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Vidyanjali: Community and Private-Sector Participation in School Education

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Vidyanjali: Community and Private-Sector Participation in School Education

Practice: 7 MCQs



Students at a rural school in Kanchipuram district, Tamil Nadu. Government and Government-aided schools can ask for help on Vidyanjali. Photo by McKay Savage, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0.

Vidyanjali is a Government of India programme that lets people and organisations help schools. The article covers its growth, who can give and how help reaches a school. It also covers the rules, the latest figures and the 2017 UPSC question.

- **Exam answer:** the official 2017 UPSC key is (a), statement 2 only.
- **Run by:** the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education.
- **Launch:** Vidyanjali was launched on 16 June 2016 on a pilot basis. The Prime Minister launched the portal on 7 September 2021.
- **Volunteers:** they give services or assets in non-monetary form.
- **No pay:** volunteers get no salary or honorarium, and the school makes the final decision.

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1. What is Vidyanjali?

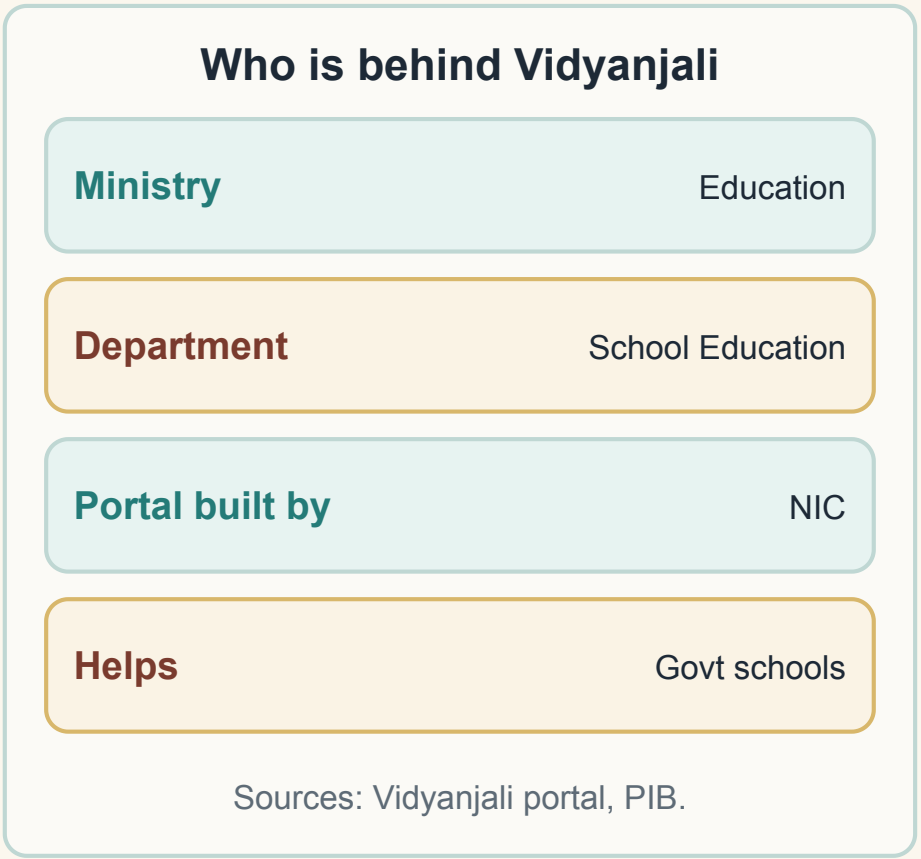
Vidyanjali is a Government of India programme. It lets people and organisations help schools directly. They can give time and skills, or they can give materials and equipment. This lesson also follows the 2017 UPSC question on Vidyanjali.

1.1 What does the name mean?

The name joins two Sanskrit words. **Vidya** means “correct knowledge” or “clarity”. **Anjali** means “an offering with both hands”.

1.2 Who runs it?

Vidyanjali is an initiative of the **Department of School Education and Literacy**. This department is part of the **Ministry of Education**. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) designs, develops and hosts the portal.



Who runs the programme and who it helps. Original explanatory diagram.

1.3 What is it meant to do?

The portal says the aim is to strengthen schools through community and private sector involvement. It connects schools with volunteers. A 2023 PIB release calls it a school volunteer management programme.

1.4 Which schools can take part?

The guidelines apply to central and state **Government schools** and **Government-aided schools**. The guidelines name no other kind of school.

