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Problems, Prospects and Achievements of Higher Education in India

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Abstract

The world is increasingly shifting towards a knowledge economy where foreign trade has been replaced by an information exchange. The revaluation has shifted focus of individuals of a nation's abilities and resources to generate human capital. Creation of human capital largely depends on education and research output of a country. But higher education in India suffers from several systematic deficiencies and difficulties. As a result it produces graduates and post graduates, who are unemployable due to the fact of shortage of skill and quality. India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world, with 25.9 million students enrolled in more than 45,000 degree and diploma institutions in the country. During the Eleventh Plan period (2007–2012), India achieved a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 17.9%, up from 12.3% at the beginning of the Plan period. The investment made in higher education in the 1950s and 1960s has given us a strong

knowledge base in many fields and contributed significantly to economic development, social progress, and political democracy in independent India. At the time of independence, the number of universities was no more than 20, and of colleges around 500 and the total enrolment was less than 1.0 lakh. By the end of the Tenth Plan, the Indian higher education system has grown into one of the largest in the world with 378 universities, 18064 colleges, a faculty strength of 4.92 lakh, and an estimated enrolment of 140 lakh students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge economy has made a structural shift in the world economy where shift takes place from primary sector to tertiary one. These revaluation changes have increased the per capita income, standard of living and individual's capabilities to achieve the freedom. Higher Education in India suffers from several systematic deficiencies and difficulties. As a result it produces graduates and post graduates who are unemployable due to the fact of shortage of skill and quality. Investment in higher education, particularly academic research, has come to be recognized as a prospective source that could aid a nation's development through production of knowledge. Usually, countries such as USA, Japan and other European nations such as the United Kingdom, Germany and Finland have been predecessors in academic Research & Development (R&D). Therefore, in terms of wealth intensity, GDP and Human Development Index of these countries such as Finland, United Kingdom, USA, Japan and other European nations have also been at the top. However, these trends are giving way to new front-runners, such as Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC nations) that are posing a tough competition to the old world leaders. The United Nations (UN) Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) 2005- 2014 states that 'Universities must function as places of research and learning for sustainable development.

The higher education system in India has shown a remarkable progress after independence and has the largest higher education system in the world. The higher education system in India has gone through various gigantic expansions and invention in the post independence era. Various universities, research and technical institutes, professional and non professional colleges has been started all over the country to generate the human capital and knowledge economy by providing easy access of higher education to general population of the country. India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world, with 25.9 million students enrolled in more than 45,000 degree and diploma institutions in the country. During the Eleventh Plan period (2007–2012), India achieved a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 17.9%, from 12.3% at the beginning of the Plan period. At the time of independence, there are only twenty universities, 500 colleges and only 1.0 lakh students the total enrolled in higher education. By the end of the tenth five year plan, the Indian higher education system has grown into one of the largest in the world with 378 universities, and 18064 colleges.

Faculty strength of 4.92 lakh, and an estimated enrolment of 140 lakh students in higher education. The Starting with 1950- 51, there were only 263,000 students in all disciplines in 750 colleges affiliated to 30 universities. This has grown by 2005 to 11 million students in 17,000 Degree colleges affiliated to 230 universities and non-affiliated university-level institutions.

Table (1.1) presents that there is positive trend of number universities, colleges and students enrolled in the higher education. In 1970-71 the total number of universities in India is 103 which increased to 659 universities in 2011-12, an increase of 556 universities, while the colleges are 3604 in 1970-71 and 33023 respectively in the same period.

The trend equation indicate that in India universities and colleges has increased at the rate of 60 and 668 respectively per decade, while students enrolled in higher education increased at the rate of 0.555 million per decade. It has been found that student institution ratio at university level has showed increased trend which rises from 19417 students per institution in 1970-71, which increased to 39301 in 2011-12.

Table (1.1) Number of Universities, Colleges and Students Enrolled in Higher Education

Year	Number of universities	Decadal Growth rate of Universities	Number of Colleges	Students Enrolment in higher Education (Million)	Decadal Growth rate Enrolment	Students Institution Ration
1960-61	103	-----	3604	2.0	-----	19417
1970-71	133	29.12	4722	2.8	40.0	21052
1980-81	190	42.85	7346	4.9	75.0	25789
1990-91	256	34.73	12806	8.9	81.63	34765
2000-01	387	51.17	21710	16.6	86.51	42894
2006-07	659	70.28	33023	25.9	56.02	39301

Source: Higher Education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) and beyond FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012

