the form of iris and fingerprints. This has helped to exclude bogus beneficiaries of government schemes and eligible beneficiaries are targeted well hence quality of Service delivery system has improved immensely.
- Digital Saksharta Abhiyan or National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Scheme has been formulated to impart IT training to 52.5 lakh persons, including Anganwadi, ASHA workers and authorised ration dealers in all the States/UTs across the country.
- The initiative aims at training non-IT literate citizens to become IT literate to enable their active and effective participation in the democratic, developmental process, and enhance their livelihood too.
- The NAM Portal provides a single window service for all APMC related information and services. This includes commodity arrivals and prices, buy and sell trade offers and provision to respond to trade offers, among other services.
- e-Granthalaya is an Integrated Library Management Software developed by National Informatics Centre, (NIC), Department of Electronics & Information Technology. The application is useful for automation of in-house activities of libraries and to provide various online member services.
- eBiz is being implemented by Infosys Technologies Limited (Infosys) under the guidance and aegis of Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. The focus of eBiz is to improve the business environment in the country by enabling fast and efficient access to Government-to-Business (G2B) services through an online portal.
- DigiYatra has started facial recognition for airport entry on trial basis in the Hyderabad airport. DigiYatra intends to offer air passengers a “seamless, hassle-free and paperless journey experience.

Conclusion

With the penetration of technology in the hands of a layman, e-governance aims to empower citizens with service delivery without time delay and in effective manner. India is emerging as the country with highest monthly internet usage. The more

steps need to be taken to increase the penetration of services in effective and efficient manner.

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