

## Recent Trends in Higher Education in India

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**Abstract:** Educated workforce provides strong foundation for the development of an economy. It accelerates the growth of a country. Indian education system has changed a lot since independence. There were many obstacles in the growth of higher education in India. Various strategies and plans are implemented by the government for improving quality and accessibility of higher education. Indian education system is considered as one of the best in the world. Indian scientists, doctors, engineers, managers, accountant are present all over the world. This is mainly because of continuous efforts of all associated with education – the government, the faculties, the educational institutions and the students. Recently many changes have taken place in the higher education system strengthening it. The study covered the present trends in the Indian higher education system.

**Key Words:** Higher education, enrollment, courses, skill development.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Development of a nation depends upon development of its human resource. It's none other than education which has immense power to develop human resource of any country. Education helps an individual to gain knowledge, develop skills and proper attitude towards life and society. It helps to nurture overall personality. It enables an individual to learn and earn so as to improve standard of living. Educated workforce is valuable asset to a country which is not subject to depreciation. As per data revealed by the National Policy for Skill Development, 2015, India will be the world's youngest country by 2020 with an average age of 29 years, whereas the average age in the United State of America (USA) will be 40 years, for Europe 46 years and for Japan 47 years. The working age population is expected to touch 962 million by 2030. India will be having the largest young work force but the main challenge is to make them equipped with knowledge and skills so that they can contribute for the progress of the nation. Recognizing the fact, the Indian Government is also emphasizing on development of the education sector. NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) has also initiated special measures in its three year action plan (2017-18 to 2019-20) to strengthen the young work force through education and skill development.

### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The research is done with a view to study the present higher education system in India and to analyse the recent trends in higher education in India.

### 3. METHODOLOGY:

The research methodology used is descriptive and based on secondary data. The researcher has tapped many authentic source of information for the research. Secondary data is collected from books, magazines, news papers, research journals and reports on higher education in India like UGC report, AISHE - All India Survey on Higher Education conducted by the ministry of human resource development.

Indian higher education system has progressed tremendously in the last decade. The study covers some of the recent trends in the higher education sector-

#### 4. Increase in number of universities and colleges in India:

Higher education is the education beyond the school level. Indian higher education covers various undergraduate, post graduate degrees and pre-doctoral and doctoral programs. It is imparted at universities or at colleges or at institutes. UGC is the regulatory body which governs any institution imparting degree but the institution carrying out technical education also needs to comply with operational norms specified under All India Council for Technical Education AICTE (for engineering, management studies etc.) and Medical Council of India MCI (for medical) among others.

There are different kinds of higher educational institution operating in the country.

- **Central Universities** - Universities established by an Act of Parliament.

- **State Universities** - Universities established by an Act of a State Legislature.
- **Deemed Universities** - Universities which have been given the status of a university with the power to award their degrees by central government notification.
- **Private Universities**: These are established by various State governments through their own legislation.
- **Institutions established under Special State Legislature Acts** – Institutes of higher education established under special state legislature act.

At the time of independence, there were only 20 universities and 500 colleges in the country with 2.1 lakh students in the higher education system. But after independence, there has been a phenomenal growth in all these numbers. During the year 2011-12 there were 574 Universities and 35,539 Colleges whereas in the year 2015-16 there were 753 Universities and 41,435 Colleges. From the following data it is clear that the number of universities is increasing year after year.

