INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABILITY –AN ANALYTICAL NOTE

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ABSTRACT:
This paper mainly highlighted the problems and prospects of Indian Higher Education in the era of globalization. The study found that the Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in its institutional capacity in the years since independence. The study observes the fact that the women Gross Enrollment Ratio is very less. The study also evidently speaks the truth that the challenges of higher education have been caused due to low college enrollment, employability crisis of unskilled labour and lack of flexibility of the education sector. The paper also covers the appropriate policy to India's towards achieving 30% gross enrollment ratio objective by 2030 .Finally the paper concludes here is need of plans requires solutions that combine, employers and youth need of Expectations of from various stakeholders Students, Industry, Educational Institutions, Parents and Government

KEY WORDS: Gross Enrollment Ratio(G.E.R),Compound Annual Growth Rate(C.A.G.R)Stakeholders, Human Resource Development

Higher education is very important for a developing country like India and it is encouraging to increasing human development. The Indian higher education system has witnessed significant expansion in recent years, both in terms of the number of institutions as well as the student enrollment. India has more than 400 universities and over 20,000 colleges, of which almost half were set up in the last decade.

Indian higher education has grown by 20% in one year and added more than 5,000 colleges to the system. Likewise, gross enrollment ratio grew from 12.5% in 2007-08 to 17.3% in 2009-10. India's target of doubling the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education by 2020 will come at a price of R9.5 lakh crore and require an additional 10,510 technical institutions, 15,530 colleges and 521 universities. GER is the number of actual students as a share of all potential students. The human resource development (HRD) ministry has set a goal of doubling GER to 30% by 2020 from the current 15%. The ratio was approximately 12% in 2008-09 — only a fourth of the average GER in developed countries (54.6%), even worse than developing countries in transition, which have 36.5%.

National University of Educational Planning and Administration has pointed out that "The investment required in higher education is more than 9 lakh crore if we want to achieve 30% GER. This includes the cost of setting up more institutes, infrastructure and salaries. In China, government spends more than 1.5 per cent of its GDP on higher education while India spends

less than 0.5 per cent. According to a provisional survey on higher education released on Friday September 28, 2012 has pointed out that the Gross enrolment ratio in India stands at an estimated 18.8 percent, with Other Backward Class recording a respectable 27.1 percent,. Enrolment ratio among Schedule Caste students in contrast stood at 10.2 percent and 4.4 percent in case of females. Similarly, enrolment ratio among the teaching staff was more under OBC at 23.3 percent as compared to 7.4 percent among SC category and 2.9 percent in Schedule Tribes category. The first 'all India survey on higher education' for 2010-11 also said 19,249 foreign students were pursuing education in India and 6,842 of them were female students.

According to Ernst & Young, in the last decade, the number of universities in the country grew at a CAGR of 7.5% as against the 4.7% growth observed from 1951-2001. The number of colleges has grown at a CAGR of 11% in 2001-2011 as against 6.1% during 1951-2001. However, salient reason for the discrepancy between Chinese and Indian educational performance is the absence of the state from higher education in India. During 2005-06 period, around 52 per cent of Indian student accessed higher education in private colleges, compared to less than 10 per cent in China. China has grown its higher education sector primarily with the help of universities, which number more than 2300. India has around 600 universities but they have more than 33,000 affiliated colleges. This is the largest number of affiliated colleges in the world, and is 10 times more than that of China. The majority of these universities and colleges in India are private and do not receive financial support from the Indian government.

Review of literature

National Knowledge Commission report 2006 pointed out that '*the existing framework, rather than fostering accountability, constrains the supply of good-quality institutions whilst excessively regulating the existing institutions in the wrong places and is not conducive to innovation or creativity'*. These findings are backed up by another report which describes the Indian higher education sector as: *'Over-regulated and under-governed'*. At the same time, quantity expansion has also been grossly inadequate, making the challenges daunting on dual fronts of quantity and quality

According to the Team Lease report, well over half — 58 per cent, in fact — of young Indians suffer from some degree of skill-deprivation. The study also showed that non-availability of courses, inadequate infrastructure facilities, inadequate financial resources, lack of flexibility and autonomy to the institutions among others have dented efforts in improving the quality and scale of education, employability and employment. The study also states that the challenges of higher education been caused due to low college enrollment, employability crisis of unskilled labor and lack of flexibility of the education sector

McKinsey-(NASSCOM 2005) He mainly pointed out that those employers stating their dissatisfaction with the quality of graduates. There are jobs — in the IT sector, for instance — but not enough qualified engineers to fill them.

