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Growth and Development of Professional Higher Education in India (1950-2010)

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ABSTRACT:

Education is the backbone of every society to sustain economic growth. A good higher education system is essential for national, social and economic development of India that with a 2.2 billion strong population is fast emerging as a global force to reckon with. There is a need of value based higher education system which empowers youth for self–sustainability by inculcating employment skills and hence reducing poverty**.** Since independence, we are facing challenges to establish a great and strong system. Enough has been done but a lot more remains. Various governments came and gone. They tried to establish new education policies in the system but ended up making cosmetic changes only. Consequently even after 65 years of independence we are facing lots of problems in our education system. The overall scenario of higher education in India does not match with the global quality standards. The present system of higher education does not serve the purpose for which it has been started. There is an absence of a well-informed reform agenda for higher education in the country. Time has now come to walk the talk. or else India's youth will be left behind in the global race . Considering the weakness in the prevailing regulatory and quality assurance environment, the amount of scams that are being highlighted in the press, the paper attempts to provide a roadmap for reforms towards greater transparency and accountability in the system

KEYWORDS: Higher education, Economy, Reforms

INTRODUCTION:

Nelson Mandela famously said the education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. Education is the backbone of every society and is a prime requirement to sustain economic growth. Higher education system is essential for national, social and

economic development of the country. Two terms need to be explained at the outset. When any system is founded on certain core values and beliefs that are inalienable this is called being *value based.* When any system is based on the creation of value it is referred to as being *value driven*. When a system is both value based and value driven it is called as being value *centered*.

Value is a thought based concept whereas ethics is an activity based concept. When we look at value as a subjective notion we say things like "these are my values". In doing so we become *value based*. When we look at value in the objective sense we say things like "this is the total value of our produce". In doing so, we become *value driven. When we are both value based and value driven we are called being* value centered. It opines that there is a need of having a value centered higher education system which empowers youth to attain self–sustainability by inculcating employment skills and hence reducing poverty. The University Education Commission (1948-49), under the Chairmanship of S. Radhakrishnan, laid the foundations of the future of Indian Higher Education. The Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) under the Chairmanship of D.S. Kothari symbolized the symbiotic relationship between education and national development .Higher education trains people to take up different economic roles in society and spurs technological innovation that drives economic growth. It is important that the country's capacity in higher education is aligned to the demand for skills from the economy, Since higher education itself cannot create jobs; a mismatch between the demand and the supply of quality and number of graduates would lead to unemployed graduates and / or a shortage of graduates with certain kind of skills. Today, we face the harsh reality of growing unemployment among graduates that co-exist with skill shortages in many areas. Increased need to universalize elementary education has resulted in serious focus on elementary education and at the same time rather total neglect of higher education. A few countries or states could succeed in providing universal elementary education by ignoring higher education; giving an impression to the educational planners that universalization of elementary education is possible only if one ignores higher education.

Higher education in India has witnessed an impressive growth over the years. The number of higher educational institutions (HEIs) has increased from about 30 universities and 695 colleges in 1950-51 to about 700 universities (as of 2012-13) and 35,000 colleges (as of 2011-12) as per a recent UGC report1. With an annual enrolment of above 25 million (including enrolment under Open and Distance Learning system), India is today ranked as the

third largest higher education system in the world after US and China. Despite remarkable progress and reforms covering a number of sectors and sub –sectors of the economy , there is little informed debate on reforms in higher education. Several recent studies have revealed that overall state of Indian higher education is dismal and therefore poses a severe constraint on the supply of skilled manpower. The rapid expansion of higher education in India has been at the cost of its quality, in that quality varies with institutions. The present system of higher education does not serve the purpose for which it has been started. In general education itself has become so profitable a business that quality is lost in the increase of quantity of professional institutions with quota system and politicization adding fuel to the fire to spoil system, thereby increasing unemployment of graduates without quick relief to mitigate their sufferings in the job market of the country.

Higher education is extremely diverse and the challenges and issues faced by higher education are just as diverse. The process of education is not merely digesting books. It is also about doing several co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that give a broader meaning to life in general and education in particular .The time now is to modernize our education system so that our country can get much more technically graduated people which can take our country to develop state.

Higher education may include education in general or specialized or professional areas. It won't be possible for the researcher to examine all the areas of higher education, therefore concentrated efforts has been made on professional education.

Meaning of Professional Higher Education: Study at the first level of higher education during which a student acquires the competence necessary for employment in a particular profession or to continue his or her study in Master's study. Examples of providers of professional higher education may include graduate colleges of Architecture, Business, Journalism, Law, Pharmacy, Human Medicine, Professional Engineering etc.

Generations of education environments: The Indian culture has a rich educational tradition. The origin and growth of Indian Education System progressed through five generations – namely;

- Pre-Vedic system of education: oral experience sharing (1500 BC – 1000 BC)
- Post-Vedic system of education: formal education system (Gurukul system) (1000 BC – 200 BC)
- Buddhist system of education: mass education through educational institutions

(e.g. Takshashila, Nalanda) (200 BC – 1000 AD)

- Islamic system of education: education proliferation through books (1000 AD – 1600 AD)
- System Overlap when various kingdoms had their own unique education features (1600-1800)
- British system of education: Western education system post Lord Maclay's intervention (1800 AD onwards)
- System catharsis when India's education system tried various experiments and is now somewhat stable (1950-2010).

While it is an important area for consideration, it will be seen that the western education system overlaps on traditional Indian education system. Also the western education system has global presence. The origin and growth of western education system has also progressed through five distinct generations. Prior to writing, books and schools, learning was essentially experiential (the first generation of learning). The individual learned by doing. The cave paintings and hieroglyphics of the ancients were to instruct future generations about what had been learnt by their ancestors.

The formal education process was developed in the 5th century B.C. in Athens with the advent of the Socratic-method based on deduction. Until that time learning was very much a process of everyday experience. The idea of learning in an abstract setting (rather than experience) constitutes the first formal education process (the second generation of education) that eventually gave rise to today's educational system.

The learning process tilted even more towards formal education in the third generation, with the academies founded by Aristotle and Plato in 4th century B.C. These early academies for many years relied on the oral tradition of the teacher reciting from memory, while students memorized the recitation. Faculty and students then engaged in a dialogue to discover the truth. The origination of symbol systems eventually led to the formal writing of codified knowledge in documents known as books. The first books were extremely rare, and writers were severely criticized for introducing them into the education system. In this early period, books were the exclusive domain of faculty. Instead of reciting lectures from memory, faculty read to students from handcrafted manuscripts. For reasons of economics and

ideology, students didn't have access to such books. This era formed the latter part of third generation.