Table 1 – Number of Universities and Colleges in India

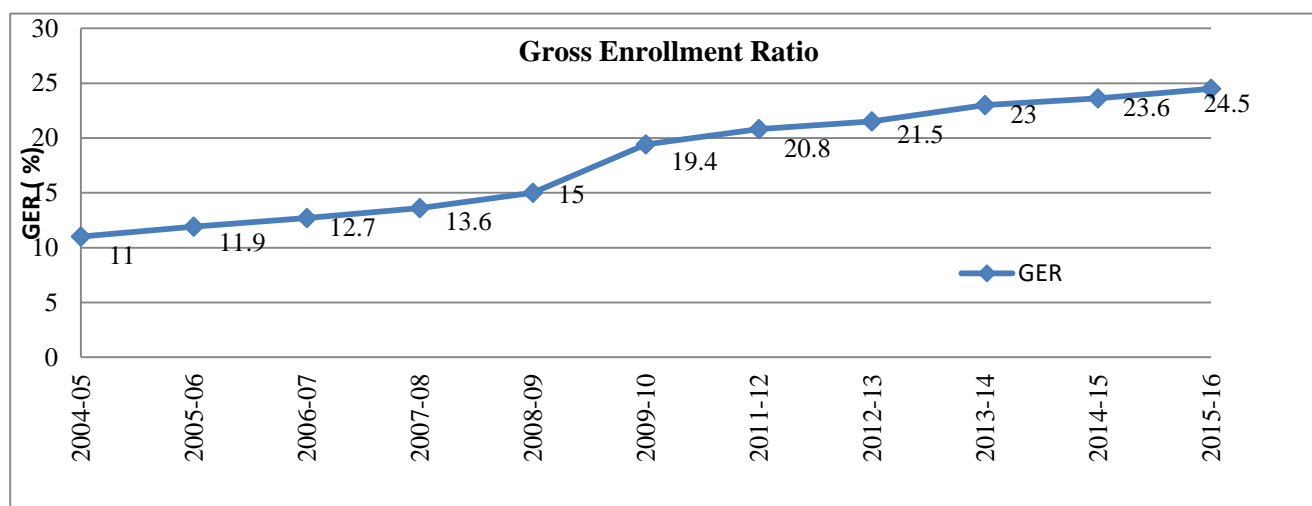
	UGC Annual Report				
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Central Universities	44	44	45	46	47
State Universities	286	281	313	329	345
Deemed Universities	129	129	129	128	123
Private Universities	111	151	175	205	235
Institutes under Special Legislature	4	4	4	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>753</b>
Number of colleges	35,539	37,204	39,671	40,760	41,435

Source: UGC Annual Reports

### Improved Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER):

Gross enrollment ratio indicates total enrollment for higher education as a percentage of the total eligible population. In India, not only the number of universities and colleges has increased over a period of time but the gross enrollment ratio has also improved. This indicates increase in number of students registered for higher education. The GER for higher education in India increased to 24.5% in 2015-16 from merely 11% in 2004-05, a decade ago. This is mainly due to the massive efforts of the government to improve quality and accessibility of higher education.

Chart 1 – Growth in Gross Enrollment Ratio



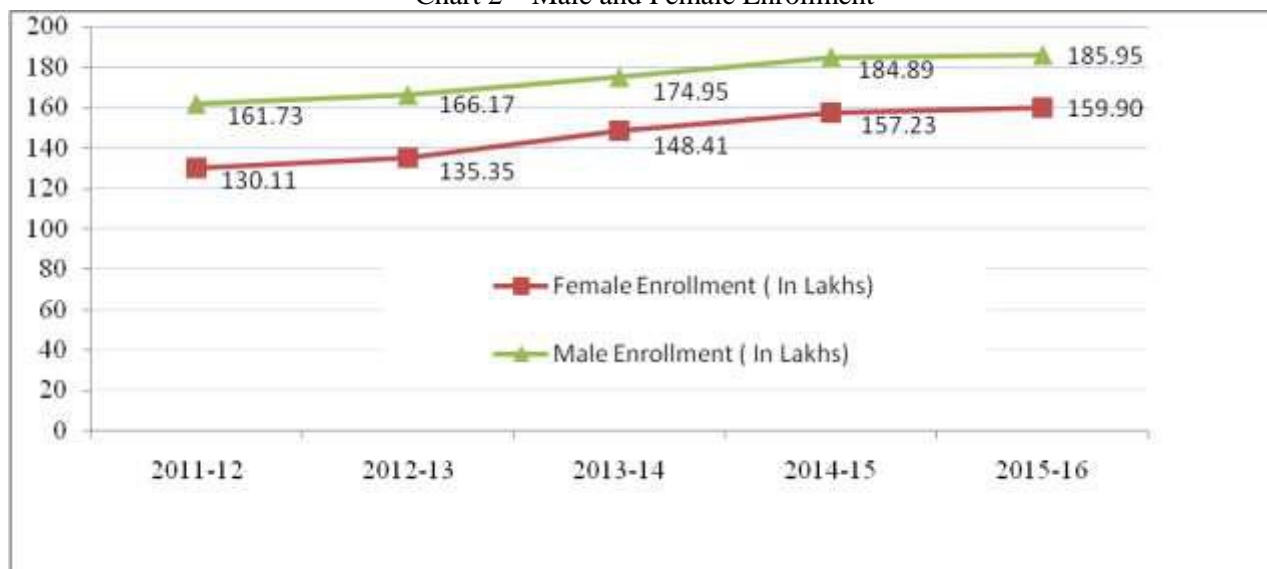
( Source : UGC Annual Reports)

