

**A STUDY ON INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM: CHALLENGES,
OPPORTUNITIES & REMEDIES**

Sonia Gandhi

Assistant Professor,

Delhi School of Professional Studies and Research

Affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University

Abstract

The mankind has finally felt and realized that the holistic success of the countries and the world is in a straight line with their education systems. Education system of the country is the biggest strength of that Nation. A developed country is without doubt a country with high level of education too. Indian higher education system is the 3rd largest in the world, first position held by the United States and at the second position we have the China. After achieving the independence, India as a country is gradually and consistently progressing in the educational field. India as a country has been facing lot of challenges pertaining to the higher education system of the country but on the other hand the country also has lot of positives to battle these threats and to make the HES of India much effective. There is a need for additional transparency and accountability in the system, the role of higher educational institutions, and flourishing scientific research about learning process and how to make learning more effective is of dominant value. Our country needs well educated and skilled people who can act as a strong driving force for our economy in the future. India is a big provider of the highly skilled people to the world and therefore it should be trouble-free task for India to transform our country in to a developed one. The study undertaken aims to illustrate the challenges and to emphasis on the opportunities which are prevailing with respect to the higher education system in India.

Keywords: Indian Educational Sector, Indian Higher Education System, Opportunities, Challenges, Colleges, Universities

Introduction

The key to the development of nation lies in cultivation of talents and practical virtues. The awakened mind, right knowledge, sophisticated skills and desirable attitudes are the indicators of national development. Education helps in unfolding the latent powers or talents for the purpose of harnessing the process of national development and personal development. The NPE (1986) beautifully states, “The human being is a positive asset and a valuable national resource which need to be cherished, nurtured and developed. The catalyst action of education in this context needs to be planned and implemented meticulously”. Education brings a synthesis between cultural and scientific values which is essential for development of a nation. In this way, education plays a very pivotal role in bringing about national development. It is education which acts as a powerful instrument to bring about national development in its true sense. A nation cannot sit idle ignoring its role towards education.

It should invest on education today and tomorrow for a better life of the nation and her people. NPE (1986) conceived education as a “unique investment in the present and the future.”

HES is very important for the country, as it is an influential instrument to construct knowledge-based society. With the mounting dimension and multiplicity of the HES predominantly in terms of educational courses offered, managerial bodies and geographical and location wise coverage, it has become indispensable to fabricate a data reservoir and reliable record of the higher education. Prevailing and the available data base on HES are insufficient and obsolete. The process of compilation and distribution of data on higher education is facing a trouble in terms of incompleteness in the coverage, excessive time gap etc. Due to this reason, The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the country, which is calculated on the basis of existing data, does not reveals the correct picture of the India’s development in terms of Higher Education sector? Government has laid down a target of escalating the GER to 30% by the year 2020. Government has taken various initiatives during XI Five Year Plan to increase the GER. There is an urgent requirement for obtaining and maintain reliable and comprehensive data-base to measure the actual GER and to improve the GER. An authentic database on HES is also necessary for future planning, formulation of the policies, fulfilling the national & international commitments, quality research etc.

Research Objectives

1. To study the Indian Higher Education System.
2. To Study the Challenges with regards to the HES of India.
3. To Study the Growth of Higher Education Sector in India.

Research Methodology

Nature of Study

The nature of the study undertaken is mainly descriptive.

Secondary Data

To conduct this study secondary data is congregated and utilised from the various websites, reports and the research journals.

Results & Discussion

Scenario of HES in India

According to the World Bank India holds the third rank in the world in terms of HES, after the US and China. HES of India is targeting 13% of the total population with the age bracket of 18yrs. to 23yrs.

As per the survey result of AISHE 2017-18:

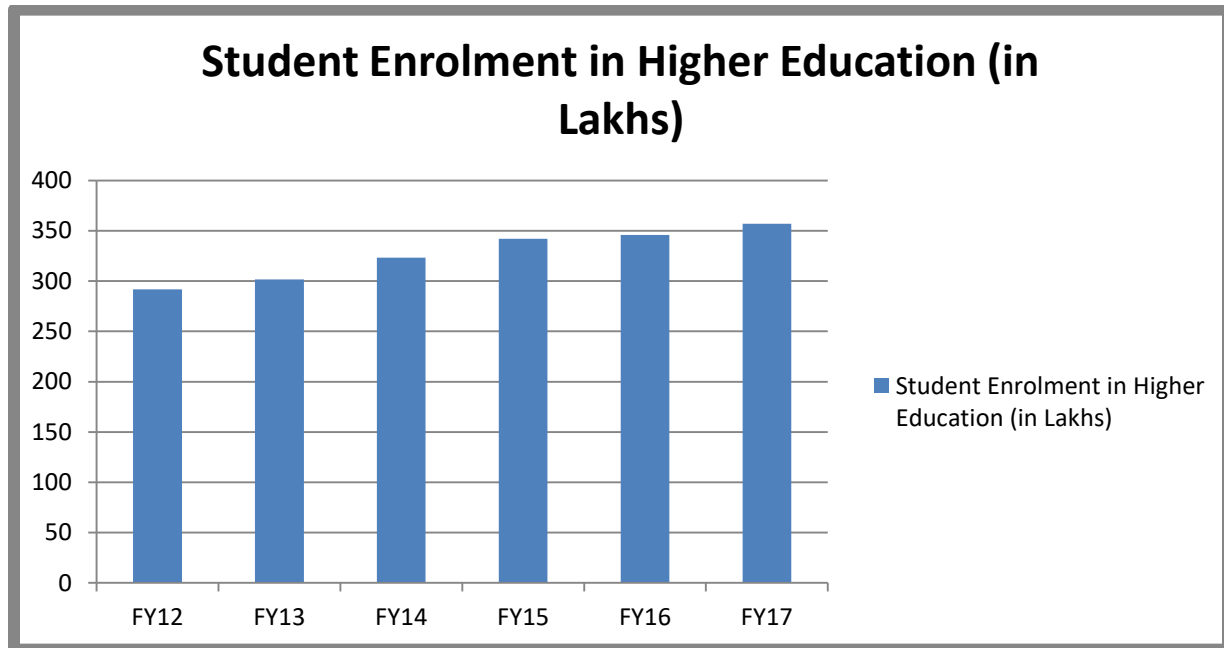
Indian Higher Education Data FY17-18	Total No.
Total Universities In India	903
Total colleges In India	40,026
Universities in Rural india	357
Colleges in Rural India (60.48%)	24207
Colleges Solely for India (11.04%) in India	4418
Colleges Running Ph.D Programme in India (3.6%)	1440

Source: AISHE Survey Report 2017-18

Trends in Universities and Colleges		
Year	No. Of University	No. Of Colleges
FY13	667	35,525
FY14	723	36,634
FY15	760	38,498
FY16	799	39,071
FY17	903	40,026