The invention of the printing press erased the economic argument against students' having access to books. The wide availability of books eventually ushered in the fourth generation of learning, which has persisted until this time. The advent of the book and the printing press added a major level of productivity enhancement towards the proliferation of education.

The emergence of digital technology started the fifth generation. Its multidimensional approach is changing our traditional perceptions towards management of education environment, transfer of instructional resources and teaching-learning process itself.

These five generations of education can be summarized as;

- first generation: experience sharing (through auditory, cave paintings, and hieroglyphics)
- second generation: formal education, 5th century B.C.
- third generation: formal institutions of higher education, 4th century B.C.
- fourth generation: printing press enabled students' access to the books, 15th century
- fifth generation: digital technology enhanced the educational environment, 20th century

Current scenario of Higher Education in India: The position of Indian universities has consistently been falling year after year in almost all international rankings. For instance none of the Indian universities figure in the latest (2013) *Times Higher Education* (THE) ranking of the top 100 world universities under 50 years old. In the 2012 rankings of 400 universities India had just one university compared with nine of China. Last year, India was the only BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) nation that did not have a single university among the top 200 on the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) list — one of the most reputed global rankings of institutes for higher education. Even our high-profile IITs and IIMs fail to match international standards of excellence.

India with its 700 universities and 35,000 colleges has the third largest education system in the world, after China and the United States.. But 68 per cent of these universities and 73 per cent of colleges are found to be medium or low quality by Indian standard itself. With a severe shortage of quality higher education institutions, India faces the challenge of educating nearly 30 per cent of its 1.1 billion people. Certainly, India requires many more institutions of

higher learning since nearly 100 million students are going to the higher education market in the next 10 years If categorically spell out ,how much we are lagging behind in terms of overall percentage of higher educational institutions ,number of students pursuing higher education .We are not only beaten in by the developing and developed countries in terms of GDP ,exchange of foreign currency but also in terms of number of students pursuing higher education. In future, it is estimated that India will be one of the largest education hubs of the world. Higher education system in India when compared to developing/developed countries needs substantial improvement. The percentage of students taking higher education is hardly about 13% whereas the same is varying between 28 to 90% across the world.The lowest percentage being 28% and the same is as high as 90% in developed countries. In such a scenario improving the standards of existing universities and establishing quality institutions should be our priority.

Infrastructure costs are high and when education becomes a business venture budget cuts become the order of the day as quality suffers. In the absence of raised budgetary allocations the public infrastructure for higher education could not keep pace with the increased demand between 1980 and 013. The public expenditure on higher education in India is very low at 0.6% of the GDP, compared to 2.7% in the USA. We need to step up our expenditure on research to pursue large-scale innovation. The private sector, which contributes one-fourth of our country's expenditure on research and development, should increase their share of spending to levels prevalent in nations such as Japan, US and South Korea. Realizing the importance of higher education in human resource development successive finance ministers have resorted to marginal increases in budgetary allocations to the education sector. A key problem in India's efforts to upgrade higher education has been undue focus on spending without realizing what it should be doing.

The focus of the 12th Five Year Plan is on technical education, distance learning, quality research, infrastructure, faculty and curriculum content. Wholehearted, co-ordinated efforts of the government departments and the private sector are needed to realize the plan's educational goals .The central government funding on education is less than 1% of GDP. The government sponsored capacity building is not sufficient to meet the emerging need for higher education. At present 14.6 million students are enrolled in higher education sector. According to FICCI-E&Y report to achieve 30% gross enrollment rate (GER) over the next

decade the country would need an additional capacity to cater to 25 million new seats. The extra capacity generation would need an extra Rs. 10 lakh crore by 2020. The funding requirement is Rs. 0.4 million per seat. At the current budgetary allocation for education, the funds would be insufficient. The central government and the state governments are making more provision to promote higher education. In the Eleventh Five Year Plan the total provision of Rs. 44,000 cr. was made for higher education. In the Twelve Five Year Plan the total provision of Rs. 1, 80,000 cr. is made for higher education. Such a provision was made to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) related to the higher education. It is responsibility of the U.G.C. to make more effective regulation over the higher education system in India. Merely growth of higher education will not serve the basic purpose of education policy. It is necessary to see that the Universities and colleges should provide quality education to the masses**.** This is especially so because there has been a mushrooming of institutions offering higher education especially since 1991. The last five years has seen a spurt in the activity. Just as new institutions have sprung up the older ones that were not doing well started dropping out of the educational map. The following table will shed some light on how the growth of institutions has taken place.

Vacant Seats: Due to structural unemployment where demand for jobs and the supply of manpower is dis-equilibrated region wise, sector wise and business wise. Demand that had once outstripped supply has started to lag behind and there are (comparatively) less takers for seats on offer at institutions. Out of the total 9000 seats only 100 were filled in the 84 management colleges of Rajasthan. Large number of seats is lying vacant across the country in professional colleges, prominently self financing colleges. In Odisha there were about 20 engineering colleges having less than 50 admissions in 2012-13 batch. In Odisha the no. of seats in plus two science increased by 392 in the period of 2001 to 2010, but engineering seats have gone up from 8000 in 29 colleges in 2001 to about 43,000 in 105 colleges in 2011.Only 21,745 students appeared for counseling for over 40,000 sanctioned seats in the state. In 2009 vacant seats were about 10,000, in 2010, 18,000, in 2011, vacant seats were 22,000. In 2008-09 in Odisha 48 new colleges were added at once creating a supply gut. Due to poor performance of engineering colleges in academics and placement students are shifting to traditional degree courses. In Tamil Nadu 55,813 engineering seats were vacant. The results of Anna University declared in 2012 are an eye opener on the academic quality of engineering education. The well known colleges had about 55% results whereas the lesser

known ones the pass percentage is less than 20% .In Gujarat 7000 seats were vacant in MBA& MCA colleges. In 41 MBA colleges the numbers of admissions were less than 20. In 2011 the no. of vacant seats were 6000. The rising number of seats in self-financing colleges is a matter of concern for the viability of these colleges.

