

# SIGNIFICANCE OF GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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## Abstract

*“Education is the single most important factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress... in all branches of national life education becomes the focal point of planned development,” (GOI, 1961). The Indian Higher Education System has established itself as the largest system in the world in terms of number of institutions and third largest in terms of student enrolment after China and USA (MHRD, 2012). However, the access to higher education is measured in term of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which is a ratio of persons enrolled in higher education institutions to total population of the persons in age group of 18 to 23 years. As per UNESCO estimate, at least 20 per cent of GER in higher education is a pre requisite for rapid socio economic development of country (Chauhan, 2010). The access in higher education has increased over the years, 10% of GER was found in the year 2000 and it is increased by 24.3 % in 2016 (MHRD, 2016). Indian higher education is more reliable, competent to that the coming generation can be more competent to face the challenges in their life. It is in this context, the paper makes its attempt to highlight the GER of Indian higher education at present scenario.*

**Keywords :** Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Higher education.

## Introduction

GER in Indian higher education system has a tremendous improvement. Former MHRD Minister Smriti Irani (2015) had expressed confidence that the target of 30 per cent GER by 2020 as envisaged in the 12th Plan, would be achieved. During the same period, the number of institutions of higher education (Listed on the All India Survey on Higher Education portal) has also increased significantly. At present, there are 760 universities, as against 757 in 2015, and 38498 colleges against 38,056 in the year 2014-15. It is evidence for increasing of higher education institutions in India.

The GER of Indian higher education also improved to 24.3 per cent in 2015-16 from 23.6 per cent in 2015 and 22.5 per cent in 2014 respectively. Overall enrolment in higher was 34.2 million in 2015-16 compared to 33.3 million in 2014-15 (MHRD, 2016). Regarding enrolment in higher education, the top 8 States in terms of highest number of colleges in India are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana. In GER in Indian higher education, the state of Tamil Nadu retains the number one position (45.2 %) among the states. The Union territory of

Chandigarh (56.1%) and Puducherry (46.0%) have the first and second place in terms of GER at States and UTs level in the country (MHRD, 2016) respectively.

According to Agarwal (2006), the growth of higher education in India can be divided into three phases: (i) Period 1947 to 1980 can be termed as first phase, (ii) second phase from 1980 to 2000, and (iii) the third phase can be taken from the year 2000 onwards.

**Table - 1 : Growth of Higher Education Institutions in India**

Year	No. of Universities	No. of Colleges
1950-51	20	695
1960-61	55	1542
1970-71	103	3604
1980-81	133	4722
1990-91	190	7346
2000-01	256	12806
2010-11	564	33023
2011-12	634	34908
2012-13	667	35525
2013-14	723	36634
2014-15	757	38056
2015-16	760	38498

Source : Ministry of Human Resource Development, (2015-16)

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Table-1 shows that the growth of higher education institutions (Universities and Colleges) in India for the period 1950-51 to 2015-16. In the year 1950-51 the number of Universities was 20 which went up to 760 in the year 2015-2016. The increase in the universities during the period was 38 times. In the year 1950-51 the numbers of colleges were 695 which increased to 38498 in the year 2016. The increase in the colleges for the above-mentioned period is 55 times. From 2000 to 2015-16, it can clearly indicate the tremendous growth of the universities and colleges in India. The growth of Universities and Colleges was due to massive efforts and policy decisions that were periodically taken by the central and the state government of India.

**Table - 2 : Growth and enrolment details in higher education institutions (2013 to 2016)**

YEAR	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
No. of Universities	667	723	757	760
No. of Colleges	35,525	36,634	38,056	38498
No. of stand alone Institutions	11,565	11,664	11,922	12276
Enrolment in Higher Education (in mil)	30.1	32.3	33.3	34.2
GER(Total)	21.5	22.5	23.6	24.3
Male	22.7	23	24.5	25.3
Female	20.1	22	22.7	23.2

Source : Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI, (2015-16)

Table - 2 clearly indicates the growth and enrolment status of the higher education institutions in the country for the last three years. In all these years the enrolments in higher education institutions have increased. However, during the year 2012-13, 30.1 million students took part in the higher education, but in the year 2015-16 there are 34.2 million students who are pursuing their higher education. The estimation of GER is generally based on the data collected by AISHE/MHRD (2016) from the higher education institutions. The government initiatives for the planned development of higher education into the country has transformed the elitist system of education favouring the rich and higher class to a more democratic and mass based system. Whenever the universities and colleges increased, simultaneously the GER also gradually increased. It will increase the number of students being enrolled in the higher education arena, eventually promoting the progress and development of the nation.