Sources:

- Vidyanjali portal, About
- Ministry of Education, Vidyanjali guidelines
- PIB, 5 Aug 2026
- Vidyanjali portal, home page
- PIB, 14 Jul 2023

NITI Aayog runs Vidyanjali.

2. How did Vidyanjali grow from a pilot to a national portal?

Vidyanjali has two stages. A pilot was launched in 2016. A national portal was launched in 2021.

2.1 What happened in 2016?

The Central Government launched Vidyanjali as a school volunteer programme on **16 June 2016**. It ran as a pilot in **21 States and UTs**. Volunteers joined through an online portal built by MyGov.in.

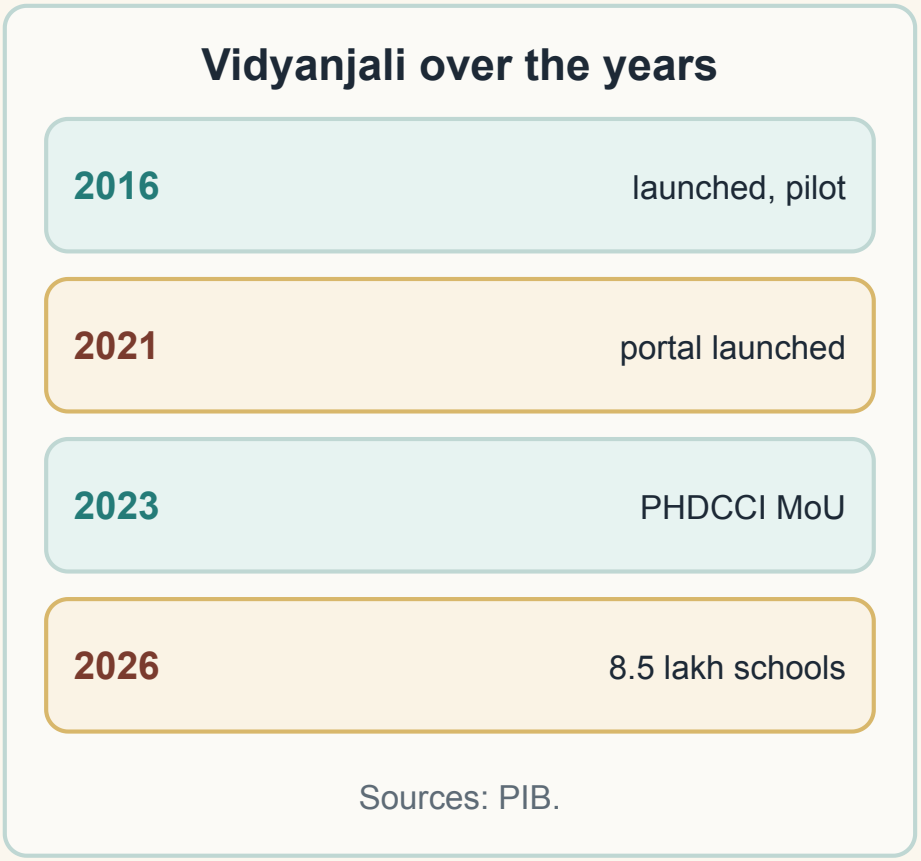
In the pilot, volunteers did co-scholastic activities with children in standards 1 to 8. Examples were reading to children, creative writing, public speaking, play acting and making story books.

2.2 What happened in 2021?

On **7 September 2021**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Vidyanjali portal. He did this at the inaugural conclave of Shikshak Parv 2021. PIB describes the portal as a way to help education volunteers, donors and CSR contributors support school development.

PIB says the portal was launched in line with the National Education Policy 2020.

PIB reports that the Prime Minister called Vidyanjali 2.0 a platform for the resolve of “Sabka Prayas”. He said the private sector has to come forward to raise the quality of education in government schools.



Four dates to remember. Original explanatory diagram.

2.3 What changed in 2023?

On **13 July 2023**, the Department of School Education and Literacy signed an MoU with the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI). The MoU aims to scale up industry CSR for schools through the portal.

The Department's Economic Adviser said it was the first time an industry body had come forward to consolidate corporate support for government schools in Vidyanjali.

Sources:

- PIB, 20 Mar 2017
- PIB, 7 Sep 2021
- Ministry of Education, Vidyanjali guidelines (section 2)
- PIB, 14 Jul 2023 (section 2)

The Prime Minister launched the Vidyanjali portal on 7 September 2021.

Remember this: how did the 2016 and 2021 versions differ?

