Editorial of the Day – 13.01.2026

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1. A Bill that reimagines higher education regulation (TH)

General Studies 2- Governance
Topic- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.
Sub Topic- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors; Issues arising out of their design and implementation (Higher Education Regulatory Reform).
Reimagining Higher Education Regulation- The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025

Introduction

The poet Tiruvalluvar (in his 140th Thirukkural) emphasized that education is futile unless it teaches individuals to live responsibly within society. Echoing this ethos, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a holistic educational framework fostering social relevance. To realize the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 (introduced in Lok Sabha on Dec 15, 2025) aims to radically transform India's higher education regulation through a "light but tight" framework, nurturing future-ready leaders.

I. The Urgent Need for Change

Despite the massive expansion of India's higher education sector (1,000+ universities, crores of learners), the regulatory architecture remains outdated and inefficient.
Fragmented Regulation- Multiple statutory bodies with overlapping roles have led to a labyrinth of complex approvals, inspections, and compliance burdens.
Process Over Purpose- Institutions are forced to prioritize paperwork and procedural compliance over their core missions of teaching, research, and innovation.
Reduced Agility- Excessive regulation stifles institutional flexibility, making it difficult to collaborate, innovate, or update curricula to match modern needs.
Outcome Deficit- The focus on "checking boxes" rather than educational quality has weakened overall learning outcomes.

II. Rationale Behind the Bill

The Bill addresses the gaps highlighted by NEP 2020 by shifting from a regime of heavy-handed inspection to one of facilitative regulation.
"Light but Tight" Philosophy- Implements strong standards (tight) but with minimal procedural friction (light).
Unified Architecture- Seeks to repeal older, fragmented Acts to create a single, modern regulatory framework.
Apex Umbrella Body- Proposes a centralized body with clearly separated verticals for regulation, accreditation, and standard-setting to ensure credibility and eliminate conflicts of interest.
Tech-Driven Transparency- Introduces a technology-enabled single-window system based on public self-disclosure, fostering accountability and continuous quality assurance.

III. Transformative Impacts

1. Youth Empowerment & Enhanced Learning Outcomes

Access & GER- Streamlined regulations will remove capacity bottlenecks, expanding access to quality institutions and raising the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER).
Focus on Quality- Institutions can pivot their energy toward value-based learning and interdisciplinary pathways rather than administrative hurdles.

Lifelong Learning- Support for reskilling and upskilling ensures employability across evolving career landscapes.

Student Agency- Robust feedback and grievance redressal mechanisms turn learners into active stakeholders who can demand quality and drive institutional improvement.

2. Global Alignment with Indian Roots

Best Practices- Enables Indian institutions to adopt global best practices while remaining anchored in national values.

True Credibility- International standing will be built on genuine outcomes, ethics, and research culture, rather than mere imitation of Western models.

Talent Mobility- A unified standards framework facilitates student/faculty mobility and collaborative research, helping attract international talent and retain Indian scholars.

3. Modern, Transparent Governance

Reduced Discretion- The single-window digital system reduces human discretion, delays, and regulatory uncertainty.

Earned Trust- A culture of meaningful, audited public disclosure replaces the old inspection raj, fostering trust.

Differentiated Autonomy- High-performing institutions are granted greater autonomy to drive excellence, while common standards ensure a baseline of quality for all.

Conclusion

Atmanirbharta (Self-reliance) in higher education is achieved when institutions are empowered to set ambitious goals and innovate responsibly. By harmonizing standards, regulation, and accreditation into a coherent framework, the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, promises to build an ecosystem that nurtures capable, socially responsible citizens—fulfilling Tiruvalluvar's vision of education that serves both individual growth and the collective good.

Source- https-//www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-bill-that-reimagines-higher-education-regulation/article70502373.ece#google_vignette

2. Equality is not the enemy of growth – oligarchy (IE)

General Studies 3- Economy

Topic- Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it.

Sub Topic- Effects of Liberalization on the economy; Changes in Industrial Policy and their effects on Industrial Growth (Issues of Crony Capitalism/Oligarchy).

