I-STEM Portal

In an effort to endorse digitization in the country and to link resources with researchers with a view to strengthening the Research and Development ecosystem in India, the I-STEM portal was launched. In this article, you can learn all about the I-STEM Portal for the UPSC exam.

What is I-STEM Portal?

The Multi-dimensional I-STEM Web Portal was launched by the Prime Minister in January 2020, during the 107th Indian Science Congress in Bengaluru.

- I-STEM stands for **Indian Science, Technology and Engineering Facilities Map**.
- The I-STEM national initiative is sponsored and funded by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA) to the Government of India.
- The I-STEM portal is developed and managed by the Nanoscience Centre of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.

Why was the I-STEM Portal launched?

- The portal was launched as an initiative for linking researchers and resources.
- This is facilitated through the creation of a database of Research and Development resources in various institutions in India.
- The researchers across the colleges and institutions can have easy access to research facilities and equipment anywhere in the country.
- I-STEM is a new and forward-looking paradigm for R&D and innovation in the country.

How can I-STEM portal be accessed?

- At present, the I-STEM portal hosts an inventory of about 20,000 equipment in more than 850 institutions across the country.
- It will allow the researchers to locate the specific facility they need available closest to them for their R&D work in India.
- The resources are available for utilisation by the researchers through an online reservation system made in consultation with the host institution and paid for through a secure payment gateway.
- The portal hosts a Quora-like forum that facilitates discussion on general topics.
- The portal also allows for consultations with a panel of experts.
- The I-STEM Mitra feature generates auto-responses to general questions on the portal.

Image source: https://www.istem.gov.in/

Benefits of I-STEM Portal

The I-STEM Portal has been chosen by the government of India as one of the transformative ideas.

- The R&D ecosystem in the country is strengthened by connecting researchers with the resources. The resources are meant to empower researchers and innovators throughout the country.
- Researchers can make the best use of facilities as well as equipment procured using public funds.
- Equipment sharing could drastically bring down the cost of research and development in the country.
- It would facilitate better exploitation of available resources.
- It would help academic researchers avoid the time-consuming process of locating and/or procuring the equipment necessary for research.
- It avoids duplication of research efforts by making available the outcomes of funded projects in public domain.