The 2016 version was a pilot in 21 States and UTs for standards 1 to 8. The 2021 portal was launched by the Prime Minister. PIB says it was launched in line with NEP 2020.

3. Who can volunteer, and what can they give?

Many kinds of people can volunteer. Their help falls into two groups. This section explains both.

3.1 Who is a volunteer?

The guidelines define a volunteer as a citizen of India, an NRI or a person of Indian origin. An organisation, institution, company or group registered in India can also volunteer. The help is given free of charge. These people can volunteer:

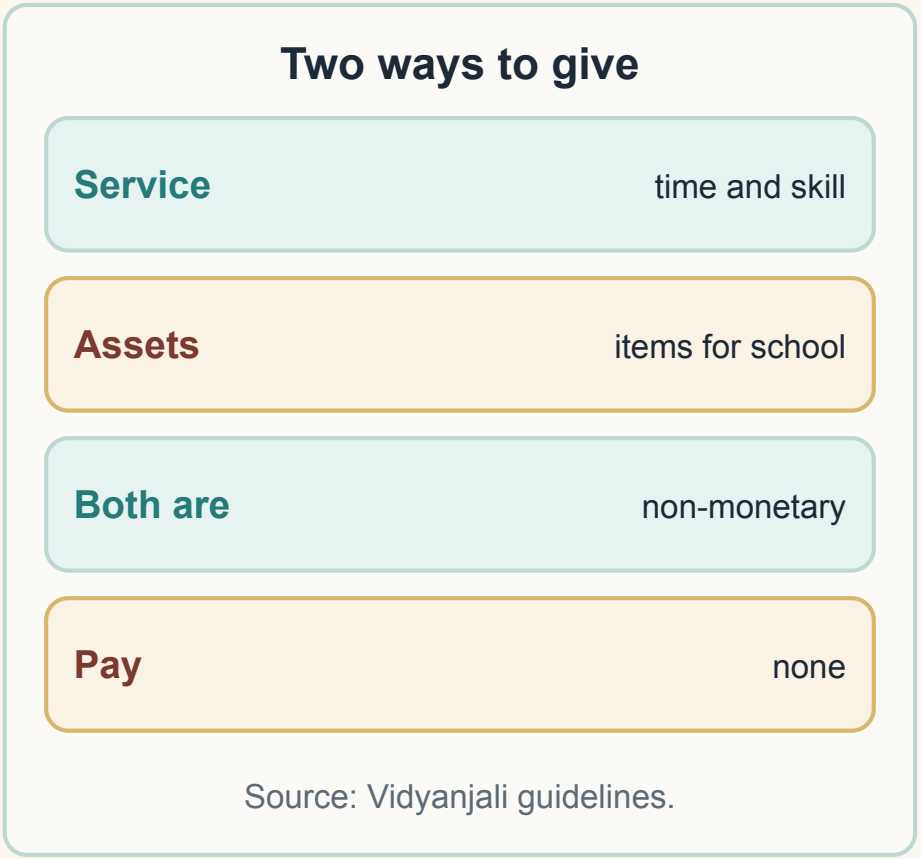
- Serving and retired teachers.
- Serving and retired scientists and government officials.
- Retired armed forces personnel.
- Self-employed and salaried professionals.
- Alumni of educational institutions.
- Homemakers and persons from the Indian diaspora.

Any other literate person can volunteer at a school that asks for help.

3.2 What are the two ways to give?

- **Service or activity:** sharing knowledge, skill or expertise through training, teaching, demonstration, practice or sponsorship.
- **Assets, materials or equipment:** physical items that a school asks for on the portal.

The guidelines call a contribution “any non-monetary form” of help. So a volunteer does not hand over cash.



What a volunteer can give. Original explanatory diagram.

3.3 What services can volunteers offer?

The guidelines list generic activities such as these:

- **Subject assistance** in school subjects, including local languages.
- **Art and craft**, yoga and sports.
- **Language teaching**, including Braille and Indian sign language.
- **Vocational skills** and adult education.
- **Career counselling** and support for entrance examinations.
- **Mentoring** of gifted and talented children.
- **Nutritional support** in addition to Mid-Day Meals.

PIB's 12 February 2026 release adds modern examples. It names workshops on Artificial Intelligence and coding, and support for Children with Special Needs.