Judhajit Das, opines that (Chief HR Officer, ICICI Prudential) "The issue of employability is centered on two challenges. The first one is lack of access to education and skills, and the second is rigour in education quality standards. Calculated investment and new technology can take care of the first issue. The second challenge is more about quality of students which results in aspiration mismatch between skills and job/salary expected.

Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017): This report suggested that accountability indicators designed to ensure quantity were inhibiting the quality of graduates, particularly in relation to their creative and entrepreneurial skills. It also pointed out that higher education system in India can scale up in quality and reach only by creating competition with transparent regulation. Some of the proposed solutions include legitimizing distance education, fostering public-private partnership models, deregulating higher education and tweaking the skill and employment ecosystem. While stressing the importance of Indian higher education challenges in the context of globalization following objectives are set forth

Objectives

- To examine the Growth of higher education university/colleges/students enrollment/teaching staff from

1950-51 to 2010-2011

- To study the Growth of higher education level wise student enrollment boys and girls 2010-2011
- To evaluate the growth of universities/colleges 2001-2011
- To study the of total student and girls enrollment(000) in Higher Education
- To examine the faculty-wise students enrolment in Higher Education 2010-2011
- To study a comparison of gross enrollment ratio of various countries

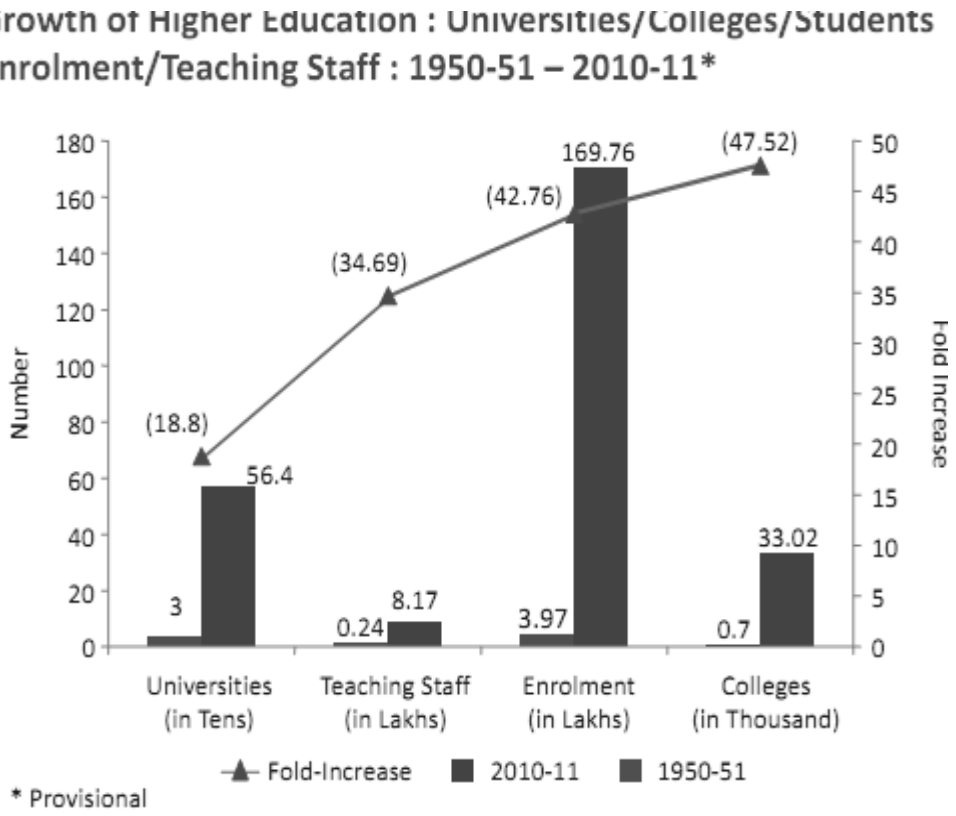
Data and methodology.