**Table - 3 : Selected States and UTs' above the National GER level (24.3%) in Indian Higher Education**

STATES / UTs	GER (%)	Male	Female
Chandigarh	56.1	48.6	63.6
Puducherry	46	47.7	44.2
Tamil Nadu	45.2	47	43.4
Delhi	43.5	42	45.4
Telungana	36.1	39.2	33
Manipur	35.9	37.1	34.8
Uttarakhand	33.9	34.9	32.8
Himachal Pradesh	31.2	29.2	33.3
Andhara Pradesh	31.2	35.2	27.3
Sikkim	30.3	28.4	32.4
Kerala	28.7	24.1	33.3
Arunachal Pradesh	28.3	28.6	27.9
Maharashtra	27.9	30	25.6
Goa	27.7	25.2	30.7
Haryana	27.6	27.6	27.5
Punjab	27.1	26	28.4
Karnataka	26.4	26.7	26
Uttar Pradesh	25	24.5	25.5

Source : AISHE, MHRD Report (2016)

Table-3 indicates that the selected States and UTs GER that are above the average of the national GER in Indian higher education (24.3 %). From the table 18 states and UTs have to increase the GER on par with the national GER level. Among the States and Union Territories, Chandigarh (56.1), Puducherry (46.0%), and Tamilnadu, (45.2%) have the maximum GER respectively.

#### **Current Scenario of GER in Indian Higher Education**

The higher education institutions are at present engaging in enrolling international students, becoming partners of inter-institutional schemes, and pushing forward in the drive towards globalization, students, academic staff and curricula are transferred and exchanged between the institutions of higher education for the betterment of the quality and to increasing the GER at global level. Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the

number of Universities/University level Institutions and Colleges since Independence.

But, India's GER of 17.9% (2012) was much below the world average of 26%, as well as the other emerging countries such as China (26%), USA (95%) and Brazil (36%) (MHRD, 2012). The GER in the year 2012-13(21.5%), 2013-14(22.5%), 2014-2015(23.6%) and 2015-16 (24.3 %) respectively. It will be increased to 25% by 2017. Former HRD Minister KapilSibal said, "India needs 800 to one thousands new universities and 40,000 new colleges to meet the aims of 30 percent GER by 2020(MHRD Report, 2010). Now, India aimed to reach the target appropriately. It is the evidence for the progress of the higher education in the country. However, the increase of the colleges and universities definitely improve the national GER and to realize the ultimate aims of the RUSA. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education in India is witnessing a consistent and significant rise for the last six years. The GER of higher education in India are tabulated as follows :

**Table - 4 : Gross Enrolment Ratio in Indian Higher Education (Year-Wise)**

YEAR	GER(%)
1950-60	0.7
1960-61	1.4
1979-80	5
1989-90	6
1999-00	10
2006-07	12.3
2011-12	17.9
2012-13	21.5
2013-14	22.5
2014-15	23.6
2015-16	24.3

Source : 12<sup>th</sup> FYP Report (2012-2017)

The access to higher education is measured in terms of GER, which is a ratio of persons enrolled in higher education institutions to total population of the persons in the age group of 18 to 23 years. GER

in higher education increased from 0.7 per cent in 1950-51 to 1.4 per cent in 1960-61 to 5 per cent in 1980, 6 per cent in 1990 to about 10 per cent in 2000. It is further increased to 12 per cent in 2007 (Ernst andYoung, 2011) to about 17.9 per cent in 2011-12 (Ernst &Young, 2012), 2012-13, 21.5%,2013-14,22.5% and 23.6 % in the year 2014-15 respectively. It indicates the phenomenal growth in access to higher education cuts across in states, religion, and gender thereby increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio from 10% in 2000 to 24.3 % by 2016. Thus, access to higher education in India has increased over the years.

#### **Female GER in States and UTs in Indian Higher Education**

Since independence there had been a phenomenal growth in the number of women students' enrolment in higher education, around 40 percent of enrolments coming from lower socio economic strata, and women comprising of approximately 35 percent of the total enrolments (Tilak, 2004). However, on the eve of the independence the women enrolment was less than 10 per cent of the total enrolment but in the academic year 2014-15 women enrolment increased up to 46 per cent (AISHE, 2014). Gram Vikas Trust (GVT) supports to reduce the dropout and increase the girls GER at higher education level by providing free bicycle for the students of marginalized sections in the society and they can able to achieve their goal. Government of Tamil Nadu provide 8 gm gold and the sum of rupees 50,000 as incentive for the undergraduate female students under the 'Thaalikkuthankam scheme'. Thus, the scheme was to ensure to increase the women education and promote the gender equity in higher education. Also, issuing of free laptops and bicycle is witnessing for top in enrolment in higher education level. However, the schemes, initiatives and special project play an important role in increasing the female GER at state and national level.

