



Higher Education System in India: A Comparative Analysis

KEYWORDS

Indian Higher Education, GER, International Comparison etc.

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ABSTRACT Education has always been considered as the key component of human development and greatest liberating force. In order to become prosperous global economy, India has to qualitatively strengthen higher education. Higher education has significant role in supporting knowledge driven economic growth strategies. The Indian education sector has been recognized as a "Sunrise Sector" for investment in the recent past. The Government has also been proactively playing the role of facilitator in this sector. With relatively stagnant growth of public sector, private sector now accounts for 63 per cent of the total higher education institutions and 52 per cent of the total enrolments in Indian higher education. The aim of the paper is to study the growth of structure of higher education in India. The paper also analyzed the GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) in higher education with some imperatives of Indian higher education.

Introduction

"Indian higher education, has grown dramatically in the past six decades but this expansion has been largely unaffected by the many plans and proposals to guide it. At the same time that expansion has been the hallmark of higher education and systemic reforms have largely failed, there has been much change in Indian Higher Education of this change has been negative deteriorating standards for much of the system, student political activism, the like and there is little doubt that these characterizations are correct...." (UGC & Higher Education system in India, by-Sharda Mishra). Over the last two decades, India has remarkably transformed its higher education landscape. India has also undertaken large-scale reforms to better faculty-student ratios by making teaching an attractive career path, expanding capacity for doctoral students at research universities and delinking educational qualifications from teaching eligibility (FICCI, 2013).

Various Committees and statutory bodies have reviewed the higher education scenario in the country and have recommended future courses of action. Kothari Commission, National Knowledge Commission, CAGE Committee on Autonomy in Higher education and Yashpal Committee are some of the major 78 contributors on the subject. Similarly, the lack of such education causes the inverse to occur; i.e. the greater the level of higher education in a society, whether in stock or flow forms, the greater the level of human development can be, through its influence on two main components of human development index: life expectancy, and GDP per capita (Tilak, 1994).

Objectives:

This research paper has following objectives:

- To understand the structure of Higher Education in India.
- To access the GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) for Higher Education in India.
- To compare Indian education at International level.
- To examine various Imperatives for India's higher education system.

Data collection:

The research paper is based on secondary data. Various

sources that have been used for the same include the reports and documents of Ministry of Human Resource Development, various regulatory bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), accreditation organizations, National Sample Survey Organization etc.

Observations and Findings:

The observations and findings with regard to the Indian higher education have been mentioned here along the same lines as the objectives, i.e. to analyse the structure of higher education in India, to examine the GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) for Higher Education and to understand the various Imperatives for India's higher education system.

Structure of Higher Education in India:

Higher education is recognized as a critical factor in inclusive and faster growth in any country including India. It fosters higher growth rate and enables people to compete in a globalize world. Indian higher education system has undergone massive expansion since independence.

In India the institutional framework consists of Universities established by an Act of Parliament (Central Universities) or of a State Legislature (State Universities), Deemed Universities (institutions which have been accorded the status of a university with authority to award their own degrees through central government notification), Institutes of National Importance (prestigious institutions awarded the said status by Parliament), and Institutions established by State Legislative Act and colleges affiliated with the University (both government-aided and unaided (Kaul, 2006). According to MHRD Annual report 2009-2010, as of March 2009, the country had 26455 institutes of higher education; 504 universities and university level institutions and 25,951 colleges. Table 1 shows the type of institution and there growth till 2009-2010

Year	Universities	Colleges	Total
1947-48	20	496	516
1950-51	28	578	606
1960-61	45	1819	1864
1970-71	93	3227	3320
1980-81	123	4738	4861
1990-91	184	5748	5932

2000-01	266	11146	11412
2004-05	348	17625	17973
2005-06	355	18064	18419
2006-07	367	19000	19367
2007-08	416	20677	21093
2008-09	480	22000	22480
2009-10	504	25951	26455

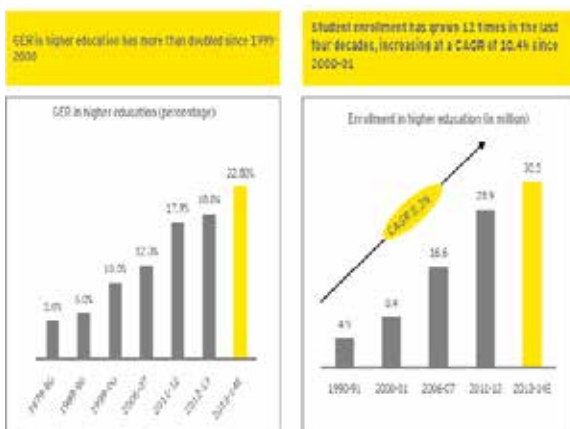
Table-1: All India Growth of institutions

Source: UGC and Higher Education in India, Annual Reports 2008. (Universities include central, state, private-Deemed and also institution of national importance established both by the central and state legislatures).