The study is mainly based on secondary data which is collected from Ministry of higher education Government of India, University Grants Commission reports, corporate expert's opinion and other published and unpublished reports which is relevant to the study. For analyzing primary and secondary data, simple statistical tools like percentages and averages have been used to interpret the data. Apart from this, tables, charts, graphs; pictures have been chosen for responding the data at relevant places.

Observations

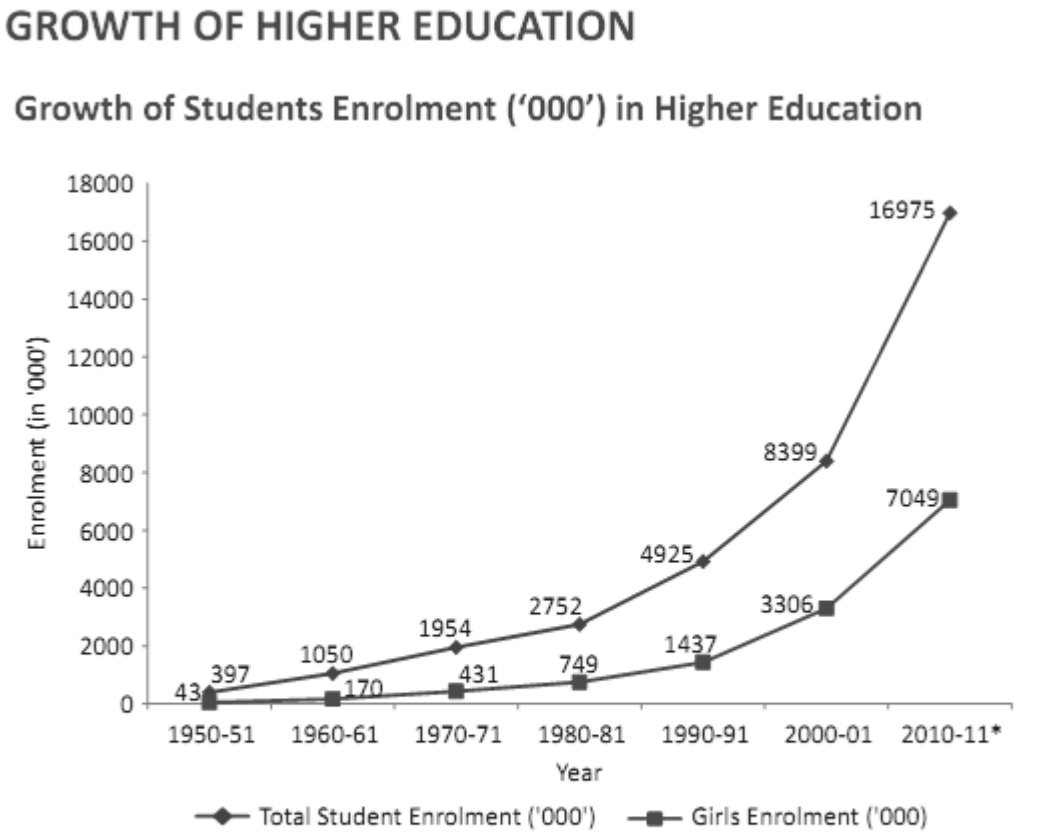
Growth of higher education university/colleges/students enrollment/teaching staff from 1950-51 to 2010-2011as shown in fig-1

Fig-1
Growth of higher education university/colleges/students enrollment/teaching staff from 1950-51 to 2010-2011



The data from the above figure reveals the fact that the growth of higher education university/colleges/students enrollment/teaching staff from 1950-51 to 2010-2011 has recorded positively. It also examines that India added nearly 20,000 colleges in a decade (increased from 12,806 in 2000-01 to 33,023 in 2010-11) which translate into a growth of more than 150%. Number of degree granting universities more than doubled from 256 to 564, primarily due to deemed-universities and private universities.