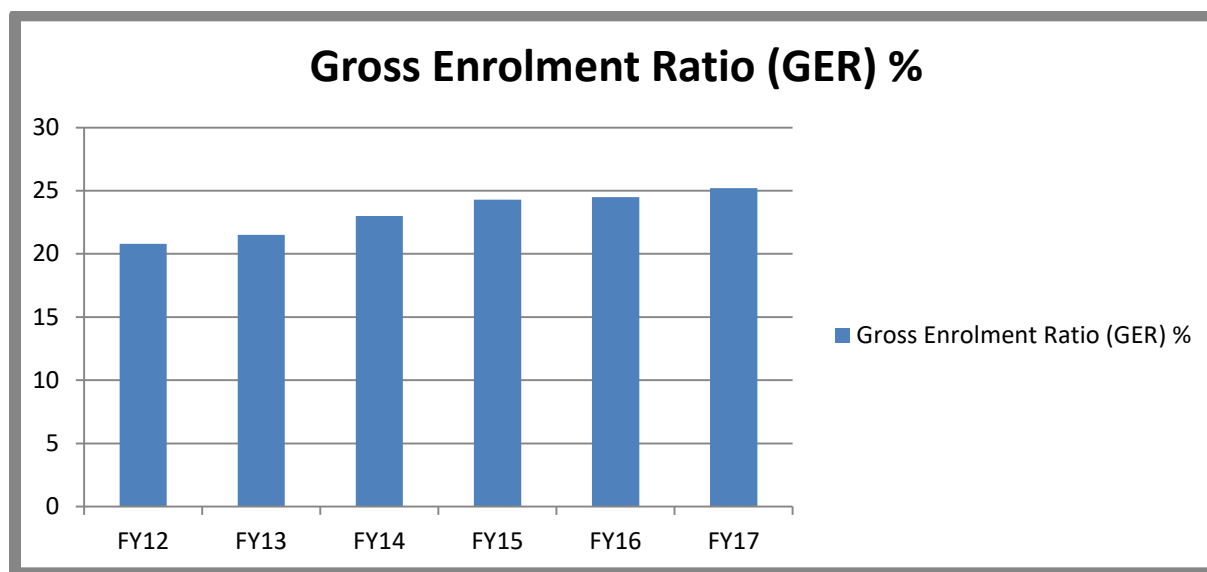
Source: AISHE Survey Report 2017-18

- There is growth of 35.38% in the No. of Universities in India from FY13 to FY17.
- There is growth of 12.67% in the No. of Colleges in India from FY13 to FY17.



Source : AISHE Survey Report 2017-18

- The Student Enrolment for the FY17 is 357.1 lakhs as compared to 291.8 lakhs in FY12; there is a growth of 22.3% in 5 yrs.



Source: AISHE Survey Report 2017-18

- The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of Indian HES is 25.8%, which are calculated for age bracket of 18-23 years.
- The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for male population in India is 26.3%
- The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for female's population in India is 25.4%.

The regulatory structure of the Indian Higher Education

The regulatory structure governing the Indian HES is multifaceted with roles and responsibilities being distributed between both the central and state governments. The University Grant Commission (UGC) which was established in 1956 is the top most body governing and regulating the university level education in India.

Central Government: In India the main authority at the central level is “Ministry of Human Resource Development” (MHRD), through MHRD the central government regulates and defines the policies for the overall HES of the country.

State Government: The state government operates through respective government departments for higher education related matters. For maintaining and regulating the functioning of HES at the state level state advisory boards and state councils have been established by most of the states. “The Central Advisory Board of Education” (CABE) also exists in India which acts as a common platform for the central government as well as the state.

Regulatory and Professional Councils: The main governing body for the higher education in India is UGC, apart from this there also exists “All India Council for Technical Education”

(AICTE) and professional councils like “Bar Councils of India” (BCI) which are given the responsibilities related to effectual management and regulation of the HES in India.

Accreditation Bodies: In India there also exist the accreditation bodies like the “National Assessment and Accreditation Council” (NAAC) and “National Board of Accreditation” (NBA).

The Drivers & the Opportunities related to the Indian Higher Education:



- **Market Size**

India possesses a huge population i.e.500 million people in the age group of 5-24 yrs. This is a very prominent market prospect for the India as country. India has achieved the mark of US\$ 91.7 billion in FY18 and is likely to touch the mark of US\$ 101.1 billion in FY19.

- **E- Learning**

E- Learning is also one of the biggest driver & opportunity for the India. E- Learning sector is estimated to touch the mark of US\$ 1.96 billion by 2021 with around 9.5 million users. No. One position is grabbed by US while India holds second position in the world in terms of E-Learning.

- **Foreign Investments/ Recent developments.**

There has been a huge inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) amounting to US\$ 2.47 billion into the education sector in India in a span of last 19yrs from the year 2000 to the year 2019.

Major investments and developments in the Indian education & Training Sector are as follows:

1. There have been 18 merger and acquisition deals of value around US\$ 49 million in 2017 in Indian educational Sector.

2. 3,500 start-ups out of the total start-ups in India are related to the education sector. Total funding received by these start-ups is cumulating to US\$ 700 million in 2018.
3. The Government of India through MHRD aims to acquire around Rs 1 lakh crore from private companies and HNIs of the country to sponsor and fund the improvement of HES in the country.
4. India has entered into a loan agreement with World Bank related to the “Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion” (SANKALP) Project to augment the overall system and mechanism for skills development.
5. In order to enhance & support the Vocational Training for the youth of India, Singapore is going to establish its first skill development centre in Assam.

Government Initiatives

1. Establishment of “Innovation Cell and Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements” (ARIIA) in August 2018 to promote the innovation in the education sector.
2. The second phase of “Unnat Bharat Abhiyan” was launched which targets to connect the higher educational institutions in the country with minimum of 5 villages in 2018. The scheme covers 750 such institutions all over the country.
3. To advance and improve the impact of the “Skill India Mission”, two new schemes have been launched: “Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion” (SANKALP) and “Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement” (STRIVE).
4. To promote coordination between the government bodies, educational bodies and the public of India, the “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” (EBSB) campaign has been initiated by MHRD.
5. The Skill India initiative – “Kaushal Bharat, Kushal Bharat”. With a target of train and make 400 million people employable by the year 2022. To strengthen the Skill India there are more initiatives which are launched like: “Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana” (PMKVY), “National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship” 2015, “Skill Loan scheme”, and the “National Skill Development Mission”.
6. In the last four years the present Government of India has initiated the process for establishment of 141 universities and 7 IITs.

