

Higher Education

Introduction

A demographic explosion in the young population of the country means that higher education needs to keep pace with the growth in the relevant population. As per the 2001 Census, 31.2 per cent of the country or 337 million were below the age of 15. Providing higher education for this group is imperative and has to be provided on an unprecedented scale to meet the challenges of this unique demographic trend. The higher education sector currently faces major challenges of quality and excellence, and of improving access with inclusiveness. The proportion of our population, in the relevant age group, that enters the world of higher education is only about 10 per cent (2004-05). Access to higher education in terms of the available number of seats in universities is simply not adequate in relation to the current demand. There are also large disparities in enrolment rates across states, urban and rural areas, sex, caste and poor-non-poor.

Current Scenario

Institutions: As in 2006, the Indian higher education system consisted of 355 universities and 18,064

colleges - there exist 20 Central Universities, 216 State Universities, 101 Deemed Universities, 5 Institutions established through State Legislation and 13 Institutions of National Importance.

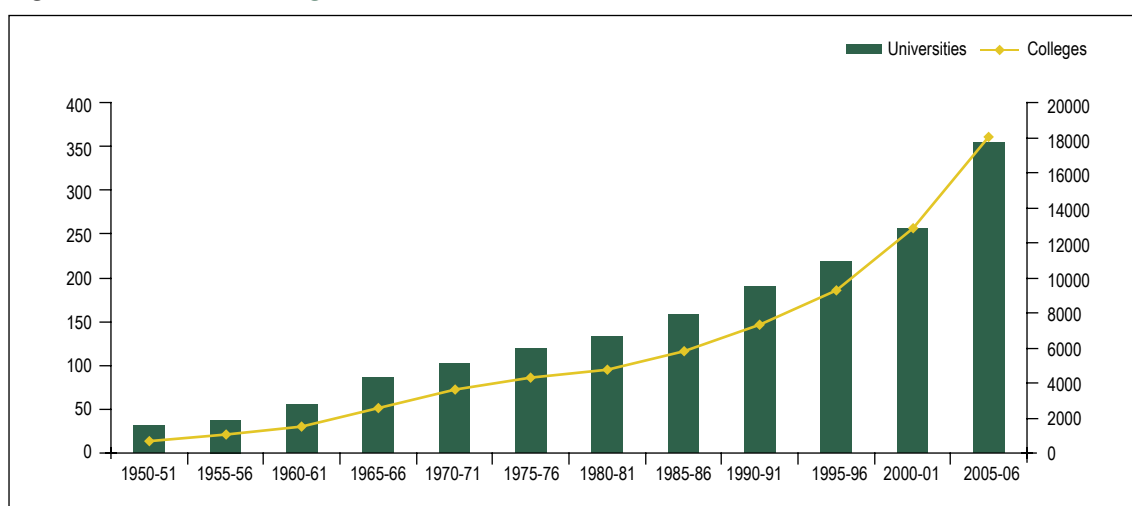
Enrolment: Around 110 lakh students were estimated to be currently enrolled in the Indian higher education system in 2005-06. The growth of student enrolment in higher education in India has been uneven and slow. For instance, while the enrolment grew by 6.7 per cent in 2001-2002, in 2005-06 it grew by 5.2 per cent.

Teachers: The total number of teachers in the higher education system is 4.88 lakhs. Out of the total teaching faculty, 84 per cent were employed in affiliated colleges and only 16 per cent in the universities and university colleges. The student-teacher ratio works out to 18 in the university departments and colleges and 23 in the affiliated colleges.