3.4 What assets can volunteers give?

The portal groups assets into broad themes. These include:

- **Basic civil and electrical infrastructure.**
- **Classroom needs** and teaching-learning material.
- **Digital infrastructure.**
- **Sports and yoga equipment.**
- **Health and safety aids.**
- **Maintenance and repairs.**

PIB's 12 February 2026 release also names laboratories, sanitation infrastructure and renewable energy solutions.

Sources:

- Ministry of Education, Vidyanjali guidelines (section 3)
- Vidyanjali portal, About (section 3)

- PIB, 12 Feb 2026

A volunteer can give cash to a school through Vidyanjali.
Explain it back: what are the two ways to give?

A volunteer can give a service or activity. A volunteer can also give assets, materials or equipment. Both are non-monetary.

4. How does help reach a school?

The school asks first. The volunteer responds. The school then decides. This keeps the school in charge.

4.1 What does the school do?

- The school registers with its **UDISE+ code**, a registered mobile number and a one-time password.
- It posts a list of the services or assets it needs.
- It shortlists volunteers after reading their profiles.
- It meets them face to face or online.
- It decides whether to take up the offer.

The final decision on engaging a volunteer rests with the school authorities.



A government primary school building in the Balotra area of Rajasthan. A school like this can post its needs on the portal. Photo by JaniyonKaMagraEditor, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0.

4.2 What does the volunteer do?

- A volunteer registers as an individual, an NGO, or another organisation.
- The volunteer searches for a school by State, District, Block and school name.
- The volunteer browses requests and applies.
- A volunteer can offer to meet a request partly or fully.
- After the work, volunteers and schools can give each other feedback.

4.3 What if the gift is too small or too big?

- If a gift is smaller than the demand, the request stays open for other volunteers.
- If a gift is larger, the school accepts only what it needs. The volunteer is told to give the balance to another school.
- If a gift equals the demand, the request is closed.

4.4 Who keeps watch?

The guidelines name several administrators. They are the National Nodal Officer, State Nodal Officers and District Nodal Officers. Regional Nodal Officers of KVS and NVS and the school user are also named.

PIB's 12 February 2026 release says progress runs on a digital framework with approval, monitoring and feedback. States review progress through dashboards. Schools validate volunteer contributions.

Sources:

- Ministry of Education, Vidyanjali guidelines (section 4)
- PIB, 12 Feb 2026 (section 4)

The school makes the final decision on engaging a volunteer.

5. How do NGOs and companies join?

NGOs and CSR organisations use special routes. Each route has its own papers and its own approval.

5.1 How does an NGO register?

An NGO uses its **NGO DARPAN Unique ID**. NITI Aayog issues this ID. The DARPAN Portal then verifies it.

5.2 How does a CSR organisation register?

A CSR organisation submits valid registration papers. These can be a PAN, a GST Registration Certificate or a Udyam Registration Certificate. Vidyanjali then offers two frameworks:

- **CSR Bulk Engagement:** the organisation supports identified needs across many schools.
- **Adopt-a-School Model:** the organisation gives sustained support to one school.



Two routes into Vidyanjali. Original explanatory diagram.

5.3 Who approves these registrations?

The concerned State or UT approves NGO and CSR registrations. **Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)** are approved at the Central level instead.

5.4 What is the CSR module?

The CSR module helps companies that do CSR work. Companies can create and join educational projects for specific States and UTs. They can fund a project partly or fully.

The portal lists thematic areas such as digital infrastructure, teaching-learning material, health and safety aids, and maintenance and repairs. On 8 October 2026 the home page showed 1147 projects open for CSR participation.

Sources:

- PIB, 5 Aug 2026 (section 5)
- Vidyanjali portal, CSR module
- Vidyanjali portal, home page (section 5)

Remember this: what does each type of organisation show?

NGOs show their DARPAN ID. CSR organisations show PAN, GST or Udyam papers. Both are verified before approval.

6. What rules protect schools and children?

Vidyanjali is a volunteer platform, not a job platform. The guidelines set clear limits for volunteers and for schools.

6.1 Do volunteers get paid?

No. The guidelines say no funds, salary or honorarium goes to a volunteer. They also say the work does not give a claim to a job.

- The time served cannot be claimed as full-time work experience.
- A school's certificate cannot be used as an experience certificate.

The portal also warns that Vidyanjali offers no jobs, employment or paid opportunities. It calls any such claim fraudulent.

6.2 Can volunteers take over teaching?

No. The guidelines say volunteer services may not form the major part of teaching and learning. Schools should use volunteers mainly for areas where they lack enough staff or expertise.

- Permanent teachers supervise and monitor the volunteers' work.
- The work must be purely academic or co-curricular.
- It must not promote any particular ideology or practice.