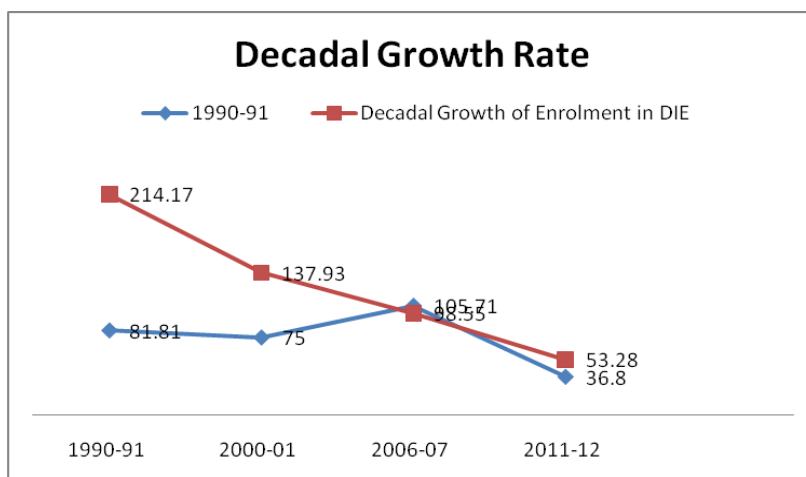


Table (1.2)Trend Equation of Universities, Colleges and Students enrolled in Higher Education

Item	Trend line	R ²
No. of Universities	$Y = 1973 + 0.60 X$	0.863
No. of Colleges	$Y = 1358175 + 688.47X$	0.873
Student Enrolled in Higher Education	$Y = 1095 + 0.55X$	0.862

Where Y= Dependent Variable and X = Time Period

In India there are two types of universities and colleges like central governed and state governed. Table (1.4) reveals that there are 152 central, 316 state universities and 191 private universities, while 669 central colleges, 13,024 state colleges and 19,941 private colleges in India. Even though there is a terrific rise in the higher educational institution in the country, but quality of education in government colleges is deteriorating day by day. because in government colleges are not providing facilitated with the qualitative infrastructural facility.

Table (1.4) Number of central and state Universities and Colleges in India

Type	Universities	Colleges
Central	152	669
State	316	13024
Private	191	19941

Source: Higher Education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) and beyond FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012.

Distance Education System In India:

Open and distance learning will remain the most cost-effective way of reaching under-penetrated geographies and customer segments. Distance education have shown a tremendous progress in terms of number of intuitions as well as the students enrolled through distance mode. Table (1.5) presents that 1980-81 only 22 distance education institutes are in the whole country which increased to 197 in 2011-12 on the one hand, on the other there were 0.17 million students enrolled in distance mode which increased to 4.20 million in 2011-12. The econometric model shows that unit increase in distance education institution leads to increase 0.022 million students enrolled through distance education in India.

It has also been observed from the table that there is a huge gap between number of distance education institutions and students enrolled in these institutions. Also the student institution has increased at a terrific rate, by which quality of education in distance mode is deteriorating day by day.

**Table (1.5) Number of Distance Education Institution and students
Enrolled**

Year	No. of DEI Of DEIs	Decadal Growth of DEI	Enrolment in DEI (Million)	Decadal Growth of Enrolment in DIE	Average Number of Students per University
1980-81	22	-----	0.17	-----	7,727
1990-91	40	81.81	0.58	214.17	14,500
2000-01	70	75	1.38	137.93	19714
2006-07	144	105.71	2.74	98.55	19,027
2011-12	197	36.80	4.2	53.28	21,319

Source: Higher Education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) and beyond FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012

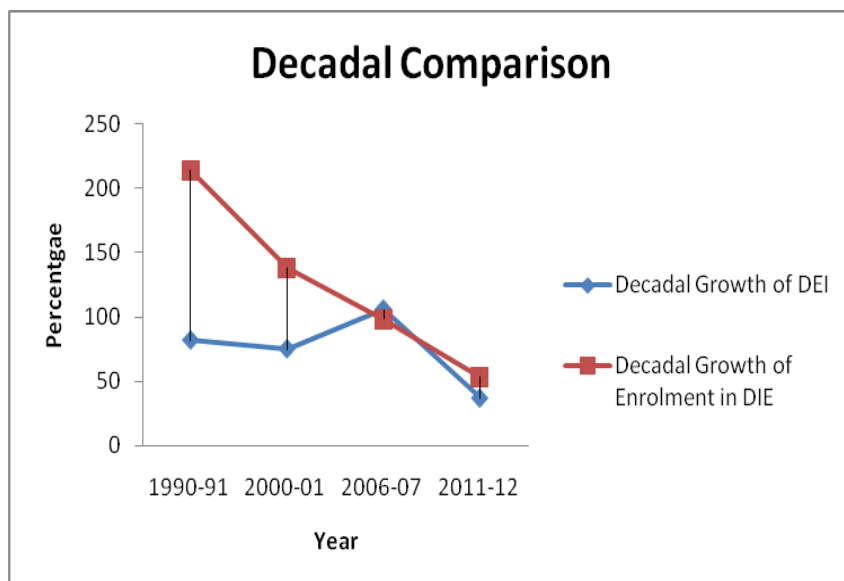


Table (1.6) Coefficients(a)

	Un-Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t*	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.303	.106		-2.857	.065
DEI	.022	.001	.997	24.342	.000

