

Governance, Growth and Equity: Reflections from Indian Higher Education

JOSHI Mahendra Kishore

<Abstract>

Higher education is now widely accepted as a foremost instrument for fostering economic growth. The Indian higher education system is the largest in the world in terms of the number of institutions and the second largest in enrollments. About 29.6 million students are currently enrolled in higher education institutions in India, but the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is still very low about 21.2%. There are around 712 universities and 36,671 colleges in India. This mammoth network of higher education institutions includes a large private sector that has emerged explicitly and outsized during last two decades. The regulators associated with governance of higher education are overlapping and entangled across various ministries and regulatory bodies.

Despite the various intervention measures to address equity objectives, disparity in access as well as participation still exists in terms of gender, ethnic groups, and economic criteria and by location. The present paper attempts to delineate and identify the advent and growth of Indian higher education besides discourses on governance and equity.

1. Introduction

Higher education plays a significant role in knowledge production and dissemination. Further, the knowledge production and dissemination are

Professor, Economics of Education, Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji
Bhavnagar University, India
Visiting Professor, Center for the Studies of Higher Education, Nagoya
University

indispensable in achieving economic growth. Economists have empirically substantiated the notion about the contribution of higher education to economic growth, both directly and indirectly (Hansen and Lehmann 2006, Joshi 2006, Barro and Lee 2010). Such writings and evidences have fostered all countries to expand the periphery of their higher education.

It is common to observe in writings an assertion that in many countries both developed and developing countries, the higher education landscape has changed during the post 1990s period, and India does not seem to be exception to this proclamation (Joshi and Ahir 2014). The higher education in India has moved from elite to mass. This change has brought many new dimensions to the shape of Indian higher education as reflected in the enrolments, institutions, private participation, equity, quality etc.

The present paper makes an attempt to introspect the growth of Indian higher education and analyse the predicaments associated with this growth. The first three sections discuss the structure of education, various issues related to governance, higher education growth statistics, followed by discussion on equity in the last part of the paper.

2. Structure of Indian Higher Education

The level of education pursued after senior secondary education at the age of eighteen is referred to as higher education. Table 1 shows that the duration of the undergraduate program vary from three years (like in case of Bachelor of Science, Commerce, Business administration and Arts) to more than three years (like in case of Bachelor of Engineering and Technology – B.E./B.Tech the duration is four years or in case of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery – MBBS the duration is five years). Successful completion of an undergraduate program makes a student eligible for postgraduate program. The duration of postgraduate program may vary from one year (for education – M.Ed.) to three years in case of Medicine or Surgery (MD/MS). The duration for the postgraduate program for most of the traditional subjects like social sciences, science, commerce and arts is two years (Joshi and Ahir 2014).

Table 1 The Structure of Higher Education in India

Age						
27	Higher Education in India					
26						
25		Ph.D.		Ph.D.	PG (Medicine /Dental)	
24			Ph.D.			
23		M.Phil		PG (For all the below faculty)	UG (Medicine & Dental)	
22		PG (For all the below faculty)	PG (Education)	UG (Engineering, Technology, Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences)		
21			UG (Education)			
20		UG (Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, Commerce, Management, Rural Studies)				
19					Pre Teacher Training Program	Polytechnic (Diploma Program)
18						
17	Senior Secondary School					

Note: UG refers to Undergraduate Programme and PG refers to Post Graduate Programme. There is also provision of M.Phil programme in the faculty of Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, Commerce, Management, Rural Studies and education. Students in these faculty can also enrol in Ph.D. directly without joining the M.Phil. programme

3. Institutional Autonomy

India has witnessed an incredible growth in terms of higher education institutions during the last three decades. The Indian higher education system is the largest in the world by the institutional count.

But this growth also endorse challenges in context of implementing the defined authority/autonomy, assuring transparency in accountability and the subsequent outcomes. These tangible challenges have contoured in the form of issues related to equity, efficiency, quality and above all the governance of higher education in India (Joshi and Ahir 2013).

Pandey (2004) recognizes three autonomies associated with the governance of higher education – institutional autonomy (related to the decision-making and operational mechanisms), financial autonomy (related to raising funds and its use) and academic autonomy (related to the teaching learning process).

Various statutory documents like Acts, Statutes, Ordinances, and Gazette Notifications etc. related to higher education have evolved over a period of about a century. This process of inclusion, inception and

amendment has involved various committees to review the provisions to keep the system abreast with the dynamic changes resulting from an ever-expanding higher education system and the global environment. Despite a homogeneous organizational structure, the volume of higher education institutions as well as financing source has led to differentiated provincial (State) legislation edifice for this sector. In spite of well framed regulations, laws and decrees, the piecemeal and defunct practice along with erroneous implementation, impedes in the attainment of governance objectives.