6.3 Who checks the volunteer?

The **school** carries out background checks and capability checks. If an issue arises, it is the sole responsibility of the school or its administration system. The guidelines also say the Ministry is not responsible for checking volunteers' credentials.

Volunteers need to submit an identity proof to the school before they work. An Aadhaar card or any other Government of India ID will do.

6.4 What rules apply to donated equipment?

- Donated items should be at least **BIS marked**.
- They should be in working condition. Schools must not become a dumping ground for e-waste.
- A gift should include a commitment to regular maintenance.
- The volunteer gives a self-certificate that the item is legally owned and works well. Ownership passes to the school.

Sources:

- Ministry of Education, Vidyanjali guidelines (section 6)
- Vidyanjali portal, home page (section 6)

A volunteer gets a salary or honorarium from the school.

7. How big is Vidyanjali, and where does it fit?

Vidyanjali is large by registrations. It also fits the National Education Policy 2020. This section gives the figures and the policy link.

7.1 Which parts of the NEP 2020 does it follow?

PIB says NEP 2020 Para 3.7 asks for more community and alumni involvement in volunteer efforts. These efforts include one-to-one tutoring, literacy and remedial support, teaching support and career guidance.

The guidelines also cite Para 2.7. It says every literate member of the community could commit to teaching one student to read.

7.2 How does it relate to Samagra Shiksha?

PIB says Vidyanjali complements Government efforts under Samagra Shiksha. In 2026 it also said the interventions supplement Government efforts. So volunteer help sits beside government programmes. It does not replace them.

7.3 What do the official figures say?

- **12 February 2026:** nearly **8.5 lakh schools** and more than **5 lakh volunteers** onboarded since September 2021.
- The same release counts more than **56,734** service activities and **35,695** asset contributions completed.

- It says over **2 crore** students benefited.
- **5 August 2026:** in the last year, **1,27,884 schools**, **32,581 volunteers** and **1,126** CSR organisations, NGOs and institutions newly registered.

The portal home page is a live counter. On 8 October 2026 it showed more than 8.79 lakh onboarded schools and more than 5.81 lakh registered volunteers. It also showed over 2.29 crore students benefited and about 3,760 CSR or NGO registrations. Treat these as a snapshot, because the counter keeps changing.

Size on 12 February 2026

Schools	nearly 8.5 lakh
Volunteers	over 5 lakh
Students	over 2 crore
Dated	12 Feb 2026

Source: PIB.

Official figures from a Rajya Sabha reply. Original explanatory diagram.

7.4 What has it done on the ground?

PIB's 5 August 2026 release gives these examples:

- AI and Robotics Innovation Labs in Government schools in **Delhi**.
- Digital classrooms and teacher capacity building in **Dholpur, Rajasthan**.
- Stronger digital infrastructure in **Mamit, Mizoram**.
- Desktop computers for Government schools in **Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh**, given by NICSI.
- BaLA painting in Government schools in **Begusarai, Bihar**.

PIB names Dholpur and Mamit as Aspirational Districts where CSR-supported work was facilitated.

Sources:

- PIB, 12 Feb 2026 (section 7)
- PIB, 5 Aug 2026 (section 7)
- Ministry of Education, Vidyanjali guidelines (section 7)
- ANI, 5 Aug 2026
- Vidyanjali portal, home page (section 7)

8. How do exams test Vidyanjali?

UPSC asked about Vidyanjali in the Civil Services Prelims 2017. The question tests the purpose of the scheme. It also tests a detail that is easy to get wrong.

8.1 How do you solve the 2017 question?

- **Statement 1** is wrong. Vidyanjali connects volunteers with Government and Government-aided schools. It does not bring foreign campuses to India.

- **Statement 2** is right. The programme aims to strengthen schools through community and private sector involvement.
- **Statement 3** is wrong. It speaks of voluntary monetary contributions for infrastructure. The Ministry's guidelines call a contribution non-monetary. The official key is (a), **2 only**.

Note the link to the rules. The guidelines say assets cannot be given as monetary support. So a statement about monetary contributions does not describe Vidyanjali. Match the statements to the answer, not just the option letter.

8.2 What are the common traps?

- **Pilot or relaunch:** the programme was launched on 16 June 2016 as a pilot. The portal dates from 7 September 2021.
- **Which body:** the Department of School Education and Literacy runs it. NITI Aayog only issues the NGO DARPAN ID.
- **Pay:** volunteers get no salary or honorarium.
- **Which schools:** Government and Government-aided schools only.
- **Teaching role:** volunteers support teachers. They do not form the major part of teaching.