Introduction

A prevailing economic narrative often suggests a trade-off between equality and economic growth. However, this perspective is increasingly being challenged by the reality that the true barrier to sustainable, inclusive development is not the pursuit of equality, but the entrenchment of oligarchic interests. The central problem lies in structural economic distortions where a small elite monopolizes resources and policy influence, thereby stifling competition and limiting broader societal progress.

I. The Core Misunderstanding- Inequality vs. Oligarchy

Misplaced Focus- Public discourse often centers on simplistic metrics of inequality (like the Gini coefficient) without analyzing the root causes.

The Real Enemy- The actual impediment to growth is Oligarchy—a system where a minuscule economic elite captures markets and policy mechanisms to serve their exclusive interests.

Growth Illusion- Focusing solely on GDP growth rates without addressing wealth distribution creates an illusion of progress while denying the majority access to essential resources, education, capital, and employment.

II. Key Challenges & Mechanisms of Oligarchy

1. Concentration of Power & Suppression of Innovation

Market Dominance- High concentration of wealth leads to market dominance by a few large conglomerates.

Stifled Competition- Emerging businesses and startups struggle to survive as established players use their financial muscle to suppress competition, ultimately hurting innovation and efficiency.

2. Policy Capture (Regulatory Capture)

Elite Influence- Economic elites often exercise disproportionate influence over policymaking.

Profit over Public Interest- Policies are frequently tailored to protect incumbent profits (e.g., through tax loopholes or favorable regulations) rather than advancing the public interest, weakening the regulatory frameworks meant to ensure fair play.

3. Barriers to Social Mobility

The Opportunity Trap- Extreme inequality creates a rigid class structure where individuals are trapped in low-income brackets.

Access Denied- The lack of access to quality education, healthcare, and credit prevents talented individuals from non-elite backgrounds from contributing effectively to the economy.

III. Implications of Unchecked Oligarchy

Economic Stagnation- Widening inequality shrinks the middle class—the primary engine of consumption. Reduced consumer demand eventually slows down long-term sustainable growth.

Political Instability- Persistent inequality fuels social unrest, dissatisfaction, and a loss of trust in democratic institutions, which can lead to volatile electoral outcomes.

Global Competitiveness- As many nations grapple with these issues, India's ability to dismantle these structures will determine its long-term economic competitiveness and social cohesion.

IV. Proposed Solutions & Structural Reforms

1. Policy Focus on Structural Reform

Taxation- Implement progressive taxation reforms to redistribute excessive wealth accumulation.

Support for SMEs- Create a supportive ecosystem for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to break the monopoly of large conglomerates.

Fair Competition- strictly enforce competition laws to prevent cartelization and market abuse.

2. Regulate Oligarchic Influence

Anti-Monopoly Laws- Strengthen the legal framework to check the dominance of large corporations.

Political Transparency- Enforce transparency in political funding to sever the nexus between big capital and policymaking.

3. Invest in Public Services (The Level Playing Field)

Human Capital- heavily invest in quality public education and healthcare. This ensures that the ability to succeed is based on talent, not the wealth of one's parents.

Safety Nets- Robust social safety nets to protect the vulnerable during economic transitions.

4. Balanced Growth Models

Beyond GDP- Shift economic planning from purely GDP-centric targets to models that integrate income distribution and social welfare indices as core metrics of success.

V. Way Forward

Inclusive Policymaking- Draft policies that prioritize the needs of the poor and the middle class, ensuring they are active participants in the growth story rather than just passive beneficiaries.

Institutional Strength- Empower institutions (like the Competition Commission of India, Labor Courts, etc.) to enforce labor rights and ensure fair access to essential services without fear or favor.

Accountability- Promote a culture of accountability where market power is constantly scrutinized to prevent it from morphing into political authority.

Conclusion

The narrative must shift from viewing equality as a hindrance to growth to recognizing that oligarchic structures are the true drag on economic dynamism. Allowing a small elite to dominate the economy creates systemic risks. Policymakers must realize that dismantling these entrenched interests is not just a social justice imperative but a prerequisite for a vibrant, competitive, and resilient economy.

Source- https-//indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/p-b-mehta-writes-equality-is-not-the-enemy-of-growth-oligarchy-is-10469844/