

The Prime Minister Internship Scheme

India's journey towards becoming a \$5 trillion economy hinges on its demographic dividend – the energy, ideas, and ambition of its youth. But tapping into this potential requires one key enabler – opportunity. Recognising this, the Government of India introduced the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) in the Union Budget 2024–25. Designed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industrial skill, PMIS seeks to provide structured, inclusive, and meaningful internship opportunities for India's young population.

Explaining the Scheme

The PMIS aims to provide internship opportunities to one crore youth over a five-year period. It is focused on students and fresh graduates from diverse backgrounds – particularly from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). The scheme began with a pilot project in October 2024, with a target of 1.25 lakh internships in the first year. As of July 2025, over 71,000 offers had been made by 327 companies, against 4.5 lakh applications – highlighting the overwhelming response from aspirants and the increasing private sector engagement.

Nature of Partnership with Corporates

One of the most innovative features of PMIS is its collaborative model between government and private enterprise. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) acts as the nodal agency, coordinating between companies and candidates. The top 500 companies, including major PSUs like ONGC and Oil India Ltd, have come on board. These companies post internship roles on a centralised digital platform, and students apply directly through it. Shortlisting is done by the platform, ensuring transparency and fairness, and partner companies conduct the final selection. Importantly, the scheme does not mandate financial compensation, but encourages companies to offer a stipend and certificate of experience, both of which are essential for future employability.

Advantages of the Scheme

PMIS provides multiple systemic benefits –

1. **Bridges the Industry-Academia Gap** – Many graduates face joblessness not due to a lack of degrees but due to lack of experience. PMIS gives students exposure to the actual work environment and business processes.
2. **Structured Pathways to Employment** – Internships are often the first step toward full-time employment. The structured nature of the scheme increases the chances of conversion to jobs.
3. **Diversity and Inclusion** – With a focus on socially disadvantaged communities, PMIS ensures that the benefits of economic progress reach every stratum of society.
4. **Digital Infrastructure** – The platform-based application and tracking mechanism ensure speed, transparency, and minimal paperwork.

Benefits for Aspirants

For India's youth, particularly from rural or underprivileged backgrounds, PMIS is a game-changer

1. **Real-world Exposure** – Many applicants, especially first-generation learners, gain their first experience of a formal corporate setup through this scheme.
2. **Skill Development** – Interns learn communication, digital tools, teamwork, and workplace discipline – skills that go beyond textbooks.
3. **Networking Opportunities** – Interacting with industry professionals expands horizons and boosts confidence.
4. **Resume Value** – The internship certificate adds weight during future job searches or higher education applications.

Socio-Economic Impact

PMIS is not just about jobs – it's about inclusive development. By prioritising SC/ST/OBC and PwD candidates, the scheme contributes to –

1. **Economic Mobility** – Helping underprivileged youth get a foot in the door.
2. **Regional Balance** – States like Assam and Uttar Pradesh have seen large numbers of internship candidates, addressing the urban-rural opportunity divide.
3. **Entrepreneurial Thinking** – Exposure to business environments often plants the seeds for future start-ups or self-employment ventures.
4. **Gender Empowerment** – With a likely increase in women applicants, the scheme can become a driver for gender inclusion in the workforce.

As internship culture grows, India's economic base becomes not only stronger, but also more inclusive and socially just.

Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite its promise, the scheme has faced early hiccups. In the first round, only 8,700 out of 28,000 selected candidates actually joined – a conversion rate of less than 15%. Reasons include lack of clarity, low or no stipends, geographic mismatch, and poor awareness.

To address this –

1. **Stipend Support** – A limited government subsidy to ensure all interns receive basic support could incentivise participation.
2. **Better Awareness Drives** – Colleges, training institutes, and civil society organisations must help spread the word and guide applications.
3. **Regional Matching** – Efforts should be made to match candidates with companies near their home regions.
4. **Digital Support and Counselling** – Hand-holding and mentorship through digital platforms and mobile apps can help reduce dropout rates.

Conclusion

The Prime Minister Internship Scheme is a bold attempt to align youth aspirations with economic realities. With strategic tweaks and continuous monitoring, it can become a foundational pillar of India's skilling and employment ecosystem. As India seeks to compete globally and lift millions into the formal economy, initiatives like PMIS show that true development is not just in GDP numbers but in the dignity of opportunity offered to every young Indian.

Main Practice Question

1. Critically evaluate the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) in terms of its potential to bridge the industry-academia gap and promote inclusive socio-economic development. Discuss key challenges and suggest measures for effective implementation.

Answering Guidelines –

1. Introduction – Briefly introduce PMIS, highlighting its objective to provide internship opportunities to one crore youth over five years and its focus on inclusivity (SCs, STs, OBCs, PwDs).

2. Body

1. Industry-Academia Gap Bridging

Discuss how PMIS provides real-world exposure, practical skill development, workplace discipline, and increases employability among graduates lacking experience.

2. Inclusive Socio-Economic Development

Analyze the scheme's emphasis on marginalized groups, regional balance, gender empowerment, and entrepreneurial thinking leading to economic mobility and social justice.

3. Operational and Implementation Challenges

Examine issues such as low conversion rates, stipend inadequacy, geographic mismatches, lack of awareness, and digital illiteracy affecting scheme uptake.

4. Suggested Measures for Effective Implementation

Recommend government stipend support, awareness campaigns, localized matching of interns and companies, mentorship, digital counseling, and continuous monitoring.

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3. Conclusion – Summarize PMIS as a transformative initiative with potential to enhance India's skilled workforce and social equity, subject to strategic improvements and commitment.