Dependent Variable: Students Enrolled Through Distance Mode

DEI= Distance Education Institute

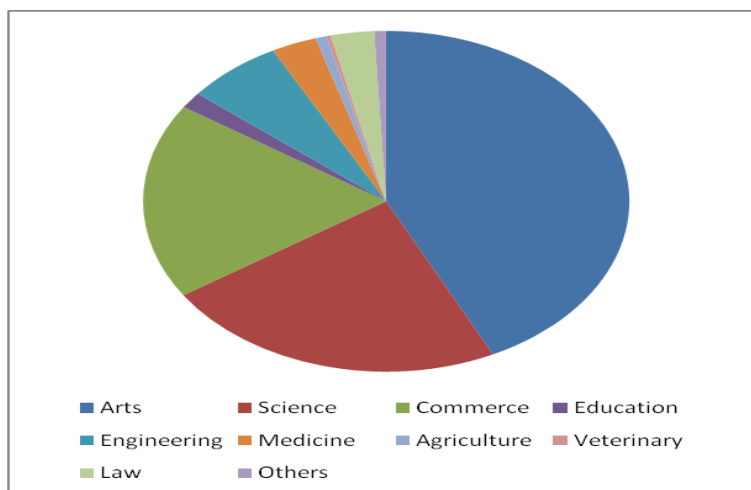
Students Enrolment by Academic Discipline:

Table (1.7) depicts the enrollment of students in various disciplines and shows that maximum numbers of students are enrolled in arts stream with 43.76 percent followed by science 23.48 percent, commerce 19.07 percent. The analysis showthat less percentage of students are enrolled in professional courses like medicine, engineering, agriculture.

Table (1.7) Students Enrolment By Academic Discipline (2006-07)

Discipline	Percentage
Arts	43.76
Science	23.48
Commerce	19.07
Education	1.57
Engineering	6.57
Medicine	3.09
Agriculture	0.73

Source: Higher Education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) and beyond FICCI Higher Education Summit 2012



Public Expenditure on Higher Education

Higher education in India is mostly funded by both the central and state governments, but the role of state government in terms of investment on higher education is more than the central governments. For maintaining reasonable standard of higher education, there is a need of reasonable investment on higher education. Table (1.7) shows that the total expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has shown an increasing trend. In 1981-90 the average decadal expenditure was 3.59 percent, which increased to 3.68 percent in 2004-05. The expenditure on higher education as a percentage of total education expenditure was 15.6 percent in 1981-90 which increased to 18.0 percent in , while the expenditure on higher education as a percentage of GDP have also shown an increasing trend with 0.34 percent in 1981-90 to 0.66 percent in 2004-05.

Public Expenditure on Higher Education (1.7)

Year	Expenditure on Education as Percentage of GDP	Expenditure on Higher Education as percentage of Total Education Expenditure	Expenditure on Higher Education as percentage of GDP
1981-90	3.59	15.6	0.34
1991-2000	3.77	19.3	0.72
2001-2002	3.82	17.9	0.69
2002-03	3.80	18.5	0.70
2004-05	3.68	18.0	0.66

Source: International Journal of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Research 2012

Five Year Plan Wise Planned Expenditure on higher Education and Gross Enrolment Ratio

Five year Plan	Planned Expenditure on Higher Education (Billion Crore)	Annual Gross Enrolment Growth Rate
6 th Five Year Plan	5.8	4.0
7 th Five Year Plan	12.0	6.2
8 th Five Year Plan	10.6	5.4
9 th Five Year Plan	25.0	5.6
10 th Five Year Plan	96.0	6.6
11 th Five Year Plan	894.4	9.3

Thrust Areas of Higher Education Development in Past Five Year Plans:

Sixth Five year Plan:

Quality improvement

- ▶ Improvement of standards and regulation of admission
- ▶ Restructuring of courses for practical orientation and greater relevance

Seventh Five Year Plan

Focus on research and academic development

- ▶ Creation of research facilities and centres of excellence
- ▶ Encouragement of academic mobility and cross-fertilization of ideas
- ▶ Restructuring courses offered at first degree level to increase employability

Eighth Five Year Plan

Funding for developing new departments/courses

- ▶ strengthening of existing postgraduate departments in terms of laboratories, workshops and library services
- ▶ Opening of new specialized courses and departments and doing away with outdated ones

Ninth Five Year Plan

Adapting to Social and Economic Changes

- ▶ Encouraging relevant courses with a professional focus to enable career development
- ▶ Addressing the education needs of under-represented social groups
- ▶ Generating revenue through increased university-industry linkages

Tenth Five Year Plan:

Improving quality and relevance of higher education

- ▶ Strengthening of research institutions as well as open and distance education system
- ▶ Knowledge and use of new information and communication technology
- ▶ Focus on quality, evaluation and accreditation of higher education

Eleventh Five Year Plan

Inclusive growth of higher education

- ▶ Expanding HEIs to eliminate regional imbalances
- ▶ Making higher education accessible to all socio-economic strata of the society
- ▶ Improving quality of education by promoting research, quality assurance systems and faculty and infrastructure development

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