

CHALLENGES FACED BY HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES IN MAINTAINING GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO

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Abstract:

For a building nation, education is indispensable for the population which is contributing towards its growth. Education has been recognised as the basic right of every human. Regrettably, the efforts of Higher Educational Institutes in India to maintain its GER are not effective. The paper identified that there is an interrelationship between tuition fee of Higher educational institute and GER and also points out on the urgent need for more and better research both to improve the quality of undergraduate education and to increase the number of students who complete their studies. The Present Paper is an attempt to explore such challenges faced by Higher Educational Institutes in India and suggested some remedies to overcome over it.

Key words:

Higher Educational Institutes(HEI), Gross Enrolment Ratio(GER) , challenges.

Introduction:

The 21st century is characterized as the age of knowledge based economy. It is widely held view that economic development depends upon knowledge and the knowledge driven economy. For growth to be socially inclusive, higher education system must be inclusive. And for an inclusive higher education system, education must be available uniformly to all concerned in fair manner.

The extent of Higher education is generally measured by enrollment ratio in higher education. The GER measure the access level by taking the ratio of persons in all age group enrolled in various programs to total population in age group of 18-23. As far as the report of All India Survey on Higher Education 2018-19(AISHE) is concerned, there are 993 Universities, 39931 Colleges are in India but the GER is just 26.3% between 18-23 years of age group with no Indian University featuring in any of the rankings of the top 200 institutions globally. Lack of quality education within the reach, lack of variety of courses which offer higher employability and better career prospects, fewer resources for research, lack of international recognition for Indian courses, etc. are few of the reason which influence the lower GER in India. Given the vast network of India's higher education, India's GER is far below than the global average of 27%.

Today the world economy is experiencing an unprecedented change. New developments in science and technology, media revaluation and internationalization of education and the ever expanding competitive environment are revolutionizing the education scene. A paradigm shift has been noticed in higher education nowadays, from 'national education' to 'global education',

from 'one time education for a few' to 'lifelong education for all', from 'teacher-centric education' to 'learner centric education'. Some changes can be seen both within and outside the academy which are altering its character – its students, faculty, governance, curriculum, placement. These changes make new demands and pose fresh challenges to the established education systems and practices in the country which are being addressed in this report.

Challenges faced by HEI:

Even though the education sector is growing, institutions are facing number of challenges in maintaining Gross Enrolment Ratio. Some of the challenges are given below.

a) Outdated and irrelevant curricula :

Undergraduate courses that haven't changed for years are churning out students who can't keep pace with these modern times. This amounts to academic suicide. "What's most worrying is that this lack of change in the syllabus is true for almost any subject today,". The further education sector is short-changing a whole generation by following outdated syllabuses and focusing on skills that don't meet national requirements. Course revision is essential, otherwise students will question what they are learning ... and that isn't healthy."

b) High level of segmentation :

Institutes restricts the students to develop a holistic understanding of different concepts which is making the student to go abroad for higher education. India went about its expansion by (1) reducing its funding and (2) inviting private investors in a bid to expand capacity. This, in turn, has resulted in a fragmented Indian system with thousands of often poorly regulated providers and relatively few students per institution.

c) Use of Technology :

HEI are largely steeped in history and tradition. They are grappling with how to hang onto their heritage while embracing technology and other societal and economic changes that are continually evolving around them.

Knowledge about automation and artificial intelligence is currently leading the way in transforming many industries. These technologies are paving the way for new business opportunities, sales and marketing efforts. Corporations including colleges and universities that lag behind rapidly advancing technologies could quickly lose their competitive edge especially in the era of ongoing pandemic.

d) Well trained faculty :

The difficulties with knowledge transfer to new generations because of lack of quality education, are a global threat to HEI. More than two-thirds of college instructors today are not on the tenure track but are lecturers serving on year-to-year contracts. Many of them are hired without undergoing the vetting commonly used in appointing tenure-track

professors. Studies indicate that extensive use of such instructors may contribute to higher dropout rates and to grade inflation.

e) Poor Placements:

Institutes attempt to bring many companies for campus recruitment's but many students are not able to perform in the aptitude, group discussion and Personal review rounds. Even if some are able to crack the interviews, they don't join due to higher expectations. It is also a challenge especially for the rural institutes to bring the companies because recruiters don't have time to travel all the way from city to rural areas to conduct interviews and another reason behind the unstable GEI is that the high price doesn't lead to guaranteed jobs, security and satisfaction to students like it used to.

f) Admission fee:

The cost of colleges is out of control – with tuition up roughly 400% since 1990 and rising more than twice the rate of Consumer Price Index (CPI). Many politicians, Higher Education Department and College administrators agree on the fact that declining government support is the main reason behind plunging college costs.