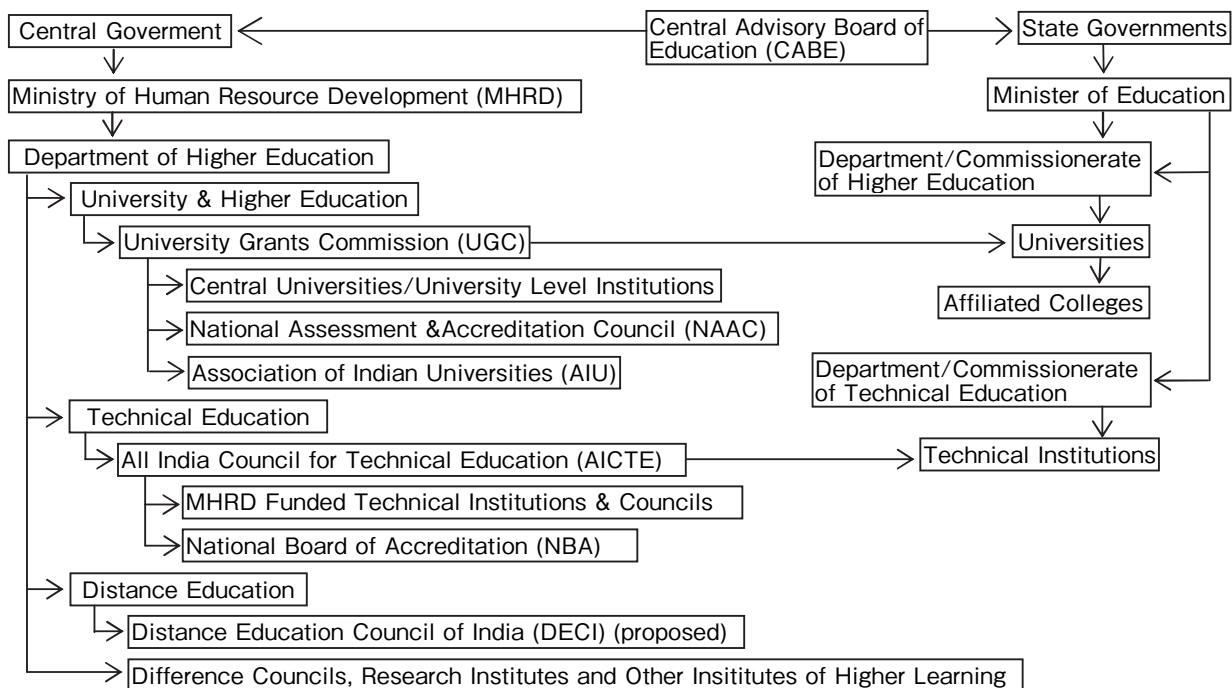
Institutional autonomy is associated with the framework and structure of the decision making process and the operational freedom. The institutional autonomy here is discussed in context of external regulatory framework and internal regulatory framework in India thereby explaining the power-play between the various interest groups (Joshi and Ahir 2015b).

3.1 University, Higher Education and Technical Education

India is a Federal Union of 29 States and 7 union territories. In the post-independence era, a constitutional provision under Article 45 accorded the responsibility of providing the education on State governments. All levels of education were on the State list till 1976. The subject of education was brought to the Concurrent List in 1976 through the 42nd Amendment as Entry 2521. With this, the Center was placed at par with the state to fulfill the responsibilities related to all levels of education. Items in the Union lists provide for 'Co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical education, Central Universities established under article 371-E and institutions of national importance'. The separate legislative powers of the Centre and the State have been derived through various acts to define the authority and the accountability of various stakeholders as also for the formation of various regulatory and statutory bodies to govern the higher education. Thus, the Central government is largely responsible for the overall development and maintenance of the standards of the higher education system in the country, providing limited funding in the form of grants to State institutions and bearing the financial responsibility of the institutions affiliated with the Central government.

Similarly, the State governments are responsible for financing institutions affiliated with the state governments. Private unaided institutions are recognized by Central or State governments depending upon their affiliation respectively. These institutions are also referred to as ‘self-financing’ institutions since they are not dependent for funding on public treasury (MoE 1964). The Central government discharges its constitutional responsibilities through Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Department of Higher Education. The Department of Higher Education is responsible for University and higher education. The department discharges its functions through various regulatory and statutory bodies like the University Grants Commission-UGC (for university and higher education), All India Council for Technical Education-AICTE (for technical education), National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) etc. (MHRD 2014b).

Analogous to the Central structure, the States also have an independent ministry of education. The States have their own State University Acts with the broad structure more or less similar to the Central University Act with minor variations in nomenclature or functionalities.