### Growth in women enrollment for higher education:

Development of a nation is not possible without proper education of the women of the country. Women play very important role in the progress of a family, society, and country. In order to make democracy successful in the country women education is necessary together with the men. Educated women are the real source of happiness in the family, society and country. It is very truly said that educating a man educate a man only however educating a woman educate whole family and thus whole nation a day. To spread the importance and improve the level of women education all over the country, many efforts are taken at private as well as government level. As a result female enrollment for higher education has improved over a period of time. The growth in female enrolment is more in

comparison to male enrollment. Per 100 male students, number of female students has increased from 80 in 2011-12 to 86 in 2015-16. Today we have female presence in almost all fields like sports, education, aviation, medical, space research, politics, social work etc. Gender-wise enrollment is depicted in the chart

Chart 2 – Male and Female Enrollment



(Source : AISHE Report 2015-16)

### **Preference for Post Graduation:**

There is tremendous improvement in students' attitude towards post graduation. Now they do not like to end up with just graduation. Majority prefer to go for post graduation. As per AISHE Report 2015-16, the number of students enrolled for post graduation has increased from 33,67,190 in 2011-12 to 39,17,156 in 2015-16. Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.Sc.), Master of Commerce (M.Com.), Master of Technology (M.Tech.) and Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) are some of the courses preferred by students for post graduation.

### **Increased Research Enrollments:**

Research is the base of any invention. In recent years, the Indian students have recognised the importance of research. The number of students enrolled for research, Ph.D and M.Phil has increased from 1,15,584 in 2011-2012 to 1,68,974 in 2015-2016 thus registering an increase of 46.19% over a period of five years. This shows that research is gaining importance in our education system.

Table 2 – Enrollment for Ph.D and M.Phil

Year	Ph.D	M.Phil	Total
2011-12	81,430	34,154	1,15,584
2012-13	95,425	30,374	1,25,799
2013-14	1,07,890	31,380	1,39,270
2014-15	1,17,301	33,371	1,50,672
2015-16	1,26,451	42,523	1,68,974

(Source : AISHE Report 2015-16)

### **Professional and management courses at under graduate levels:**

Traditionally commerce, science and arts were the three main streams available for graduation after 12<sup>th</sup> standard. Science students were having many options like pharmacy, engineering, bio technology, medical and so on but for commerce students the scope was very limited. Only some students were going for CA or CS along with their graduation. After graduation they used to do specialization. Now the scenario is totally changed. After 12<sup>th</sup>, commerce students have multiple options like Bachelor in commerce with Accounting & Finance (BAF) or with Financial Markets (BFM) or with Banking and Insurance (BBI). They can even go for media courses like Bachelor in Mass Media (BMM) or for management courses like Bachelor in Management Studies (BMS). Such courses prepare students in the specialized areas. This improves their employability after graduation.

### **Focus on careers and job placement:**

The main concern for students after graduation and post graduation is finding suitable job. Students and parents expect their college or university to be a partner in helping them to map out a successful career path. Many colleges invite corporate to their campus for selecting their students either as internee or as an employee. Practically

it is not possible to give employment to all students but the institutes are taking initiatives to provide maximum employment.

### **E-Commerce:**

E-Commerce involves doing business, buying and selling of products and services, through modern communication instruments like Internet, Fax, Telephone, E-data interchange and E-payment. E-Commerce provides multiple benefits to the consumers like the availability of goods at lower cost, wider choice and time saving. People or consumer can buy goods with a click of mouse button without moving out of their house or offices. Similarly, online services such as net banking, tickets booking for airlines, railway and bus, bill payment, hotel booking etc. have tremendous benefit for the customers. E-Commerce education has phenomenal impact on higher education. Growth in the internet over the last few decades has led to great impact on communication and research in the institutes.

E-Commerce education has opened new avenues for Cyber Law studies. It need not be stated that the importance of cyber laws has increased by leaps and bounds in the recent years. With hundreds of cybercrime cases every day, awareness and knowledge about internet has become more important. E-Commerce education not only equips students about latest career development advancements, it also opens door for access to information and knowledge.