The current status of Professional Higher Education in India:

Table1-Growth of AICTE approved Technical Institutions

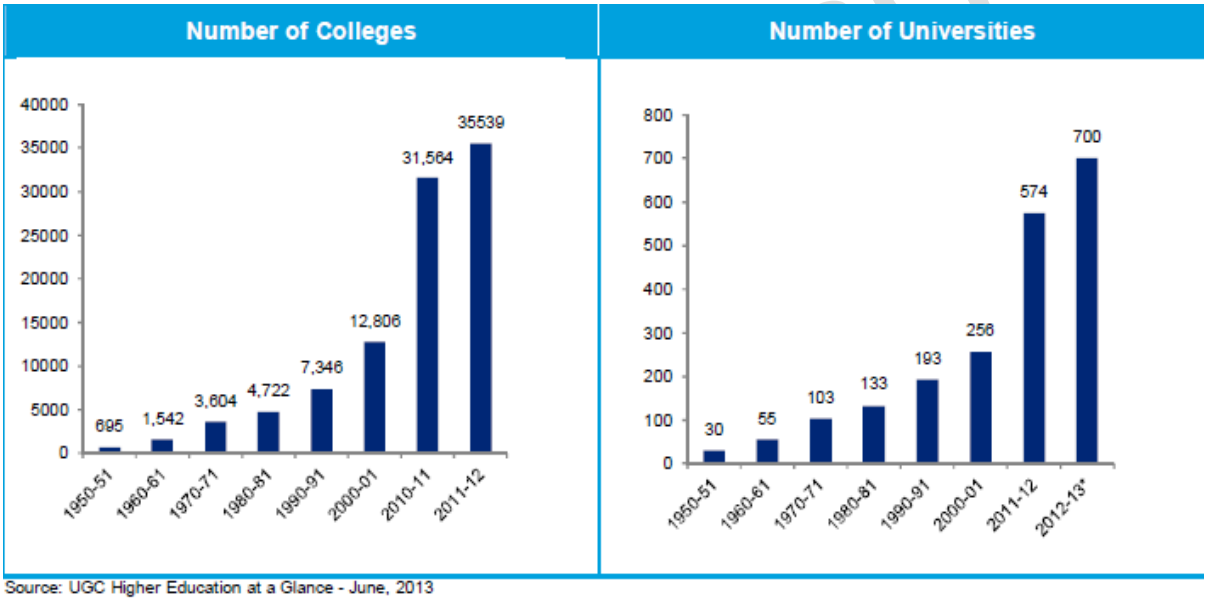
Year	Engineering	Management	MCA	Pharmacy	Arch	HMCT	Total	Added in Year
2006-07	1511	1132	1003	665	116	64	4491	171
2007-08	1668	1149	1017	854	116	81	4885	394
2008-09	2388	1523	1095	1021	116	87	6230	1345
2009-10	2972	1940	1169	1081	106	93	7361	1131
2010-11	3222	2262	1198	1114	108	100	8004	643
2011-12	3393	2385	1228	1137	116	102	8361	357

Recent growth is much greater in professional colleges (especially engineering, management and medicine), as well as in private vocational courses catering especially to the It sector. By vocation here we do not refer to trades like fitters, welders and plumbers but to professionals like engineers, managers and doctors. The fact that India has 2977 medical and engineering colleges indicates the priorities and interests that shape Indian higher education. India produces more arts, science and commerce graduates than lawyers, doctors and engineers. There has been a rapid expansion, with student enrollment growing at about 5 percent annually over the past two decades. This growth is about two-and-half times the population growth rate and results from both a population budge in lower age cohorts as well as increased demand for higher education**.**

Key Features of the Indian Higher Education System: Initially education was the responsibility of individual states, but in 1976 it was placed in the Concurrent List (denoting joint responsibility of both central and state governments). The total budget expenditure on education and the shares was to be borne by Centre and States respectively.

Number of Higher Education Institutions: Higher education in India has witnessed an impressive growth over the years. The number of higher educational institutions (HEIs) has increased from about 30 universities and 695 colleges in 1950-51 to about 700 universities (as of 2012-13) and 35,000 colleges (as of 2011-12) as per a recent UGC report1. With an annual enrolment of above 25 million (including enrolment under Open and Distance Learning system), India is today ranked as the third largest higher education system in the world after US and China.

Figure: Higher Education Institutions in India:

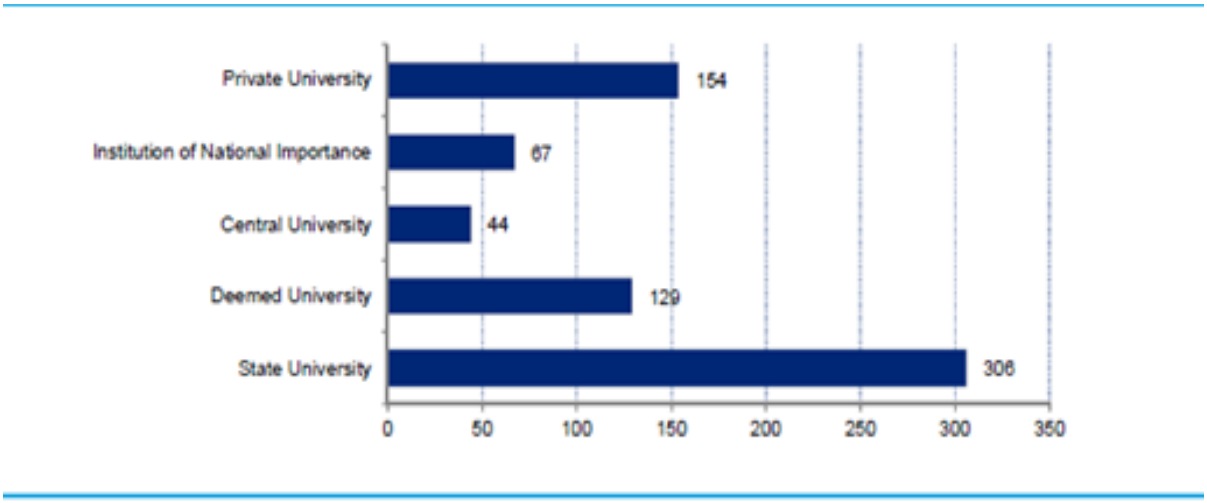


Source: UGC Higher Education at a Glance - June, 2013

As may be seen from Figure above, there has been a threefold increase in the number of HEIs in the country during the last decade.