Issues in the Current Framework

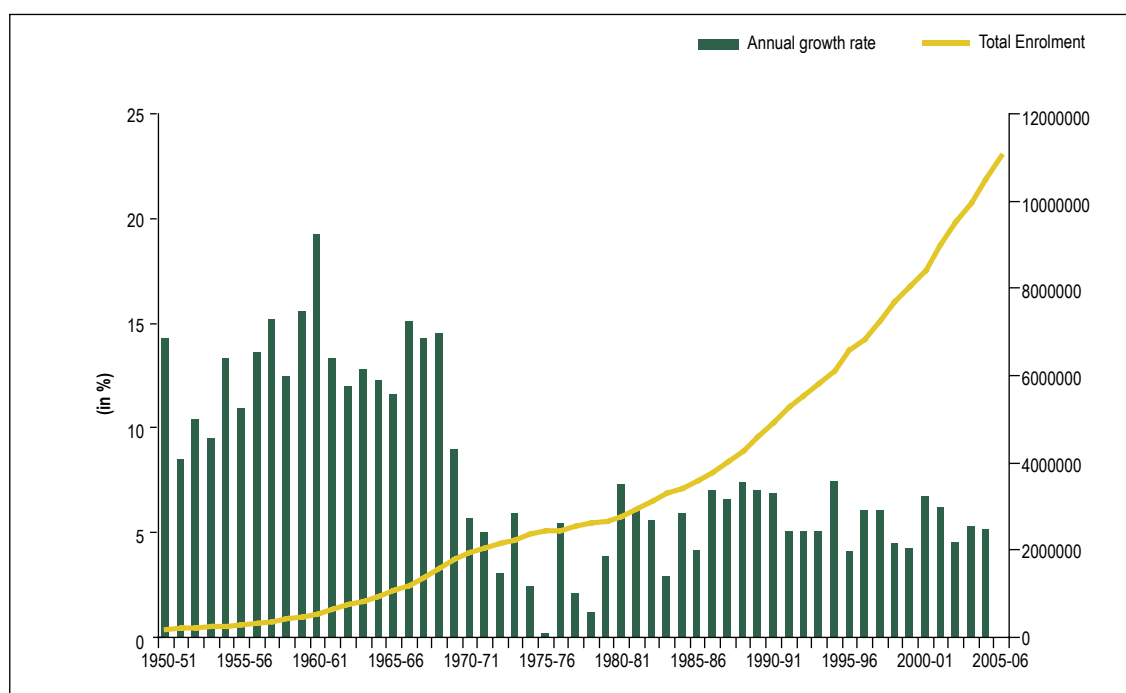
Expansion: The current enrolment in higher education stands at about 11 million. While there has been a consistent growth in enrolment in higher education over the last few years, this is not enough when compared

Figure 15: Growth of higher education system



Source: UGC

Figure 16: Growth of student enrolment in higher education in India (1950-51 to 2005-06)



Source: UGC

Table 10: Number of teachers in institutions of higher education, 2005-06

Institution	Enrolment (in thousands)	Teachers (in thousands)	Student:Teacher ratio
University Departments & University Colleges	1427	79	18
Affiliated Colleges	9601	409	23
Total	11028	488	22

Source: UGC Annual Report, 2005-06

to other countries. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education currently is around 10 per cent whereas it is 25 per cent for many other developing countries. Even South-east Asian countries show much higher enrolment: Philippines (31 per cent), Thailand (19 per cent), Malaysia (27 per cent) and China (13 per cent). The enrolment figure for the USA is 81 per cent, 54 per cent in the UK and 49 per cent in Japan. Various committees that have examined the higher education scenario in India have recommended an increase in the GER to at least 20 per cent. For instance, the CABE Committee on Financing of Higher Education concluded on the basis of international experience that an enrolment rate of 20 per cent or more is consistent with a turnaround in economic performance. If India has to achieve the target soon, it would imply more than doubling the scale and size of the higher education system within the next 5 to 7 years.

Table 11: Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for 18-24 years (in percentage)

Year	Higher Education
2001-02	8.07
2002-03	8.97
2003-04	9.21
2004-05	9.97

Source: MHRD

Access: With high disparities, inclusive education has remained an elusive target. Inter-caste, male-female and regional disparities in enrolment still remain prominent. For example, while the gross enrolment ratio for people living in urban areas was almost 20 per cent, it was only 6 per cent for rural areas. Further, the gross enrolment ratio for Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes

(SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) was 6.57, 6.52 and 8.77 respectively, much lower than the all-India figure of 11.