**Table – 5 : Female GER increased States and UTs in Indian Higher Education**

STATES / UTs	GER in Male (%)	GER in Female (%)	Difference (%)
Chandigarh	48.6	63.6	15.0
Delhi	42.0	45.4	3.4
Uttar Pradesh	24.5	25.5	1.0
Himachal Pradesh	29.2	33.3	4.1
Sikkim	28.4	32.4	4.0
Goa	25.2	30.7	5.5
Kerala	24.1	33.3	9.2
Punjab	26.0	28.4	2.4
Jammu & Kashmir	24.1	25.5	1.4
Andaman & Nicobar Island	21.9	24.6	2.7
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	07.07	09.5	1.8
Daman & Diu	04.5	09.5	5.0
Lakshadweep	02.0	06.2	4.2
Meghalaya	19.8	21.2	1.4
Nagaland	15.2	16.1	0.9

Source : AISHE - MHRD Report (2015-16)

Table - 5 shows that the number of women students enrolling for higher education in India has shot up, among the states and UTs Chandigarh stands first 15.0 %, Kerala stands second, the GER difference is 9.2% than the male in terms of enrolment, and Goa stands third 5.5% difference in their GER respectively. The female enrolment is slightly higher than the male enrolment. In general students' enrolment at undergraduate level has 53 percent male and 47 percent female, post graduate level has 49 percent male and 51 percent female (MHRD,2015). Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (1948) says, "there cannot be educated people without educated women. If general education has to be limited to men or women, the opportunity should be given to women. From them it would most surely be passed on to the next generation." However, the

modern attitude visualizes education as an instrument for women's equality and their development at global level. The National Policy of Education (1986), broadening the vision further underscored the role of education in empowering women that would overcome inequalities and disparities (Chanana, 1993). Shanjendu Nath (2014) mention some key influences for increasing the female GER in higher education in the country are as follows :

1. Increased number of higher educational institutions helped women to complete their higher studies.
2. There are some courses which provide scholarship facilities for women. This also helps many poor female students to complete their higher studies.
3. There are many institutions which have the provision of hostel facilities for girls' students.
4. Expectation for education based employment is very high amongst women. This factor works very silently in completing their higher studies.

**Table - 6 : GER, HDI & GDP % on higher education in selected countries**

Country	HDI	GER	Public Expenditure as % of GDP
USA	0.91	95%	5.6
UK	0.89	61%	5.6
GERMANY	0.91	57%	5.1
JAPAN	0.89	60%	5.6
FRANCE	0.88	51%	3.8
RUSSIA	0.77	75%	5.9
KOREA	0.89	100%	4.1
CHINA	0.79	35%	3.7
INDIA	0.58	24.30%	3.3

Source : Human Resource Development Report - 2014

Table- 6 indicates the progress of the world higher education scenario in terms of the GER, HDI in relation to the public expenditure as % of GDP on education. The GDP of USA is 5.6%, the total GER 95%, HDI is 0.91 but the Korea lead the GER in 100%, HDI is about 8.9 and the GDP is 4.1 %. It shows majority of developed countries has the maximum GER, developing country like India has the gradual improvement in GER in higher education level at last five year. From the table the GDP is the main contributor to increase the GER in the developed countries. Here, the Indian GDP is only

3.3%, HDI is 0.58, the GER 23.6% respectively. If we increase the GDP in higher education level, it ensures the maximum GER to attain the global average. HDI, GER and GDP have the close link and play an important role in the development of the any nation in the world.

### Conclusion

The main objective of the higher education in India is to increase the gross enrolment ratio in higher education to 15 % by 2011-12 to 21% by 2016-17 and 30 % by the year 2020 (MHRD,2014), the current GER is 24.2 %.It will automatically increase the number of students being enrolled in the education arena. However, the female participation in higher education also increased gradually. Abdul Kalam vision of “India 2020” is to achieve the target of India becoming a super country among the world. Educated and skilled forces are only able to change the present scenario. If all the enrolled youth are turned into skilled forces in India, no doubt India becomes a super country in the world. We can challenge the world in terms of technological advancement and enhance the socio-economic status of the nation.

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