Higher Education Institutions by type: The break-up of number of HEIs in the country shows that the share of state universities is the highest (44%) followed by private universities (22%), deemed universities (18%), institutes of national importance (10%) and central universities (6%).

Figure : Break up of HE Is



Source: UGC Higher Education at a Glance - June, 2013

Private sector participation: The public expenditure in higher education remained close to 1% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the years, which has been quite low in proportion to the burgeoning requirements of this sector. This has led to an exponential growth of private sector institutions. The number of private HEIs has increased by more than 60% during the five year period between 2007 and 2012, as illustrated in Figure . As a result, the share of private sector in terms of total HEIs has increased to about 64% in 2012.

Figure: Number of Private HEIs&

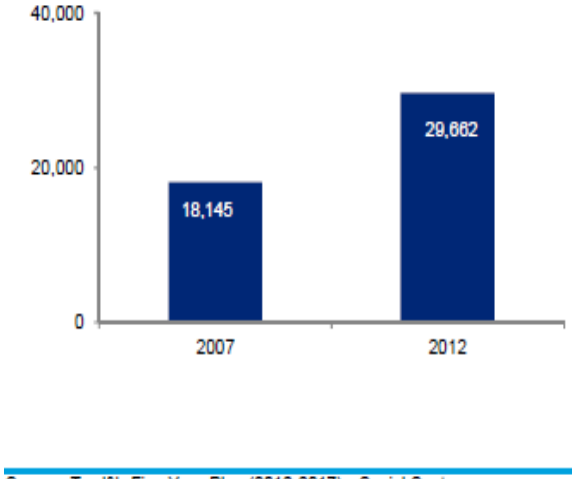
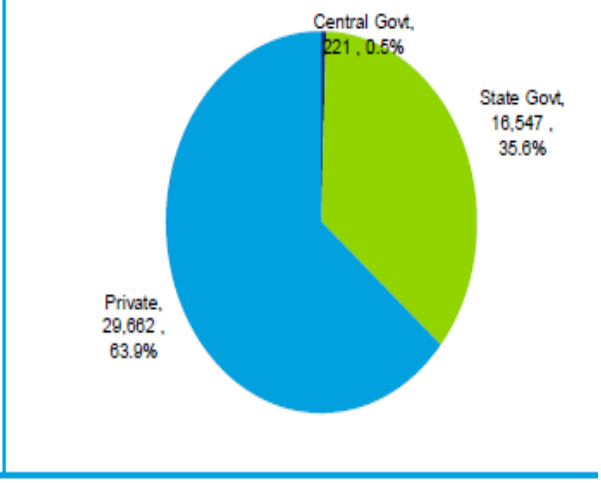


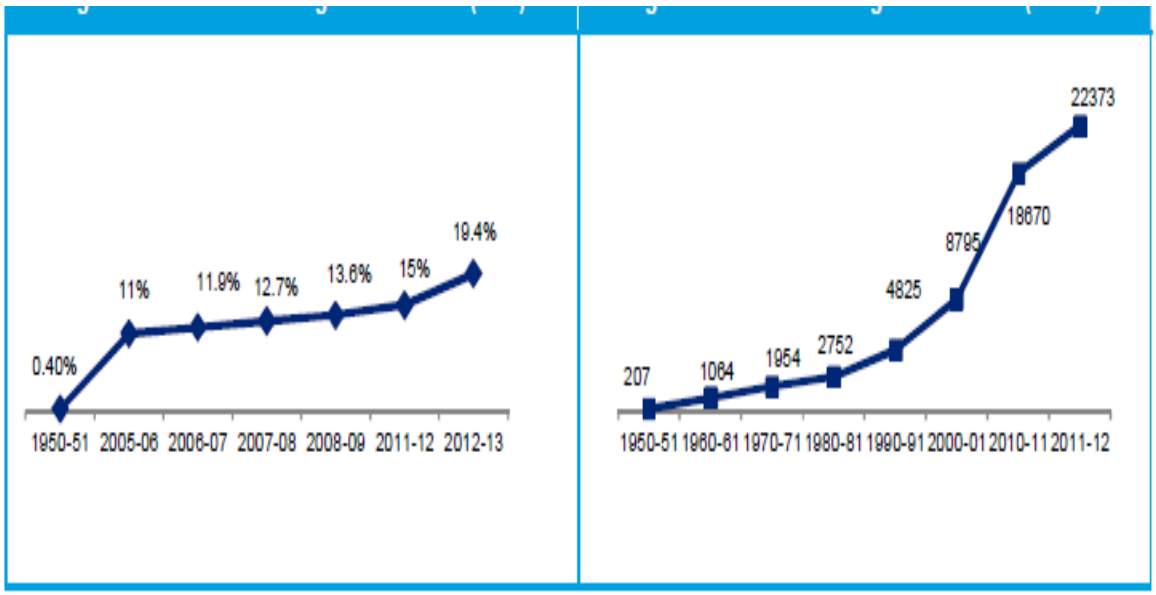
Figure: Type wise distribution of HEIs



Source: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) - Social Sectors

Growth in enrolment and GER: The increase in the enrolment figures is consistent with the expansion of HEIs over the years. The total enrolment in higher education has increased from 0.21 million in 1950-51 to about 22 million in 2011-12, while the GER has increased from 0.40% in 1950-51 19.4% in 2012-13.