Table 1 clearly shows the growth of institutions in the form of universities and colleges. The growth in number of university and colleges has continuously increased from just 20 universities in 1947-48 to 504 universities in 2009-10. In case of colleges, the number was 496 in 1947-48, which has raised to 25951 in 2009-10.

GER in higher education in India:

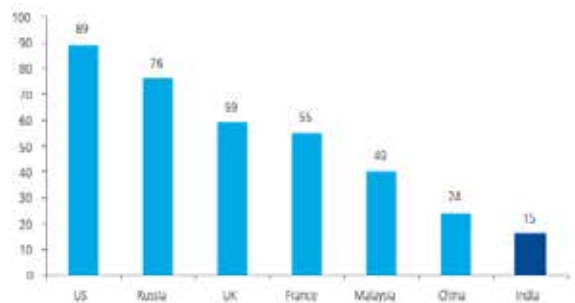
The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh (2005) has optimistically forecast that the 21st Century will be the "knowledge century", by which he refers to the socio-economic transformation that the country is projected to go through in the 21st century as a result of knowledge creation. The GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) of India is meager 13.8% while Global Average is 26%. According to data for 2009-10, while the GER in higher education in India was 17.1 for males, it was only 12.7 for females. Additionally, while the overall GER for the population was 15%, the corresponding figures for SCs and STs were 11.1 and 10.3, respectively. There are regional variations too with Uttar Pradesh having a GER of 10.9 while Delhi has a GER of 47.9 (Deloitte, 2012).



Source: Twelfth Five Year Plan: Chapter on higher education, UGC: Higher education in India at a glance, June 2013, MHRD, Annual report 2011-12 EY estimates.

International comparison of Indian Higher Education:

One can describe various reasons why students chose to abroad for higher studies. A certain specialized course may not be available within the country and hence some students may seek out a foreign land where this is offered-a 'push' factor. There are others who prefer an overseas destination as it gives a broader horizon, a richer cultural understanding or simply a different experience. Despite these strides of progress, India's higher education institutions are not yet the best in the world fewer than 25 universities in the top 200.

Fig. 2: GER in higher education (2009)-international comparison

Source: UNESCO institute for statistics database

The above graph shows the international comparison of GER(Gross Enrolment Ratio) in higher education. The GER in higher education is much high in US, Russia, UK, France, Malaysia and China as compared to India. The GER percentage is 89% in US and 76% in Russia, where as the GER in India is just 15% in case of higher education.

Imperatives for India's Higher Education System:

The imperative of the previous decade towards 'good governance' in all realms- business, administration and politics – has resulted in dramatic changes in the governance framework for higher education in areas both internal to institutions (their management and leadership structures) as well as areas external to institutions (the regulatory framework). While much has been done towards ensuring quality, instituting accountability, enabling private participation, promoting internationalization and so on. Various imperatives of higher education are as follows:

Social Imperative:

1. Creating additional capacity of 40 million to serve the incremental demand for higher education (to achieve a GER of 50%).
2. Providing affordable access to disadvantaged / low income segments Achieving reduced disparity in GER across geographies, and economic and social groups.
3. Generating greater awareness leading to improved human development and social indicators (life expectancy, health, sanitation, law and order).

Economic Imperatives:

1. Developing a skilled, job-ready and productive work force by imparting technical and soft skills training.
2. Imparting education / skills that enable students to become entrepreneurs.
3. Enabling development of successful economic models at the grass-root (district/block) level through community engagement.

Intellectual Imperatives:

1. Developing research-focused universities that deliver high quality research output and research-focused graduates.
2. Developing India as a destination for higher education for students, faculty, researchers and employers from all over the world.

Conclusion and Policy Implications:

Over the past few decades, the global economy has shifted from being manufacturing-centric to a knowledge-driven and as countries move up the ladder of development, the contribution of Higher education is essential to build a workforce capable of underpinning a modern, competitive economy. In this paper we have presented the devel-

opment and present scenario of higher education in India. The study found out that country had 26455 institutes of higher education; 504 universities and university level institutions and 25,951 colleges.

Collection and dissemination of data on higher education suffers from incomplete coverage, inordinate time lag etc. Due to this, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which is being calculated on the basis of available data, does not reflect the correct picture of the country's development in respect of Higher Education sector. Also, the GER in higher education in India is much lower as compared to other nations of the world. Government has set a target of increasing the GER from the present level of about 12% to 15% by the end of XI Five Year Plan and to 30% by the year 2020 (MHRD, 2011). Moreover, the measures to deal with structural challenges such as shortage of quality faculty and lack of adequate physical structure should be expedited. In the end, the various imperatives such as social, economic and intellectual imperatives has done much towards ensuring quality, instituting accountability, promoting internationalization and so on. Thus, there is a sense of urgency in policy makers, institution leaders and faculty to expand the system at a fast enough pace to meet the surge in demand, while increasing quality and ensuring equitable access.

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