Issues related to Higher Education in India:

1. Lack of infrastructure

Proper & Suitable Infrastructure is still missing with majority of the educational institutions, which acts as a major hindrance in quality education.

2. Poor global ranking of institutes

Only 4 Indian universities could make a mark among the first 400 universities in the world. This is mainly because of far above the ground level of faculty-student ratio which prevails in India and also due to lack of research capacity.

3. Education system in India

Education system in India is primarily information based rather than knowledge based.

4. Huge Gap between education provided and industry required education

There is massive gap between the education which is imparted and the education which is required by the industries & companies, they face the problem to find suitable employee who are work ready. Thus Companies are spending huge amount on training and development of the employees.

5. Gender issues

The discrimination in the society still prevails & it's very clearly visible in the educational sector too.

6. Costly higher education

The fees structure is on a continuous rise and very negligible amount of subsidy is provided to the students.

7. Inadequate Funding from the government

There is a huge demand for the funds while the supply is not matching the gap. There is a huge demand for the financial resources to in order to achieve the quality in educational sector.

Remedies & Suggestions related to Indian Higher Education System:

1. Technological Advancement

Education System needs technological advancement in order to create better infrastructure and enhance the quality of teaching.

2. Focus on teacher training

Training for the Teachers is of the most important parameter that needs to be focused on to ensure effectiveness in the teaching process.

3. **Financial Contribution by Government**

As a country the target expenditure on the education sector is 6% of the GDP but in reality we are only contributing 2.7% of the GDP i.e. 4.41 lakh crore.

4. **Strive to build inclusive education system**

It should be ensured that all the sections of the society should be included and taken care of with respect to the advancement & growth in education sector. The benefits of the HES should reach to the all the levels and sections.

5. **Enhancement of the quality education**

The quality of the education imparted should be worked on. The education should be value adding and enriching.

6. **Effective implementation of the PPP model in the country.**

We need to create a system which could lead to more effective public & Private sector partnership.

7. **The updation of the Education policy**

We need to regularly update and upgrade the policies related to the educational sector of the country. The changes and amendments should be as per the changes in the various internal & external factors which are directly impacting the HES of the country.

Conclusion

Education sector is the backbone of the society, if a country wants to progress than it should focus on the development of its education sector. India as a country holds lot of potential with respect to the HES. There exists plethora of opportunities in the nation which could provide lot of benefits to the nation as a whole. This would lead us to create a pool of people which would act as the drivers of the economy by contributing to the growth and the GDP of the country. The challenges that are prevailing in the country with respect to the HES should be tackled and eliminated on immediate basis. There should be focus on making the education system more systematic and updated. Efforts should be made to align the education system with the industry needs so that we develop students in the employable and industry fit. In order to accomplish and pull off the planned future level there is an imperative requirement to rework at the Resources (financial & human) and to enhance the excellence of the HES in the country.

References

- Media Reports, Press Releases, Press Information Bureau, RNCOS Report, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Union Budget 2018-19.
- GOI. (2018). *All India Survey on Higher Education 2017-18*. Retrieved from <https://epsiindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AISHE-2017-18.pdf>, Accessed on Nov. 2, 2019.
- Tierney, W.G., & Lanford, M. (2016). *Conceptualizing Innovation in Higher Education*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- CARE. (2018). *Overview of the Indian Education Industry*. Retrieved from <http://www.careratings.com/upload/NewsFiles/Studies/Overview%20of%20the%20Indian%20Education%20Industry%20June%202018.pdf>, Accessed on Nov. 2, 2019.
- Sharanabasappa, C. B., & kadamudimatha, B. N. (2017). A study on Higher Education in India : Issues, Challenges & Directions. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development*, 4(2), 188-191.

Glossary:

Higher Education – (HE)

Higher Education System – (HES)

Gross Enrolment Ratio – (GER)

Ministry of Human Resource Development - (MHRD)

The University Grant Commission - (UGC)

Higher Educational Institutions – (HEI)