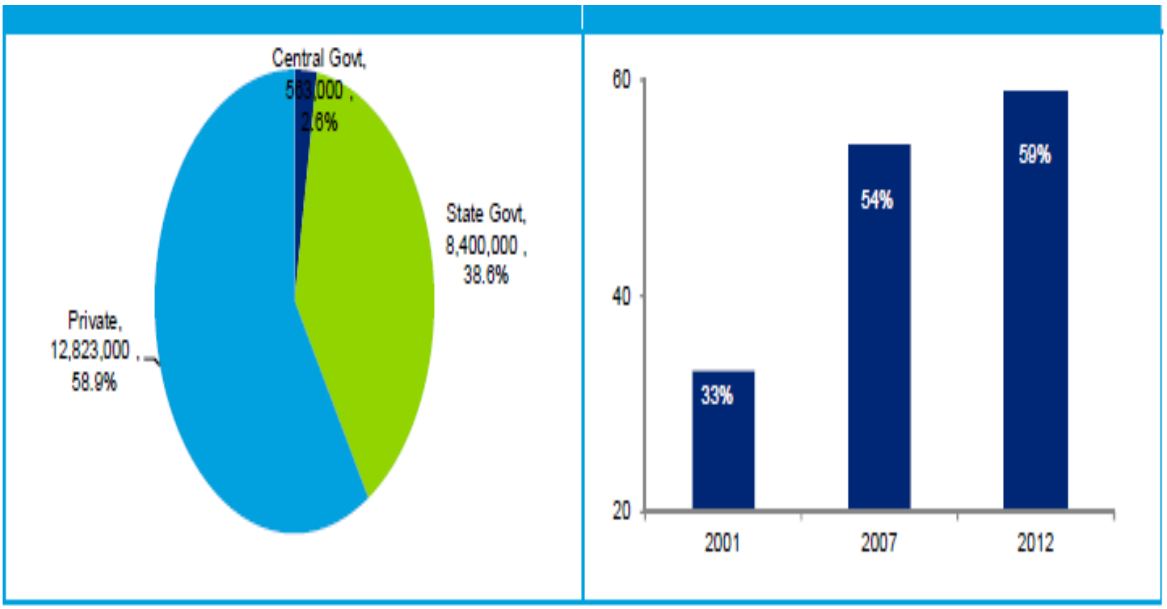
Figure: India's GER in Higher education & Enrolment in higher education



Source: UGC Higher Education at a Glance - June, 2013 and RUSA, 2013

Institution wise enrolment: The increase in number of private HEIs has also resulted in an increased private sector share in the total enrolment. The share of private sector in terms of total enrolment has grown from 33% in 2001 to 59% in 2014. While the number ofprivate HEIs account for about 64% of the total HEIs, the share of private sector in total enrolment stands at 59%, as illustrated in the following figures. The central and state government institutes on the other hand account for 2.6% and38.6% of the total enrolments, respectively.

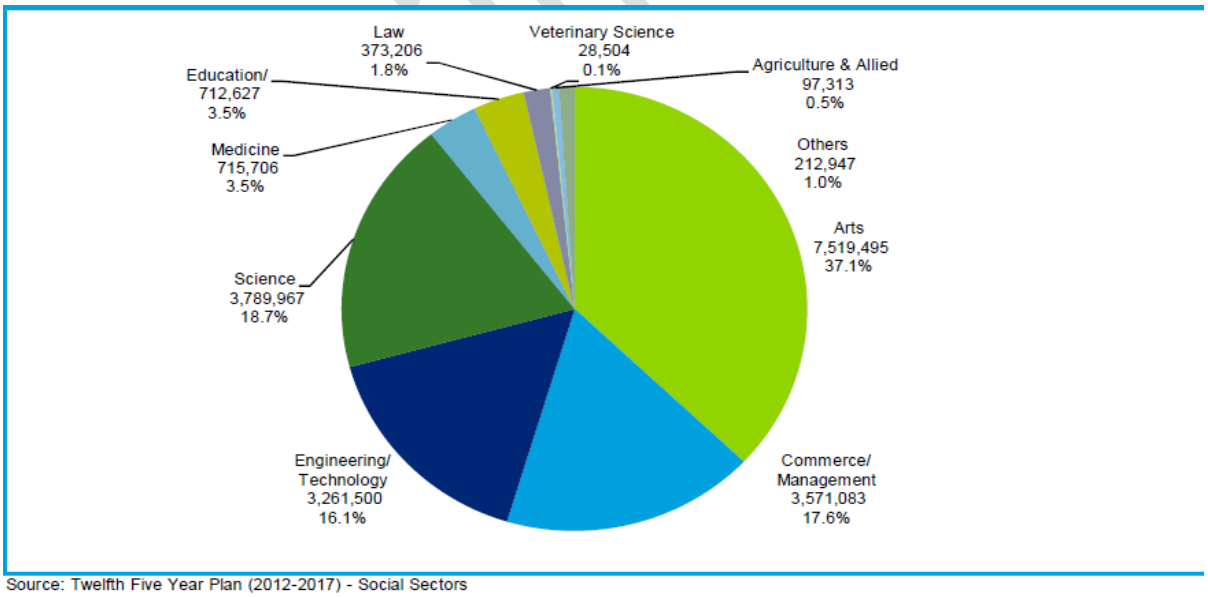
Figure: Share of Higher education institutions in enrolment& Percentage share of private sector in higher education enrolments:



Source: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) - Social Sectors

Enrolment by course: In terms of distribution of enrolment across various courses, Arts has been the favorite choice amongst students with 37.09% of enrolment, followed by 18.64% in Science, 17.57% in Commerce/Management and 16.06%7 in Engineering/Technology.

Figure : Distribution of Enrolment of students in various courses in India:

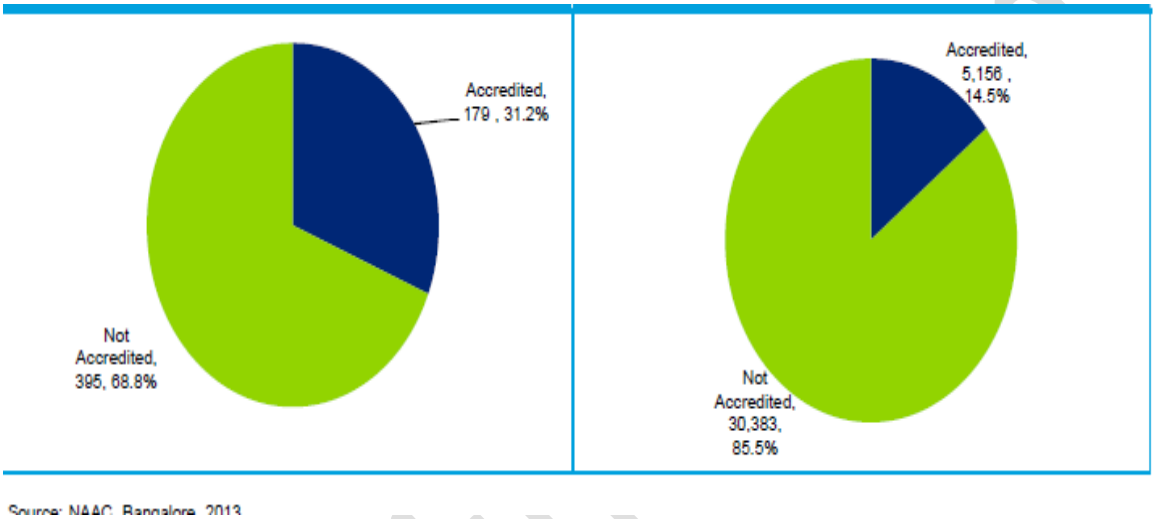


Source: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) - Social Sectors

Accreditation: Accreditation ensures that the education delivered in a particular stream/college is of an acceptable quality as per prescribed standards. Accreditation in higher education in India has been a voluntary exercise over the years, as a result,only a small percentage of HEIs have opted for accreditation. The statistics show that only 31% of the