Regulation: The regulatory structures in the current higher education system are cumbersome. Entry through legislation alone, at present, is a formidable barrier. It requires an Act of Legislature of Parliament to set up a university. The deemed university route is much too difficult for new institutions. The consequence is a steady increase in the average size of existing universities with a steady deterioration in their quality. The absence of competition only compounds problems. A vast majority of the colleges are not recognised by UGC under section 2(f) of UGC Act. This poses a great challenge for the UGC in respect of maintenance of standard of teaching and examination in higher education. Also the current system of affiliated colleges for undergraduate colleges is not adequate. These are affiliated to large unwieldy universities, making it difficult to monitor the standard of education being imparted. Currently about 90 per cent of the undergraduate enrolment and 67 per cent of the postgraduate enrolment is in the affiliated colleges. There are a large number of institutions that are technically under the purview of the UGC but are not provided financial support by it because they fail to fulfill the minimum eligibility norms.

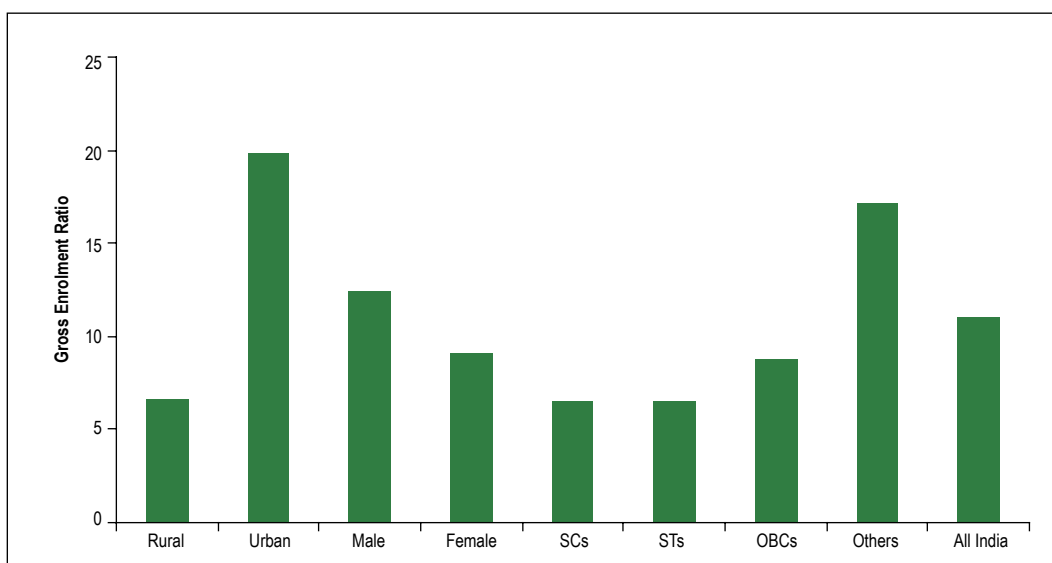
Faculty: Shortage of quality faculty is one of the main problems afflicting higher education in India today. Teacher shortages often occur due to non availability of suitably qualified people. Further, the academic profession has seen a steady decline in popularity – possibly as a result of lack of incentives here and more

lucrative opportunities in other professions. Apart from increasing compensation of teachers, there is also a need to introduce performance-based incentives in order to ensure teaching of superior quality.

Funding: Public expenditure (Centre and States) on education is only around 3.6 per cent of GDP. Government funding of higher education is still below 1 per cent of GDP. The percentage expenditure on University and Higher Education to GDP, which was 0.77 per cent in 1990-91 showed a gradual decrease to 0.66 per cent in 2004-2005. Various committees have unanimously recommended that state funding be increased to 6 per cent. While the Central Advisory Board for Education (CABE) recommends spending 1 per cent to higher education and 0.5 per cent to technical education, the proportions in 2004-05 were 0.34 per cent for higher education and 0.03 per cent for technical education.