Source: Joshi and Ahir, 2015b

Figure 1 External Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in India

The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) is the governing authority for technical education in India. It was established through an Act of Parliament in 1987. It is the governing body related to the education, research and training in engineering, technology, architecture, town planning, management, pharmacy and applied arts and crafts with Central government having the ultimate power in considering the policy issues. Its primary function is to ensure coordinated and integrated development of technical and management education and maintenance of standards using the Central funds (MHRD 2014c).

Technical institutions in India are funded by Central government, State governments and self-financed institutions. Many states regulate the provincial technical institutions through State Technical Universities/ Boards. The technical self-financed institutions have flourished since last two decades. National Board of Accreditation, was incorporated to accredit technical programs unlike NAAC that accredits institutions (MHRD 2014c).

3.2 Internal regulatory framework of higher education in India

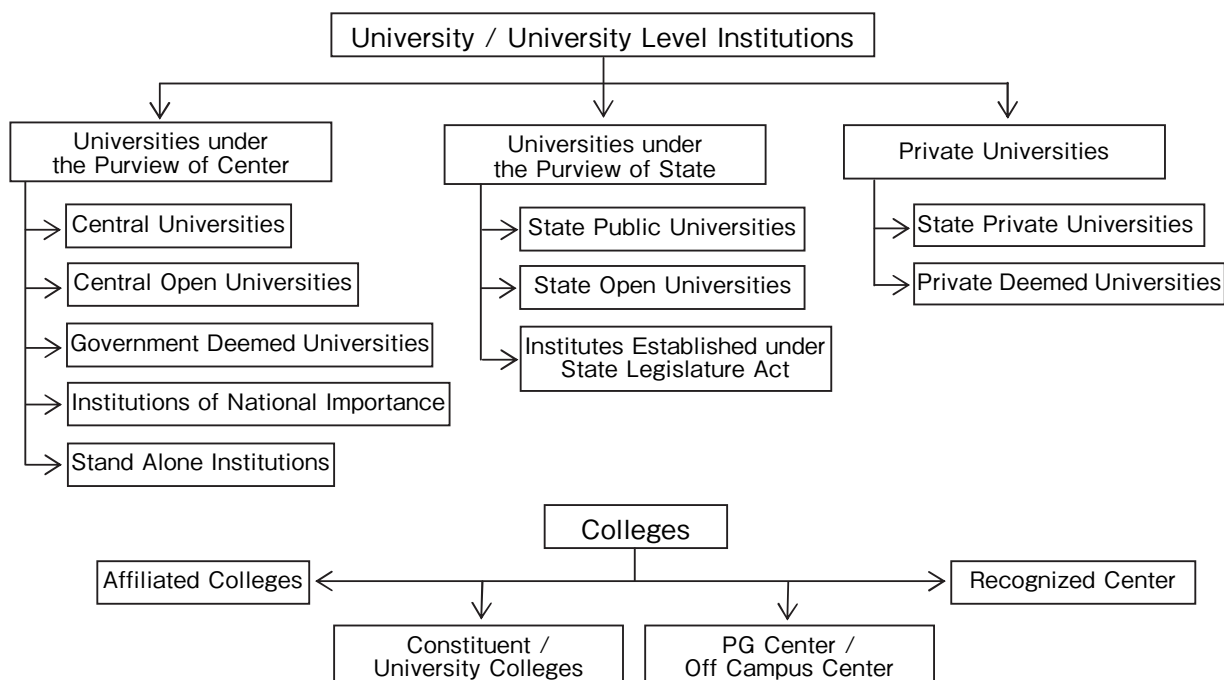
Higher education is provided through institutions like universities, colleges and stand-alone institutions. Universities have the monopoly to award a degree, but colleges and stand-alone-institutions cannot award a degree. The way the public universities operate in India, affiliate their characteristics more towards the ‘bureaucratic model of governance’ of higher education, as characterized by Weber (1947) and Stroup (1966). It has “legal rationality, tenure, competency as the basis of promotion and academic career is exclusive” among others.

3.2.1 Universities

In India, Universities can be unitary with single or multiple campuses as well as affiliating universities. Affiliating universities affiliate colleges and supervise their academic standards, conduct examinations and award degrees on behalf of the affiliated colleges. Various types of universities comprise of central universities, state universities, deemed universities, institutes of national importance and private universities. Various types of colleges comprise of government colleges, private-aided colleges, private-

unaided colleges and autonomous colleges. Stand-alone institutions generally run Diploma/PG Diploma program with an authorization by some statutory body. A detailed bifurcation of the types of universities and colleges is provided in Figure 2.