8.3 Which exam asked this question?

UPSC CSP 2017, Q88.
What is the purpose of 'Vidyanjali Yojana' ?
1. To enable the famous foreign educational institutions to open their campuses in India.
2. To increase the quality of education provided in government schools by taking help from the private sector and the community.
3. To encourage voluntary monetary contributions from private individuals and organizations so as to improve the infrastructure facilities for primary and secondary schools.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :
(a) 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 1 and 2 only
(d) 2 and 3 only

View this question.

Sources:

- Site paper page, UPSC CSP 2017 GS Paper I
- UPSC answer key, CSP 2017 GS Paper I
- Vidyanjali portal, home page (section 8)
- PIB, 14 Jul 2023 (section 8)
- Ministry of Education, Vidyanjali guidelines (section 8)
- PIB, 20 Mar 2017 (section 8)
- PIB, 7 Sep 2021 (section 8)
- PIB, 5 Aug 2026 (section 8)

Think it through: why is statement 3 in the 2017 question wrong?

Statement 3 speaks of monetary contributions. Under the guidelines, a contribution is non-monetary. So only statement 2 is correct, and the official key is (a).

Your understanding checks

Your 5 quick checks Answered 0 of 5 · Correct 0
This score resets when the page reloads.

Practice: 7 MCQs

Practice MCQs

1. Vidyanjali, a scheme connecting government schools with volunteers, is an initiative of which body?

A. NITI Aayog

B. The Department of School Education and Literacy

C. The University Grants Commission

D. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

See answer ↓

2. On which date did the Prime Minister launch the Vidyanjali portal at Shikshak Parv 2021?

A. 12 February 2026

B. 16 June 2016

C. 7 September 2021

D. 13 July 2023

See answer ↓

3. NGOs register on Vidyanjali using which ID, issued by NITI Aayog?

A. GST Registration Certificate

B. Udyam Registration Certificate

C. PAN

D. NGO DARPAN Unique ID

See answer ↓

4. Which Vidyanjali CSR framework gives sustained support to one identified school?

A. Adopt-a-School Model

B. CSR Bulk Engagement

C. NGO DARPAN Model

D. Samagra Shiksha Model

See answer ↓

5. Who makes the final decision on engaging a volunteer under the Vidyanjali guidelines?

A. The National Nodal Officer

B. The volunteer's organisation

C. The District Nodal Officer

D. The school authorities

See answer ↓

6. What do the Vidyanjali guidelines say about payment to a volunteer?

A. No funds, salary or honorarium

B. A stipend from the State

C. A salary from the school

D. A fixed monthly honorarium

See answer ↓

7. A school registers on Vidyanjali using which code?

A. UDISE+ code

B. NGO DARPAN ID

C. PAN number

D. Udyam number

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.**
   Vidyanjali is an initiative of the Department of School Education and Literacy. This department is part of the Ministry of Education. The National Informatics Centre builds and hosts the portal. NITI Aayog only issues the NGO DARPAN ID that NGOs use to register.
   ↑ Q1
2. **C.**
   The Prime Minister launched the Vidyanjali portal on 7 September 2021. This was at the inaugural conclave of Shikshak Parv 2021. Vidyanjali was launched on 16 June 2016 on a pilot basis. A PHDCCI MoU followed in July 2023.
   ↑ Q2
3. **D.**
   An NGO registers with its NGO DARPAN Unique ID. NITI Aayog issues this ID. The DARPAN Portal then verifies it. A CSR organisation shows PAN, GST or Udyam papers instead.
   ↑ Q3
4. **A.**
   Vidyanjali has two CSR frameworks. Under Bulk Engagement, an organisation supports identified needs across many schools. Under the Adopt-a-School Model, it gives sustained support to one identified school.
   ↑ Q4
5. **D.**
   The final decision on engaging a volunteer rests with the school authorities. The school posts its needs, shortlists volunteers and meets them. The school also carries out background checks.
   ↑ Q5
6. **A.**
   The guidelines say no funds, salary or honorarium goes to a volunteer. The work gives no claim to a job. The portal also warns that Vidyanjali offers no jobs or paid opportunities.
   ↑ Q6

7. **A.**

   A school registers on Vidyanjali with its UDISE+ code. It also uses a registered mobile number and a one-time password. After that it can post its list of needs.

   ↑ Q7

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