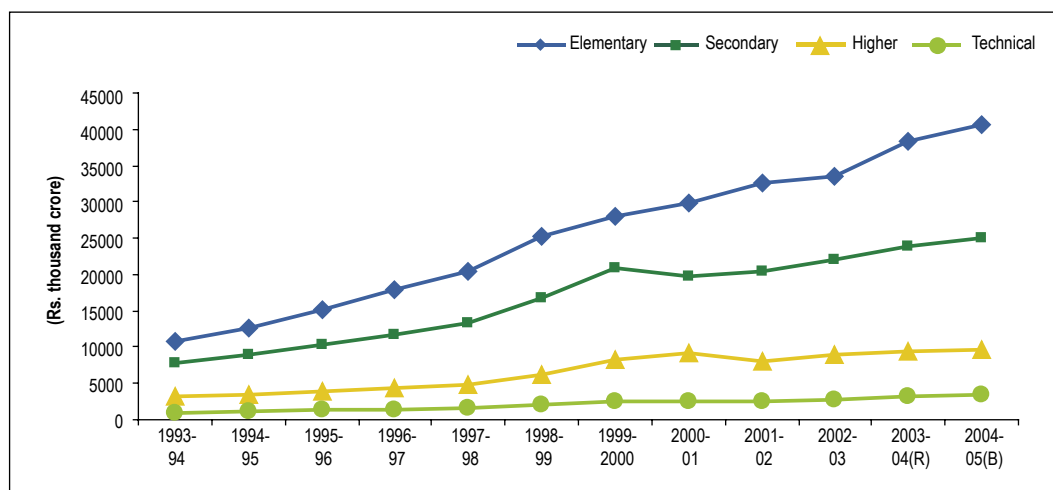
India also has one of the lowest public expenditure on higher education per student at 406 US Dollars, which compares unfavourably with Malaysia (11,790 dollars), China (2728 dollars), Brazil (3986 dollars), Indonesia (666 dollars) and the Philippines (625 dollars). In nominal terms the public expenditure per student in higher education stood at Rs. 12518 respectively in 2003-04. The trend analysis shows that the increase is not that marked if we consider the growth in enrolment, with the nominal public expenditure per student in higher education going up by only 40 per cent from 1993-94 to 2003-04. In fact, in real terms, public expenditure per student in higher education has declined from Rs. 8961 in 1993-94 to Rs. 7117 in 2003-04.

Figure 17: Disparities in enrolment in higher education (2004-05)



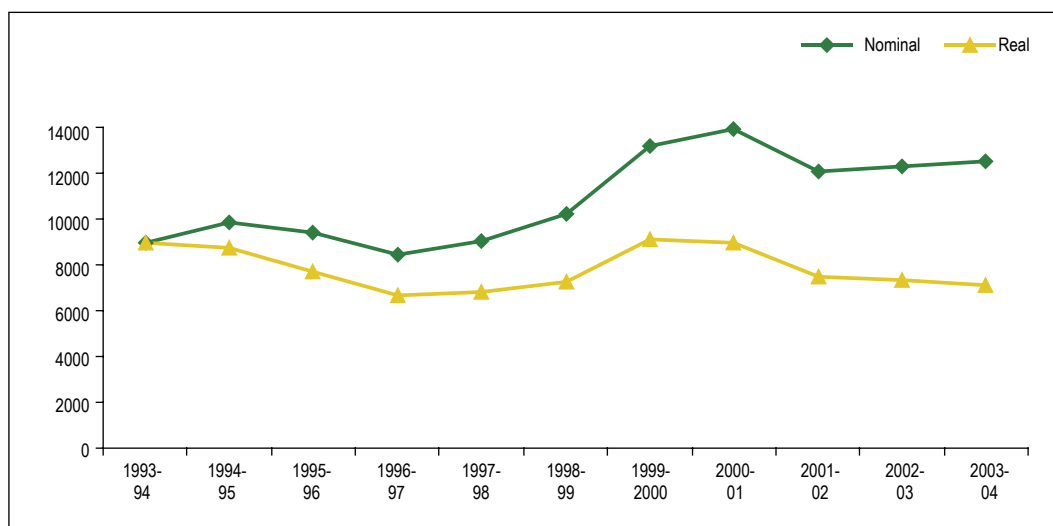
Source: UGC

Figure 18: Sector-wise plan & non-plan budgeted expenditure for education departments of State & Centre (Revenue Account)



Source: MHRD

Figure 19: Public expenditure per student in higher education - nominal and real



Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education, MHRD, Govt. of India

Private institutions: The share of private unaided higher education institutions increased from 42.6 per cent in 2001 to 63.21 per cent in 2006. Their share of enrolments also increased from 32.89 per cent to 51.53 per cent in the same period. This trend is likely to continue and therefore, it is reasonable to expect that about half of incremental enrolment targeted for higher education will come from private providers. There is a need for the state to recognise the role of the private sector and encourage their participation. There has already been a de-facto privatisation of the professional education sector, with more than 80 per cent of the engineering colleges being privately funded and managed. While there are strict entry barriers for the private sector, there is not enough regulation on the products and outputs of the private sector.

