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# Comprehension Test Questions for SBI PO Mains, IBPS PO Mains, and RBI Grade B Exams.

## Passage No 134

**Direction:** Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

**Paragraph 1 :** The government has announced a list of 'Institutes of Eminence' (IoE) among India's institutions of higher education. This was awaited for the simple reason that finding a place on it would save an educational institution from the clutches of a dreaded regulator. Regulators are meant to ensure that we have a socially desirable outcome, but in the case of higher education in India the opposite seems to have been the case. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has over half a century micro-managed this space to an unimaginable level of silliness. The result has been publicly-funded universities that are cavernous wastes, shattering the aspirations of our youth and producing low-level 'knowledge'. Evidence of the role of India's higher-education regulator may be seen in the feature that the few instances when this is not the case the institutions have enjoyed privilege that leaves them protected from its depredations.

**Paragraph 2 :** The latest offering is in the form of a proposed Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The intention is to leave the HECI to focus on quality while leaving funding of public institutions to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Even as we observe the progress of the HECI and wonder if it is going to be any more than old wine in a new bottle, we have already have an inkling of what could go wrong. This springs from the government's announcement of a list of IoEs. The government has chosen three public and three private institutions for this status. The public institutions are the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and the Indian Institutes of Technology at Delhi and Mumbai. The private ones are the Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani, the JIO Institute and the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. This list suffers from a serious lack of credibility. Where in it are the universities of India? We understand that the government's aim is to rectify the low presence of Indian institutions in the global rankings of universities.

**Paragraph 3 :** While the early European universities may have started as academies of the arts they were soon to have medicine and astronomy as areas that they pursued with vigour. Somewhere along the line we seem to have lost this breadth and come to revel in a landscape dominated by engineering schools. These engineering schools, notably the IITs, have done us proud but cannot be equated with the great universities of the world for the simple reason that they are focussed on a narrow domain. Also, if the idea behind IoEs is that they will be left alone and given enhanced financial support, it must be acknowledged that until very recently the IITs have not been meddled with neither have they been starved of resources. The IISc is of course broader than the IITs but does not embrace the social sciences and the humanities, the presence of which would be considered necessary for an university.



**Paragraph 4 :** If a list of eminent institutions in the country is at all needed, the absence of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) from the first list of IoEs is striking. Its faculty has brought many of the world's leading ideas to Indian students and in at least area came close to building a new school of thought, however controversial. It is not as if similar efforts in the social sciences have not occurred elsewhere in India but JNU has perhaps sustained its reputation as a university for longer. It already had schools of Computer Science and the Life Sciences over four decades ago when these were fledging disciplines giving it a certain breadth early on.

**Paragraph 5 :** Even as we may wonder at the exclusion of JNU from the list of IoEs released by the government one might wonder at how the private institutions that are on it made the cut. While BITS Pilani may have made a significant contribution to the country at a time when it desperately needed engineers, but is yet not what may be considered a university, the presence of the two others on the list leave one nonplussed. One of them, we are told, has been conferred the status on grounds of its promise, a dubious position to take as this institute has little to show except for the financial heft that will surely undergird it. The other is known largely for its association with the practice of charging capitation fees for education.

**1. As per your understanding of the passage studied above, what can be some reasons for lack of quality in higher education?**

- I. State universities recruited a lot of faculty members on contract basis who have little incentive to perform.
- II. Public universities are insulated from political pressure.
- III. The amount spent on research is very less as compared to foreign Institutions.

A. Only I                      B. Only II                      C. Only I and III                      D. Only II and III                      E. All of the above

**2. Which of the following is/are true as per the passage?**

- I. Among countries with a comparable research output, India with 0.8% R&D spending trails Russia, Brazil, South Korea and even Singapore, according to Unesco data.
- II. HECI would focus on funding while quality would be regulated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- III. The Institution of Eminence (IoE) status has been given to six institutes, three each from the public and private sectors.