Fig-2



**Provisional*
Source : MHRD for 1950-51 & 1960-61 and UGC for 1970-71 onwards
***Coverage :** Figures of students enrolment & teaching staff (1970-71 onwards) pertain to regular courses in Universities & Colleges (excluding Polytechnics, other Diploma awarding Institutions & Non-formal System of Higher Education)*

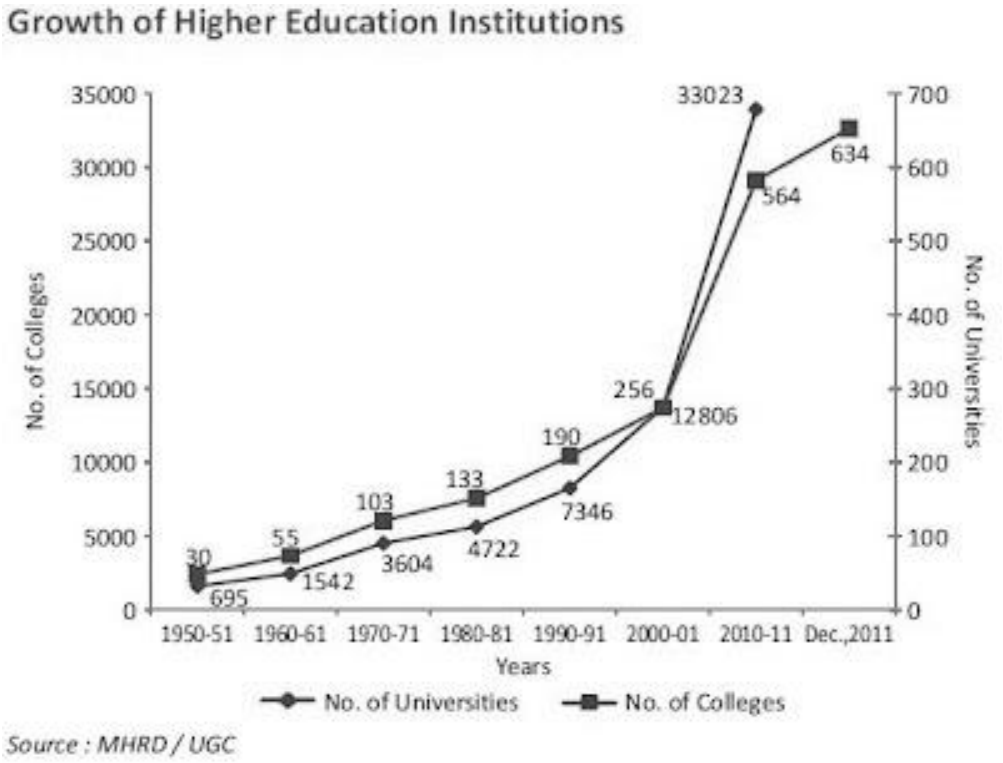
Table -2
Growth of higher education level wise student enrollment boys and girls 2010-2011

Serial number	Level wise students enrollment(0000)	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Graduate	8580(58)	6037(41)	14637
2	Post Graduate	1167(56)	882(43)	2049
3	Research	81(59)	56(40)	137
4	Diploma/Certificate	98(57)	73(47)	171

* Figures in parenthesis depict their percentage to total

Growth of higher education level wise student enrollment boys and girls 2010-2011 has revealed in table -2.The study explores the fact that the women enrollments ratio is less when compare to male. The data evidently speaks the truth that the enrollment difference has found with19 percent in research and next come with17 percent in under graduation

Fig-3-Growth of Higher Education institutions



Source : MHRD / UGC

Fig three reveals the fact that Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in its institutional capacity in the years since independence. The number of Universities/University-level institutions has increased 18 times from 27 in 1950 to 504 in 2009. The sector boasts of 42 Central universities, 243 State universities, 53 State Private universities, 130 Deemed universities, 33 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) and five Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase with just 578 in 1950 growing to be more than 30,000 in 2011.The growth of universities has been increased from 256 to 634 from 2001-2011 and number of colleges also increased from 12805 to 33025 in the same period.
Growth of student enrollment (000) in Higher Education has explained in Fig -4.
The study mainly pointed out that the girl's enrollment ratio is very less.