However, tuition costs only take up 33% of total educational costs in the aided institutions. Colleges and Institutions have to take these anomalies on their own.

The sad truth is that colleges and institutions continue raising their fee without changing the education they offer.

Table 1: GER during last 8 years and its growth rate.

Year	Gross enrollment ratio (%)	Growth rate(%)
2018-19	26.3	1.90
2017-18	25.8	2.32
2016-17	25.2	2.77
2015-16	24.5	0.82
2014-15	24.3	5.34
2013-14	23.0	6.52
2012-13	21.5	3.26
2011-12	20.8	-

Moreover there is a huge disparity in the GER of last 8 years as the growth rate is not stable and even declining. Also there is a world-wise (Table 2) gives the disparity when comparing the GER with other countries.

Table 2: Tertiary Education GER in Percentage (2017-18)

Country	% of GER
U. S.	88.2
Germany	70.3
France	65.6

U. K.	60.6
Brazil	51.3
China	49.1
India	25.8
Africa	22.4
Pakistan	9.4

The GER of India is very low when we compare with other developed and developing nations. This might be because of the inappropriate fund allocation by the Central government to Higher education institutes. This can be seen from (Table 3)–Computation of total allocation for education in different five year plans. Five Year Plan-wise allocations reflect a picture as portrayed in year to year budgetary allocations . From the very First Plan, priorities have been given to elementary education as the larger share of Plan allocation was targeted towards this sector. However, the pattern of inter-sectoral allocation in education also indicates a declining share in other sector.

Table 3: Computation of Total Allocation for Education in Different Five Year Plans

(Figures in percent)

Plan	Elementary	Secondary	Adult	University	Technical	Others	Total
First Plan	57.6	5.5	0.0	7.8	14.2	15.0	100
Second Plan	34.8	18.7	0.0	17.6	17.9	11.0	100
Third Plan	34.1	17.5	0.0	14.8	21.2	12.4	100
Fourth Plan	50.1	0.0	1.7	25.2	10.5	12.5	100
Fifth plan	51.7	0.0	2.1	27.9	9.4	8.9	100
Sixth Plan	32.1	20.4	5.9	21.4	10.4	9.8	100
Seventh Plan	37.3	24.0	6.2	15.7	14.2	2.6	100
Eighth Plan	47.7	24.0	5.2	9.6	10.1	3.4	100
Ninth Plan	57.1	21.3	1.7	8.7	8.1	3.0	100
Tenth Plan	65.6	9.9	2.8	9.5	10.7	1.5	100
Eleventh Plan	46.5	19.8	2.2	15.5	11.1	4.9	100

The draft NEP 2019 also highlighting the issues currently prevailing in our higher education. The draft highlights that lack of accessibility to Higher Institutes of Education is one of the reason for low enrolment at college / University level in the country. The another is that 40% of the colleges run a single program which is in contrast to the multidisciplinary education currently being followed in other countries. Thus, there is a little effort to achieve a proper balance between quality, quantity and equity in higher education.

Conclusion :

The paper has discussed the challenges and strongly suggest that a quantum increase in resource allocation to higher education sector by the government is needed to achieve the objective of enriched technology, inclusion and attractive placements which will help in maintaining and even increasing the GER. With the rapid growth indicated by macroeconomic parameters, India remains the world's fastest economy. However the higher education system is not able to keep pace with potential demographic dividend, thereby producing "unemployable" youth graduates in India. As a means to improve quality of education Industry and Academia Linkages are essential to ensure that the academic curriculum is in line with the demands of the job market. The collaboration can be facilitated through Public-Private Partnerships where the collaboration can provide high-tech industries with skilled workers who meet the standards of the industry. This will eventually facilitate skill building and meet the fast changing employability demands. Updation of technology requires time. College board of trustees need to spend as much time on planning and oversight as possible. The remedy to quality education is to include the non-tenure-track instructors who currently make up a majority of the teaching faculty in curricular reviews so that all those who play a substantial part in trying to achieve the goals of undergraduate education can participate in the process. Considering India being a young nation, a proper balance between quantity, quality and equity in higher education assumes greater importance. This can be achieved only through an affordable quality higher education and easing of regulations by the government so that it can promote India as a destination more aggressively.

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