A. Only I                      B. Only III                      C. Only I and II                      D. Only II and III                      E. None of the above

**3. Which of the following best describes the tone of the author in paragraph 1?**

- A. Euphoric      B. Castigating      C. Deploring      D. Lamenting      E. None of the above

**4. What could be a/some result/s of the function of funding of public institutions being left to the Ministry of Human Resource Development instead of HECI?**

I. The government may use its discretion to reward institutions according to its ideological predilections.

II. The Institutions may be forced to comply with even some dubious rules setup by the government.

III. The government can be made accountable for attaining excellence in education.

- A. Only II      B. Only I and II      C. Only II and III      D. Only I and III      E. All of the above

**5. Which of the following may be inferred from paragraph 3?**

I. Universities should embody knowledge across a wide range of disciplines.

II. There is an emphasis on a depth of knowledge across a broad horizon in Indian Universities today.

III. In India, a lot of focus is given to Institutions which are focused on only few areas.

- A. Only I      B. Only III      C. Only II and III      D. Only I and III      E. All of the above

**6. Which of the following may strengthen the argument for putting the Jawaharlal Nehru University in the list of IoEs?**

I. If there is an Indian institution that engages as an equal in the global commons it is JNU.

II. Research from JNU has adapted and contested ideas floating in the global pool of knowledge ranging from history to economics.

III. If the criterion of engagement with the global field of ideas is accepted JNU would count as one among India's eminent educational institutions.

- A. Only I      B. Only III      C. Only I and II      D. Only II and III      E. All of the above

**7. What best describes the central idea of the passage?**

A. The government's approach to higher education reflects a short-sightedness due to the social sciences and the humanities being ignored.

B. The IoE list is a good start and can be modified going forward by adding more institutions that focus on some disciplines.

C. Eminence is not usually understood in terms of money but certain exceptions can be made.

D. Two previous governments have in the past decade tried to revamp the regulatory environment for higher education.

E. None of the above

## Correct Answers

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
C	B	C	B	D	E	A



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## Explanations:

1. Statement II is opposite of what is needed as this would improve quality in the Institutions. This is incorrect.

Statements I and III are correct and give valid reasons for the lack of quality.  
Hence, option C is correct.

2. I has not been mentioned anywhere and is incorrect.

'The intention is to leave the HECI to focus on quality while leaving funding of public institutions to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).'

II is incorrect.

'This springs from the government's announcement of a list of IoEs. The government has chosen three public and three private institutions for this status. The public institutions are the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and the Indian Institutes of Technology at Delhi and Mumbai. The private ones are the Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani, the JIO Institute and the Manipal Academy of Higher Education.'

III is correct.

Hence, option B is correct.

3. Euphoric: full of energy, excitement, and cheerfulness.

Castigating: reprimand/rebuke (someone) severely.

Deploing: feel or express strong condemnation of (something).

Lamenting: a passionate expression of grief or sorrow.

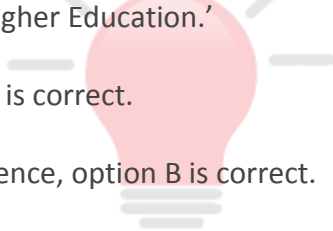
Now, if we read the paragraph we can see the author is criticizing the regulation of the education sector and elaborates on this in the entire paragraph.

Clearly, Option A can be eliminated quickly.

Option D can also be eliminated as the author is not sad or expressing grief but is angry.

Out of options B and C, C is a better choice as the author is not verbally scolding anyone (castigating) but is expressing disapproval and criticizing the heavy handedness of the government regulator in the education sector. Here, option C is a better fit.

Hence, option C is correct.



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4. Statements I and II are correct. If it is upto the government, it may use its discretion to make the Institutions comply with their ideologies and rules.

Statement III is incorrect. The ministry/government would simply be looking after funding and not functioning of the sector. This cannot be concluded.

Hence, option B is correct.

5. Statement I is correct. The entire paragraph talks about how an ideal Institution should focus on a wide variety of disciplines. This can be inferred and is correct.

Statement II is the opposite of what the paragraph states and is incorrect.

Statement III is correct as can be seen from the examples of IITs and IISc.

Hence, option D is correct.

6. All of the statements here talk about the JNU in a positive tone as well as highlight its diversity in terms of subjects, thinking and research. Also, the tone of the author also makes it clear that all these render JNU worthy of being in the list.

Hence, option E is correct.

7. Statement B is incorrect as the author is clearly unhappy with the list of IoEs and does not consider it to be a good start.

Statement C is incorrect as the idea of eminence being synonymous with money is not the central idea of the passage. IITs and IISc have not used money to get in the list.

Statement D is incorrect as this has not been mentioned anywhere and cannot be deemed to be the central idea of the passage.

Statement A is correct as this neatly states the gist of the passage- that even with a new regulator, the government's approach remains short sighted and this can be seen in its choices for IoEs.

Thus, option A is the best fit.





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