Although number of students enrolled in higher education doubled from nearly 8.4 million to 17 million in a decade, it grew a slower pace than number of colleges which grew 2.5 times in the same period, creating a paradoxical situation of excess capacity in a country where gross enrollment ratio is less than 20%.

Fig-4-Growth of student enrollment (000) in Higher Education

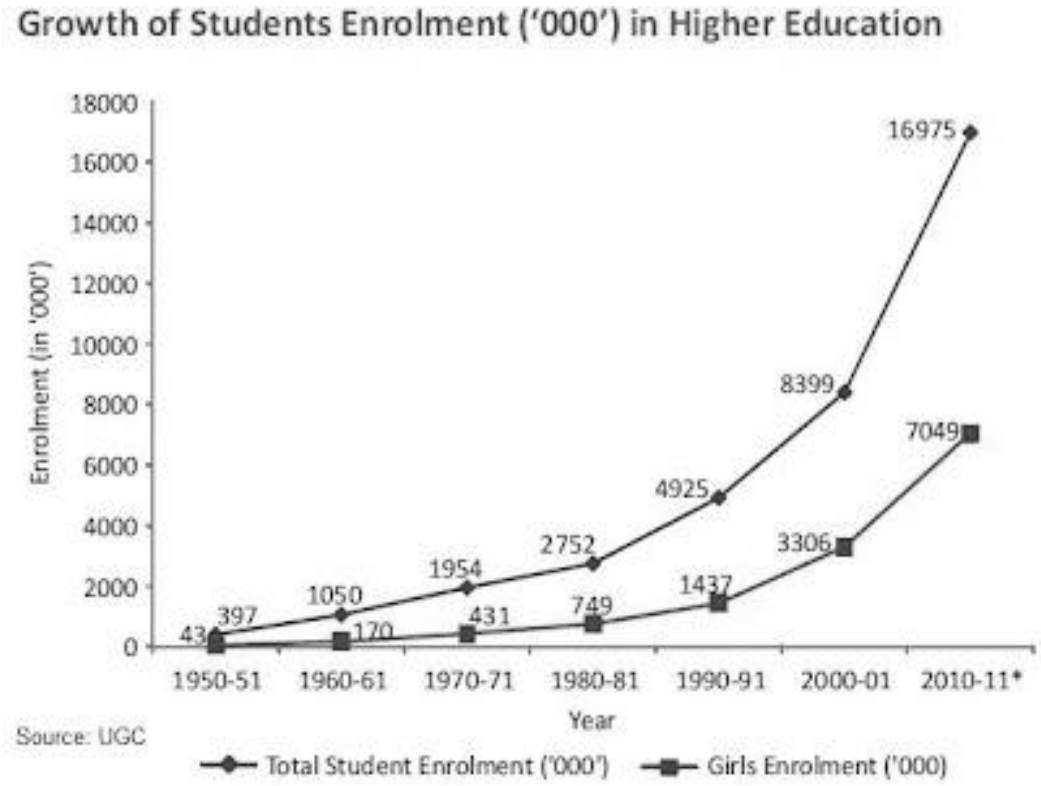
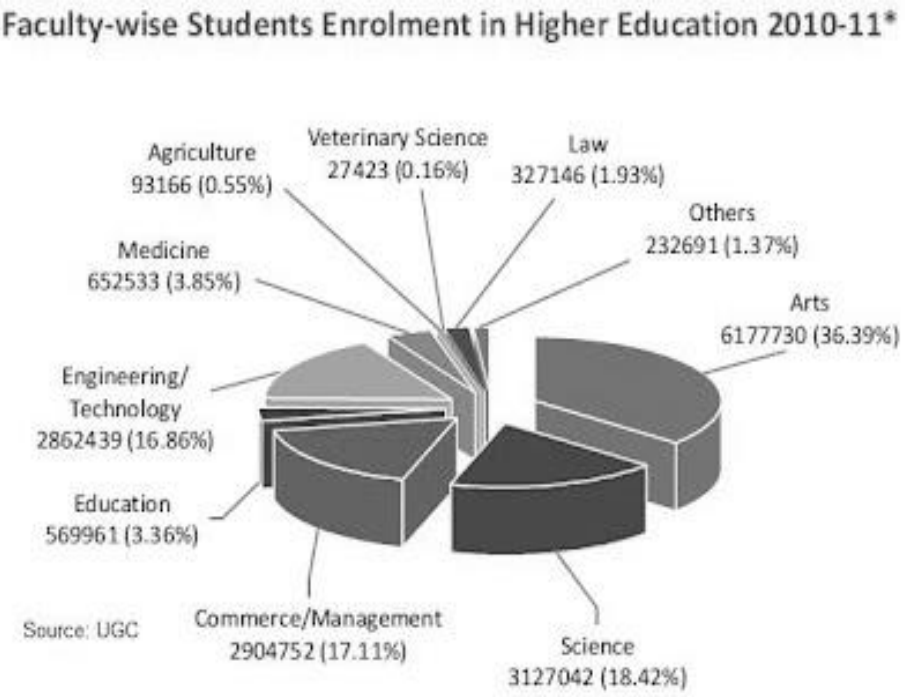