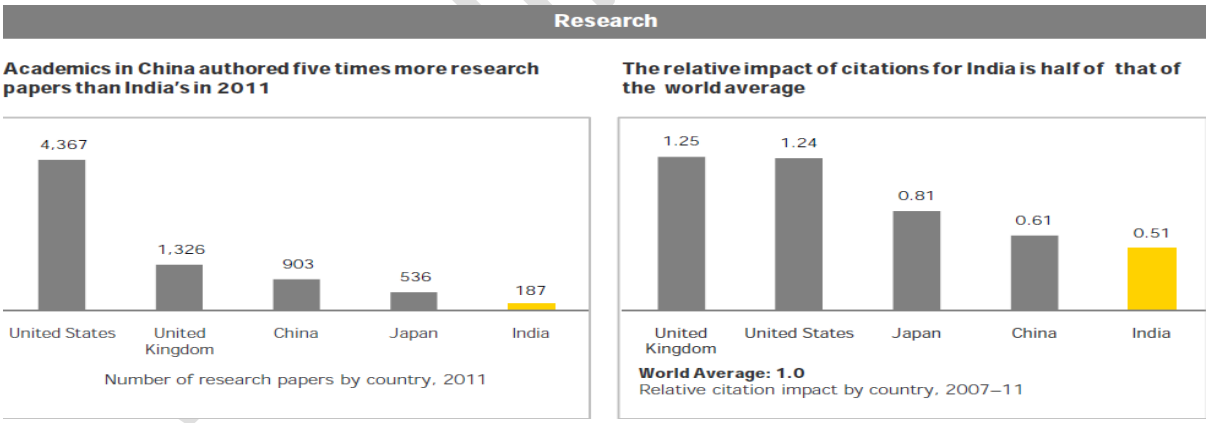
universities and 14.5% of the colleges are accredited with the National Assessment and AccreditationCouncil (NAAC).The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recently made accreditation mandatory for all universities and collegeswhich will force the HEIs to improve quality in order to attract students. The technical institutions, which have currently been kept out of the purview of these regulations, are expected to be brought within the ambit of mandatory accreditation in near future.

Figure: Universities accredited by NAAC & Colleges accredited by NAAC



Source: NAAC, Bangalore, 2013

Figure:. Status of Research In India:



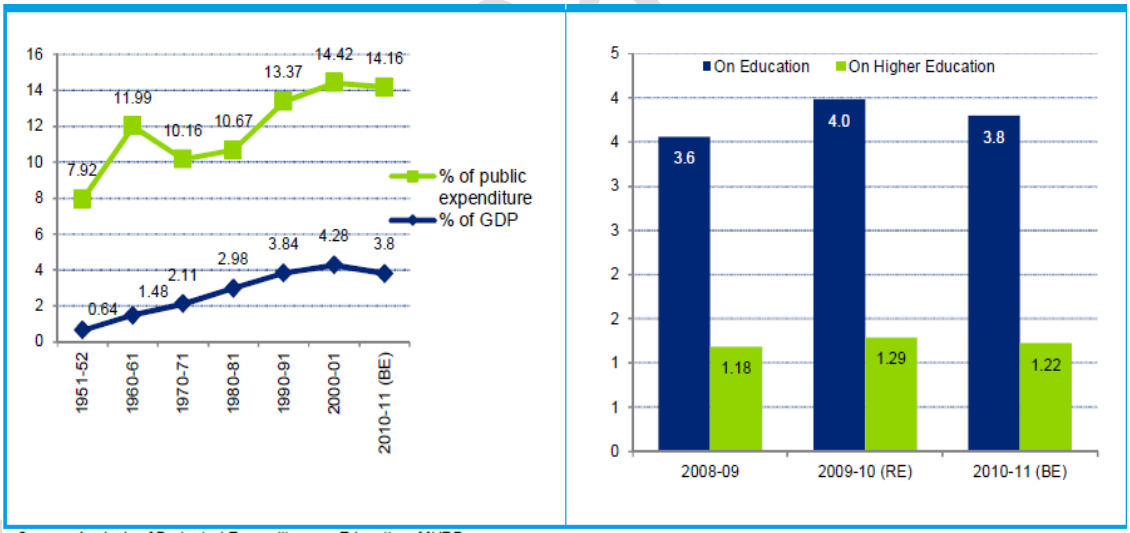
Source: FICCI Higher Education Report 2012

India's higher education institutes are poorly connected to research centres. Enough time and funding is not given for research as compared to other countries. According to the recent article of Times of India , India's investment in science has lagged behind that of China, the US and South Korea. While India invested 0.88% of its GDP in science research , the US

invested 7-8% and South Korea 3-4 %.More than 25 % of India's R& D goes into basic research , which has weak connection to economic growth. China spends only 5 % in basic research.

Low expenditure on Higher education: Education is costly business and fund allocation is of great importance. An asymmetry in the allocation of funds within the various stages of education can be observed from the chart given below. For example, in primary or elementary education the Government has given more focus, where in the higher stage of education the fund allocation is proportionately rather low. According to the Knowledge commission's note on higher education at 0.7% GDP the current support for higher education has been viewed as simply inadequate. It has been estimated that government should form at least 1.5% of GDP out of a total of 6.00% allocated to the education sector.