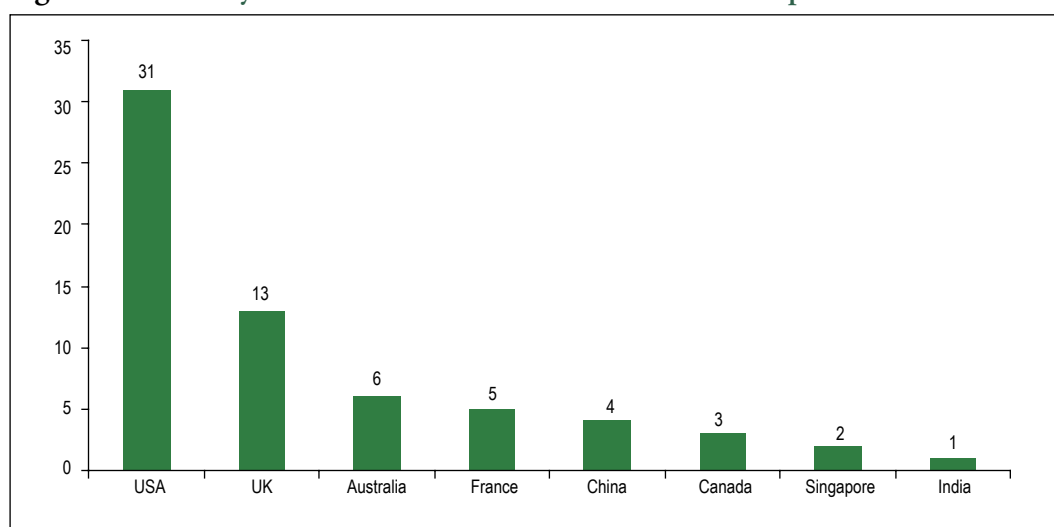
Accreditation: Accreditation in higher education pertains to determining the quality of an institution. The criteria on which institutions are judged typically involve expected student achievement, quality of curriculum, faculty, academic support and services for students, and financial capacity. In India accreditation (unlike in other countries such as the USA and the UK) is performed by government agencies. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was set up by the UGC in 1994 to accredit institutions of higher education. The NAAC's assessment is based on pre-determined criteria that combine self-study and peer review. NAAC accredits and certifies for educational quality in institutions based on seven criteria with different weights for each criterion, and for different types of institutions. NAAC has so far

completed accreditation of only 140 out of the 355 universities and 3,492 out of the 18,064 colleges. This covered just over 10 per cent of all institutions, and barely any private colleges and universities. The results of the accreditation process thus far indicate serious quality problems. Only 9 per cent of the colleges and 31 per cent of the universities are rated as 'A' grade and the rest fall in 'B' and 'C' categories. Accreditation by NAAC is voluntary and valid for five years. However, very few institutions have applied for accreditation by NAAC.

Quality: There are concerns about the quality of higher education provided in India currently. There is

an annual outflow of more than 1,50,000 students to institutes in the west every year – driving out nearly 2-3 billion dollars in foreign exchange per annum. It makes India the second-largest target market globally for education institutes in the west. Though the problem of reaching world class standards is not as pressing as meeting the larger needs of the population, India's standing in this regard is indicative perhaps of the generally low standards. In a London Times Higher Education Supplement ranking of the top 200 universities, only 1 Indian institution was listed, while the Shanghai University ranking of 500 world-class universities featured only 3 Indian universities.

Figure 20: Country wise Number of Universities in Times Top 100 Universities



Source: Times Higher Education Supplement, London

Table 12: Current Quality Status in Colleges of Higher Education in India (2005)

Details	Number
Total number of colleges	17,625
Number of colleges under UGC purview	14,000
Number of colleges recognised under Section 2(f) of UGC Act	5,589 (40 per cent)
Number of colleges recognised under Section 12(B) of UGC Act	5,273 (38 per cent)
Number of colleges actually funded by the UGC	4,870 (35 per cent)
Number of colleges accredited by the NAAC	2,780 (20 per cent)
Number of colleges accredited by the NAAC and scoring above 60 per cent	2,506 (17.9)

Source: MHRD