### **Role of information and communication technology in higher education:**

Advancements in the field of technology have touched almost all aspects of our life. Education cannot be an exception. The information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed the educational scenario in the country. It has played vital role in changing many educational practices like online exams, online fees payment, accessing online books and journals. ICT has changed the teaching learning process by providing the facility of online learning to thousands of students who cannot have access to higher education due to certain hurdles like time, cost, geographical location etc. Now even classroom teaching has become more interactive and interesting due to techniques like PPT presentations by teachers and students, use of video clips or graphics for explanation etc. Though the scope of using such tools is limited for subjects like accounts and mathematics but for theory subjects ICT is a boon.

### **Autonomy for colleges:**

Academic autonomy is the freedom to decide academic issues like curriculum, instructional material, pedagogy, techniques of students' evaluation. Autonomy, when exercised with the sense of responsibility and accountability will certainly lead to excellence in academics. This main aim of autonomy is to take the colleges out of the centralized control of their university and provide greater flexibility in academic matters. All aided and unaided colleges are eligible for autonomy subject to the norms set by UGC for granting autonomy. Even self finance colleges can get autonomy when they fulfill the preconditions set by UGC. This allows the colleges to develop their brand name and compete more effectively. As per UGC report, as on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2015 there were 487 autonomous colleges spread over 92 universities and 24 states where as on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016 there were 556 autonomous colleges spread over 99 universities and 23 states. The numbers clearly indicate that the colleges are working towards getting autonomy to excel themselves.

### **Skill development:**

The major problem faced by India is not the quantity but quality of work force. The educated youth lacks sufficient job skills. The government has implemented large scale and effective skill development solutions with a number of initiatives over the years but providing sufficient training to the large work force is still a big challenge. A new Skill Development ministry was created in 2014. The Skill India Initiative was launched in 2015 which aims to equip 40 crore people with employable skills by 2022. This initiative includes key government schemes on skill development like National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), National Skill Development Mission and the Skill Loan Scheme. According to the Skill Development Sector Achievements report, December 2016, National Skill Development Council partners skilled 24.9 lakh people of which 12 lakh were placed in 2014-15. This translates to a placement rate of below 50%. A target of a placement rate for 80% or more is set for 2020.

### **Government support for higher education:**

In union budget 2017-18, allocation for higher education has increased to Rs.33,330 crore from Rs 29,703 crore in 2016-17, a 12.2 % increase compared to previous year, highlighting the government's clear push for higher education. Finance minister, Mr. Arun Jaitley announced -

- To reform UGC and provide greater administrative and academic autonomy to quality higher education institutions in the country. A national ranking and accreditation system will be introduced to identify quality

institutions. This is expected to encourage private players' participation in higher education and focus on achieving excellent education

- To set up a National Testing Agency, an autonomous organisation to conduct all entrance examinations for higher education institutions in the country. The aim is to create a premier organisation for conducting nation-wide assessments and to reduce the additional tasks of agencies like CBSE and AICTE, thereby encouraging them to focus on their core activity of disseminating quality education
- To establish two more All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in the states of Gujarat and Jharkhand.

Along with higher education following announcements were made for skill development of the young India-

- To increase allocation to Rs. 3,016 crore in 2017-18 to the Ministry of Skill Development as compared to Rs.2,173 crore in 2016-17
- To expand the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKK) to more than 600 districts and from the current state of 60 districts to popularise vocational education and increase attractiveness to pursue skill training among the youth.
- To establish 100 India International Skills Centres across the country to offer advanced training courses as per international standards for the youth seeking job opportunities outside the country.
- To launch the next phase of Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) at a cost of Rs. 2,200 crore for improving the quality and market relevance of vocational training provided in ITIs and strengthen the apprenticeship programmes through industry cluster approach
- To set aside Rs. 4,000 crore towards Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion programme (SANKALP) for providing market relevant training to 3.5 crore youth.

The Indian five year plan system which was followed since independence is replaced with three year action plan system from 2017-18. NITI Aayog, the designer of the plan, has also emphasized on improving the higher education and skill development during 2017-18 to 2019-20. The major actions to be completed for strengthening of higher education during first three year action plan are-

- Designing of World Class Universities
- Autonomy for top colleges and universities
- Reforming the regulatory system
- Establishing system of project and scholar specific research grants
- Increasing focus on vocational and profession led education

## 5. CONCLUSION:

The Indian higher education system has changed a lot in the last decade. The spread of higher education has increased over a period of time. The government schemes and initiatives have helped a lot to solve the issues related to accessibility, equity, quality and economy. Still the government is working for complete removal of these problems. The major challenge now is to improve employability of the educated crowd by equipping them with the skills required for jobs. Indians have good brains but they need to be trained to give their best for their own progress and prosperity as well as of the nation.

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