Figure : Expenditure of India on Higher Education :



Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education, MHRD

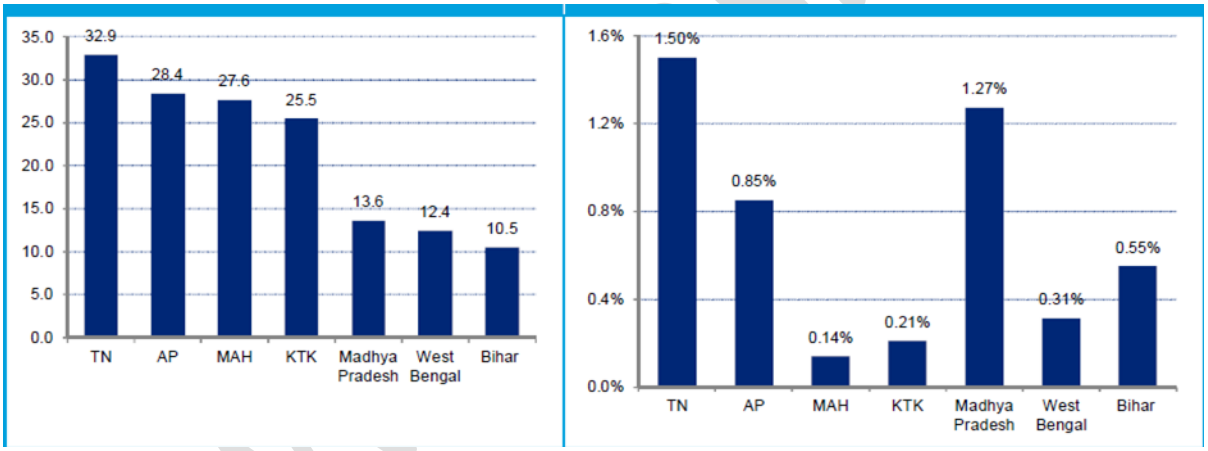
Public expenditure in education sector, especially in higher has remained very low over the years, only a little over 1% of the GDP as shown in the following figure. The National Education Policy 1968 and 1986 (revised in 1992) recommends government expenditure on education on education at 6 % of GDP , whereas the2010-11(BE) expenditure was only at 3.8%.Realizing the need to provide a good quality higher education to the growing young

population of the country , the 11th Five year plan saw a 4.6 fold increase in allocation over the 10th Five Year Plan. This constituted 19.4 of the overall.

Regionwise Distribution of Colleges: Though the number of colleges and universities related to higher education in India has increased still there is disparity in the growth of higher education at the national level. The Central and the State Governments should interfere in the uneven distribution of colleges. Because such type of uneven distribution will not serve the basic purpose of India's education policy. In other words such skewed pattern of distribution of colleges will be a barrier in the balanced regional development of the country. Such type of concentration of higher education in particular region should be avoided. The Central Govt. should take proper initiative to establish colleges in those regions where there is no proper proportion of the population and the number of colleges .

Figure: GER of Some states in higher education &

Public expenditure on higher education as % of GSDP



International comparisons

The future of any nation resides within the walls of education system, that plays a proactive role in developing and nurturing an individual's intellect, character and value system. Higher education is of paramount importance for economic and social development. It is of vital importance for the country as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge based society of 21st century. With the growing size and diversity of the higher education sector particularly in terms of courses, management and geographic coverage it has become necessary to develop a sound data based on higher education. The Indian higher education has emerged as one of the largest in the world with 14.6 million students enrolled in more than 31000 institutions. At present programme wise students enrollment percentage is 86%, 12% and 1% at

Undergraduate level, Post graduate level and Research level respectively. The Gross enrollment Ratio (GER), of 13.5% compares quite poorly with 84% in USA and over 40% in several European countries and more than 20% in many developed and developing countries. Moreover only 161 universities and 4,371 colleges had been accredited by NAAC, in which 9 % were graded 'A' 68% were graded 'B' and remaining 'C'.

Low Gross enrollment ratio

USA	UK	SWEDEN	JAPAN	CHINA	RUSSIA	INDIA
84%	59%	82%	55%	23%	71%	13.5%

Although India is demographically rich with its vibrant workforce, it still has less than 14% Gross enrollment Ratio (GER), which compares quite poorly with 84% in USA and over 40% in several European countries and more than 20% in many developed and developing countries. So, this low GER is obstacle for the economic advancement of country.

The new HRD minister Smriti Irani is staring at multifarious challenges in her office. The BJP manifesto had covered a wide range of topics on skilling and education. Importantly, it had mentioned that public spending on education would be raised to 6% of GDP. Presently, it is around 3.2%-3.5%. If the new HRD minister manages to get a budget allocation of 6%, it can truly revolutionize this sector. By doubling the amount of funds, it can vastly improve access to the "last man in the line" and also the quality of education.

Role of the Government: The Nehru-Mahalanobis interventions took a Neo Keynesian leftist slant whereby the role of the Government in the growth process was enhanced. Ever since then the Planning Commission has been allocating budget grants to education and three issues are usually raised by its critics: (a) The allocated amount of funds is insufficient. (b) Direction of impetus to education does not match market realities. (c) Accreditation and Governance norms need to be tightened up so that quality is assured. In short, since the 1950s in India, education has been considered a public good and, therefore, responsibility of providing education to the citizens lies largely with the central and state governments. The government departments and agencies are mainly involved in framing policies and regulations that facilitate higher education and in supporting the institutions through financial and other forms of assistance. Education is on the concurrent list of the Indian Constitution

and, therefore, the aforesaid responsibility is often shared between the central and state governments, which often necessitate a good coordination mechanism to avoid conflicts. Over the years, the multiple agencies have been formed at a national level in order to administer and regulate different components of higher education, while ensuring quality deliverables and some of which have been mentioned below.

Key institutions

Ministry of Human Resources Development: Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India is the apex body with regards to policy formulation in the field of higher education in the country. The following subjects (a selective set of relevant subjects presented hereunder for reference) were allocated to the Department of Higher Education, as per Second Schedule to the Government of India :

- University education; Central Universities; Rural Higher Education, Foreign Aid Programme relating to Higher Education, Technical Education Planning.
- Institutions of higher learning (other than Universities Educational Exchange Programmes, exchange of teachers, professors, educationists, technologists, etc.; programmeof exchange of scholars between India and foreign countries.
- Grant of permission to teachers of Universities, colleges and institutions of higher learning to accept assignments abroad.
- Admission of foreign students in Indian Institutions.
- Expansion, Development and Coordination of Technical Education.
- University Grants Commission.
- All Indian Council for Technical Education, including conduct of its National Diploma and National Certificate Examinations.

- While the MHRD oversees policy making with respect to higher education, its implementation and enforcement rests with the various institutions and regulatory authorities set-up for different streams of higher education.