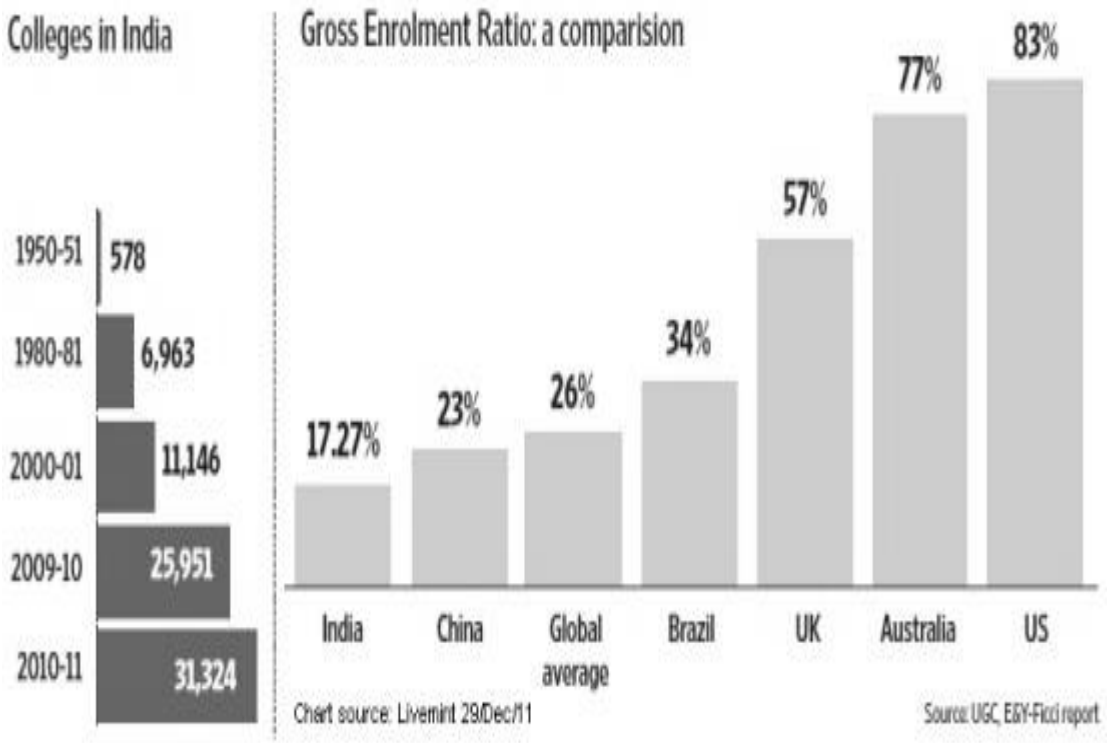
Fig-5 depicts faculty-wise students enrolment in Higher Education 2010-2011.It evidently speaks the truth that 36 per cent student in India enrolled in arts programme and 18 per cent enrolling in science and next comes from commerce/management with 17 per cent and 16 percent from engineering/technology. Every sixth student in India is enrolled in engineering/technology programme and more than 2/3rd of Indian students are enrolled in under graduate course

