

## Government Quota seats in Private Universities

In the pursuit of quality education, accessibility should not be a luxury reserved for the affluent. Yet, for many years, private universities in the country seemed to prioritize exorbitant tuition fees over inclusivity, there was no mechanism to admit meritorious students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In a progressive move towards inclusivity, the government of Andhra Pradesh has intervened to ensure that even private universities uphold the principles of accessibility and affordability. Recognizing the systemic barriers that prevent deserving students from accessing quality education, the state has introduced **a government quota system**, mandating a portion of seats in private universities be reserved for students from various socio-economic backgrounds.

This bold step manifests in concrete measures, a 50% reservation in medical programs and a 35% reservation in all other programs within private universities has been introduced in the state. Also, when a well performing engineering college gets converted into a brownfield university, despite this transition, the government has made a steadfast commitment to maintaining the existing quota system. This means that the 70% government quota and 30% management quota will remain intact on the previous intake sanction, ensuring that meritorious students from all backgrounds continue to have opportunities to pursue higher education. This decision holds significant importance as it safeguards against any adverse impact on deserving individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. By preserving the established quota system, the government ensures that no meritorious student suffers due to the university's evolution.

Moreover, state government scholarships such as Jagananna Vidhya Deevena and Vasathi Deevena has extended to government quota students to further enhance accessibility to education. Imagine the prospect of receiving a quality education in prestigious private universities without bearing any financial burden, it's a ground breaking opportunity previously unheard of. **In the academic year 2020-21, 1916 students were admitted to private universities under the government quota. Among them, 1348 students were** fortunate to pursue their education free of cost. These numbers represent more than just statistics, they signify lives transformed, dreams realized, and barriers dismantled.

Across the country, as per UGC statistics, there are currently 129 Deemed to be Universities and 478 Private universities, each with its own unique landscape of educational opportunities. However, in many states, the absence of a government quota for meritorious students has posed challenges for access to quality education. Nevertheless, the concept of inclusion extends beyond mere enrollment figures, it encompasses the provision of high-quality education to deserving students as well regardless of their financial backgrounds, and have the opportunity to receive a top-notch education in Andhra Pradesh.

By acknowledging the importance of both inclusion and quality, these initiatives mark a significant stride towards fostering a more equitable educational landscape. They not only open doors for students who may have previously been marginalized but also ensure that their educational journey is enriched with the highest standards of academic excellence. AP is setting a commendable example for other states and educational institutions across the country. As we celebrate this milestone, it is crucial to recognize that the journey towards educational equity is ongoing. Challenges remain, and further steps must be taken to ensure that every student, irrespective of background, enjoys equal access to educational opportunities. However, the strides made by AP serve as a beacon of hope, illuminating a path towards a more just and inclusive educational landscape.