University Grants Commission: The UGC, a statutory body constituted under the UGC Act, has been entrusted with the task of coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India. The UGC is also responsible for disbursement of grants to central and state universities to enable them to carry out their activities. Besides this, UGC advises the central and state governments on the measure necessary for improvement of university education. The UGC has framed various regulations to ensure minimum infrastructure requirements in order to maintain quality and standards of the higher education. The UGC regulations provide that the right of conferring degrees can be exercised only by a university or deemed university established under a Central Act or a State Act. Key functions of the UGC include the following:

- Take all steps for the promotion and co-ordination of university education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities.
- Inquire into the financial needs of universities and allocate and disburse grants to universities for the maintenance and development of such universities.
- Recommend to any university the measures necessary for the improvement of university education and advise the university upon the action to be taken for the purpose of implementing such recommendation.

All India Council for Technical Education: The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is a statutory body constituted under the AICTE Act, 1987 with aview to ensure proper planning and coordinated of the technical education system throughout the country. It is also responsible for the promotion of qualitative improvement of technical education and regulation of norms and standards in the technical education system. The technical education has covers programmes of education, research and training in engineering technology, architecture, town planning, management, pharmacy and applied arts and crafts. Under the AICTE regulations, no institution providing technical education can be established without

prior approval of AICTE. The regulations contain a detailed procedure for seeking AICTE approval. However, the recent Supreme Court judgment has completely turned the situation by holding that the AICTE's role with respect to technical colleges (affiliated to university) is restricted to just advisory & recommendatory, while the powers of defining and maintaining standards of technical education vest in the UGC.

National Board of Accreditation (NBA): The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) was constituted by the AICTE, as an Autonomous Body, under Section 10 (u) of the AICTE Act, 1987 to periodically conduct evaluation of technical institutions or programmes on the basis of guidelines, norms and standards specified by it and to make recommendations to it, or to the AICTE or to other bodies, regarding recognition or de-recognition of the institution or the programme.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC): It is an autonomous body established by the UGC to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. It is an outcome of the recommendations of the National Policy in Education (1986) that laid special emphasis on upholding the quality of higher education in India. The key tasks of the organization are:

- To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programme or projects.
- To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality of teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions.
- To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education.
- To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programme.
- To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

Identifying the problem areas in the Indian education system

These are the problem areas in the Indian education system

. Penetration of higher education in India remains low

Demand-Supply Gap: According to the recent report of HRD ministry presently about 12.4 percent of students go for higher education from the country. If India were to increase that figure of 12.4% to 30%, then it would need another 800 to one thousand universities and over 40,000 colleges in the next 10 years.

- **Inadequate Facilities**: There are is a large segment of the Indian populations who only have access to a rudimentary form of primary education and do not have access to higher levels of education namely.

  - Secondary Education
  - Adult Education
  - Vocational Education
  - University and Higher Education
  - Technical Education

- **Urban Bias:** Educational infrastructure in the country is skewed, with some regions having greater concentration of institutions as compared to others. For example, professional colleges in rural areas account for only 20 per cent of total colleges as opposed to nearly 60 per cent of total population in these areas. This has resulted in inadequate access to higher education, particularly in the case of students in rural areas who have to travel to towns and cities for the same.

- **Rising demand for education**: The number of students aspiring for education is becoming larger day by day, making it impossible to develop the traditional infrastructure to sustain this; leveraging technology by developing e learning systems can help meet these growing demands.

- **Lack of skill-based, quality education**: India ranks third in the output of graduates after the US and China but in terms of quality, it lags far behind to cite an example, at least 25% of the engineers and MBA's graduating every year remain unemployable, the education curriculum is highly theoretical and exam based and in most cases totally outdated which do not cater to the ever changing needs of industry.

- **Cost of education**: the cost of education and the benefit accrued is not very apparent, there are many colleges in India imparting poor quality education at exorbitant cost unaffordable by the most of the population technology enabled delivery can reduce cost to as much as ninety percent of what most colleges are charging today making education affordable to all

- **Method of assessment is exam oriented**: The general education system is focused only on examinations rather than training students for the future and really testing their knowledge. Because of this, students are forced to take tests that show only their retention powers, not their actual capacity or knowledge. So engineers today cannot do actual work in technology and management students have no clue as to business realities. Today, students are not professionally-oriented and they take examinations for the sake of passing them rather than to gain knowledge, or do research in the subject. In our colleges, we may have infrastructure and good faculty, but there is no motivation to do research. Rapidity of exams and the over- use of objective type tests stymies the innovative spirit of the student and makes paper pushing more important than pedagogical teaching and learning.
- **Focus only on teaching and not learning**: Indian education focuses only on the means that is teaching and not on the purpose that is learning this is one of the biggest lacunae in the system.

Recommendations:

- India has to improve on all factors which value of higher education system by setting committees or organizations so that they can keep track and improve on these factors .Thus, the suggestions of these committees and organizations must be implemented.
- India has to take better steps to improve gross enrolment ratio by increasing public spending on education.
- Government can also work towards provision of free education to all till graduation.
- Higher Education should be developed as an infrastructure for social and economic growth of the country.
- The Governmental control in the University must be reduced, so that the University autonomy and accountability are strengthened and academic decisions are taken on merit.
- Students' involvement in the area of University / College governance should be encouraged.
- Private institutes and Universities must follow a minimum standard to give degrees.

- Provision of improved curriculum and teaching-learning material.
- Attention to teacher capacity building.
- Increased focus on specification and measurement of learner achievement levels.

Conclusion: Inspite of the significant progress, India's higher education sector is still in danger with several challenges with its relatively low Gross Enrollment ratio (GER). According to the report on , India's higher education system faces challenges on three fronts — expansion, equity and excellence. On the eve of a new century, there is an unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for socio-cultural and economic development, and for building the future, for which the younger generations will need to be equipped with new skills knowledge and Ideas.

The Central government and the State governments made more provision to promote higher education. In the Eleventh Five Year Plan the total provision of Rs. 44,000 cr. was made for higher education. In the Twelth Five Year Plan the total provision of Rs. 1, 80,000 cr. is made for higher education. Such provision is made to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) related to the higher education. It is seen as the responsibility of the U.G.C. to make more effective regulation over the higher education system in India. Merely growth of higher education will not serve the basic purpose of education policy. It is necessary to see that the Universities and colleges should provide quality education to the masses. The U.G.C. should make effective regulation and try to control such malpractices. The Universities and Colleges should provide sufficient employable skills so that employability can improve. In the era of globalization there are more weightage for competitiveness. India's higher education should be more reliable, competent so that the coming generations can be more competent to face the challenges in their life.

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