Institution of National Importance (INI) tag

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Why in News?

In December 2025, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on education recommended that the Union government consider granting the Auroville Foundation the status of an Institution of National Importance (INI).

- **Institutes of National Importance (INIs) –** These are premier public bodies, formulated under the Government of India through the ***Act of Parliament***.
- **Purpose –** To develop highly skilled professionals in fields like *engineering, medicine, management, science and so on*.
- **Legal Basis –** Mentioned in the Constitution (7th Schedule, Entry 63) and reinforced by the UGC Act, 1956 (Section 22).
- **Examples of INI –** IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, NITs, etc.
- **Present status –** As of mid-2024, India has ***around 171 INIs,*** with categories like 23 IITs, 20 AIIMS, 21 IIMs, and many others making up the total.

Benefits of INIs

- Greater independence allows institutions to improve **efficiency, quality, and accountability**.
- Access to **enhanced financial support** from the government.
- Ability to **deliver higher standards** of education and strengthen research infrastructure.
- Capacity for quicker decisions without bureaucratic delays and very limited political interference in day-to-day functioning.
- Potential to offer more scholarships to deserving students.
- Opportunity to expand sports facilities, seminars, and extracurricular activities.

Quick Fact

Auroville & INI Status

• Auroville is an ***experimental township*** located in Tamil Nadu, near Pondicherry.
• Founded in 1968 to realise human unity and the transformation of consciousness.
• The Parliamentary committee suggests amending the ***Auroville Foundation Act (1988)*** to recognise Auroville as an INI.
• **Reason** – UNESCO has passed multiple resolutions since 1966 supporting Auroville, which would acknowledge Auroville's role in international understanding and peace promotion.
• **Concerns of Residents** – The INI status would place Auroville under a Parliament-defined framework, reducing its autonomy, and the township's unique experimental character could fade.

References

1. The Hindu | From universal township to national institution?
2. Digital Sansad | Institutes of National Importance

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