Figure-5 -Faculty-wise student's enrolment in Higher Education 2010-2011



A comparison of gross enrollment ratio(GER) of various countries is depicts in fig-5.The study evidently explores the fact that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education in USA was around 83 per cent which was the highest in the world, while in India it was around 17 per cent. By the end of the 13th fifth year plan, aim to overtake the US in achieving higher GER However, Indian higher education has grown by 20% in one year and added more than 5,000 colleges to the system. Likewise, gross enrollment ratio (GER) grew from 12.5% in 2007-08 to 17.3% in 2009-10. It is heartening to know that the overall Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the country stands at 18.8% (based on estimated figures collected till July 31, 2012).

Fig-5 A comparison of gross enrollment ratio of various countries



Issues and Challenges

The major challenges of the Indian higher education have explained here under

However the study identified five areas critical to making the Indian Higher education system that financial innovation, innovation use of information and communication technology (ICT), reinvigorating research, thrust on vocational education and training (VET), and regulatory reforms are potential "Game changer' for the Indian higher education system The study also found that very low per capital spends on higher education India. Lack of qualified faculty limited funding for hours for research, great budgets and research as well as poor linking

The study found that poor quality of graduates – lack skills for employability 10% of graduates and 25% of engineering graduates are directly employable (*Infosys, an IT giant, last year sorted through 1.3 million applicants only to find that around two percent were qualified for jobs.) It is also found that q*uality of education delivered in most institutions is very poor. While India has some institutions of global repute delivering quality education, such as (Indian Institute of Management) IIMs and (Indian Institute of Technology) IITs.It is also fact that Education is become a seller's market and everybody wants to get more profit rather than the quality education.

Coming up to the next increasing number of students going abroad for higher education which is a drain on foreign exchange resources and also on the students and/or their parents' finances. It is also noticed that the number of Ph.D.s produced each year is very low – those required by

academia is far higher. In fact, at many institutions fresh graduates are employed to teach, leading to poor quality of classroom instruction. The study also found that the top institutions have demand supply gap not just in terms of number of seats available but more so in terms of seats available in institutions who offer quality education

According to the senses 2011 India has birth rate of 20.97 million per year – developed countries have 1/3rd of students going to college. If India were to meet the same standard, it will need 8-9 million graduate seats in college and it has only 4.5 million today. There is huge obsession with capacity creation but emphasis should be much more on quality how is it that we can create quality capacity. The study found that the parents only treat engineering, medicine as only choices for graduation they are unable to appreciate attractiveness of new specialized industry oriented programs that are launched in the country

India has a very large number of talented students but many of these feel dejected for not making it to IITs and IIMs due to lack of capacity – they end up going abroad for education

It is also need to double capacity not just in terms of seat count but "quality" seats count and remove the "Not for profit" requirement to facilitate the investment from private sector. The study also found that industry and Academia connect necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability – Academia to understand and make sure – knowledge + skills+ global professional skills = good jobs. There is also need of Vocational and Diploma courses to facilitate specialized programs being offered to students for generating more employment. It is also need to change the teaching curriculum as per the employment growing industrial potentiality

Conclusion A lot of commissions and committees appointed by the government for suggesting reforms have also pinned upon same obstacles in the Indian Higher Education. But there has been sheer dearth of courage and a political will. It is also important that the way attempts have been made to reform secondary level education in schools, higher education needs to be reformed too. It is high time that universities cater to the growing demand of students or else this human resource boon will soon prove to be population bane for the economy. Though these are clearly positive trends, the Indian higher education system continues to demonstrate many structural shortcomings which in turn create challenges in meeting future expectations. Inequity is also pervasive in the system, with the GERs of women and backward castes being much lower than the national average. However, finally achieving India's 30% gross enrollment ratio objective by 2030 plans requires solutions that combine the needs of policy makers, employers and youth Expectations of/from various stakeholders – Students, Industry, Educational Institutions, Parents, Government

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