Central Universities, Deemed Universities, Central Open universities and Institutions of National Importance, State Public Universities, State Private Universities and State Open Universities are the types of institutions empowered to award degrees¹⁾. A university is vested with the powers to provide for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge; grant or withdraw a degree, a diploma or a certificate on a person after testing, examining and evaluating through various methods to maintain the education standards; recognize or withdraw recognition of an institution of higher learning; appoint persons in teaching or academic positions and administrative positions and specify their conditions of services and code of conduct; establish and maintain colleges; award fellowships, scholarships, medals and prizes; make necessary arrangements for research and advisory services and network with other institutions and industries (MLJ 2009).



Source: Joshi and Ahir, 2015b

Figure 2 Detailed Bifurcation of Types of Universities and Colleges in India

The officers of a university comprise of the Visitor, the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Dean of Schools/Faculty, the Registrar, the Finance Officer and the Controller of Examinations among others. The authorities of a university include the Court/Senate, the Executive Council/Syndicate, the Academic Council, the Board of Studies, the Finance Committee etc. (MoE 1961). These officers and the authorities are assigned crucial functions under various acts, statutes and ordinances.

An Act of the university lays down the broad terms and the structure for the regulatory framework of a university. Further to ensure autonomy to permit progressive experimentation suited to the local requirements of a university, provisions for statutes and ordinance with more details of operations is provided. A university has the powers to make/amend Statutes/Ordinances.

State University Acts are largely similar to that of the Central University Act. The State Universities Acts are also largely similar within the state unless required otherwise to amend due to differences in historical or local diversity. Amendments are made to upgrade the University Acts for homogeneity with the newer acts in the respective states. The composition of senate, executive council, academic council may vary slightly from State to State in terms of representatives from government, disadvantaged group etc. (UGC 1990).

Private universities are governed by the respective State Private Universities Acts and in turn the UGC Establishment of and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities Regulations, 2003. A private university has to further abide by the minimum standards set by the statutory and regulatory bodies that govern the higher education in India like the UGC, AICTE and various councils in context of faculties, programmes, infrastructure facilities, financial viability, etc. They are entirely selffinanced and are not entitled to any grants or financial aids from the government. The detail of the programmes to be offered is to be provided to the UGC and sanctioned by the UGC. The teaching, research, examination, admission, employment, service conditions, remuneration, student bodies, discipline, fees, funds, scholarships and concessions, budget, annual report, accounts, audit, programme details and minimum standards

have to be in accordance to the norms and procedures laid down by the UGC and other statutory bodies and is to be provided for in the necessary statutes and ordinances of the university Act. The State legislature approves the establishment of the Private University through an Act and formal approval is sought from the UGC under Section 2 (f) of the UGC Act, 1956.

The authorities of a Private University include the Governing body, the Board of Management, the Academic Council and others as required by the statutes and ordinances. The governing body is the supreme authority and is expected to meet at-least twice in a calendar year. It provides general superintendence and directions to regulate/control functioning of the University by using all such powers as are provided by the University Act or the Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations or rules. The Academic council is the primary academic body.

Colleges cannot award a degree of their own. Affiliated colleges are necessarily associated with some university for the purpose of awarding degree for the program that they run.

UGC Affiliation of Colleges by Universities Regulations, 2009, provides for the regulatory framework for the affiliated colleges. An affiliating college has to be registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, or is a body corporate, established or incorporated under a Central or a State Act or is a Trust with trustees being appointed and vested with legal powers and duties. The proposed college seeking affiliation has to fulfill requirements related to ownership of land, infrastructure and civic facilities, academic staff, library, laboratories, recreational facilities, furniture and fixtures in the class, etc. The affiliating universities exercise control over colleges in almost all aspects of its operations. An affiliating college follows all the norms, rules and regulations stipulated in the Statutes and Ordinances of the university to which it is affiliated. The syllabus approved by the Academic council of the university is to be followed. UGC norms and provisions made in Statutes and Ordinances are to be followed for staff recruitments and their pay scales, maintenance of student-teacher ratio, fees to be charged, seats sanctioned for each programme, facilities for the disadvantaged groups,

architectural master plan for the land use, student amenities and residential facilities, academic growth plans over a period of next ten year.

3.3 Autonomy, and Quality

The providers of higher education include public sector, private sector, grant-in-aid (public-private) sector and international providers. The grant-in-aid sector which is peculiar to largely the Asian region is also referred to as private aided sector. In grant-in-aid institutions, the initial capital cost involved in establishing the infrastructure and facilities are provided by the private sector and the recurring costs are provided by the public sector which is highly subsidized. Private unaided sector is largely funded on the basis of user-charges and so are also referred to as self-financed institutions.

At a more micro/institutional level the expenditures have steadily increased and revenues have not kept pace resulting in financial dearth. The sources of funds for a university comprise of endowments, government grants, affiliation fees, examination and tuition fees. Few universities had very generous donors that have resulted in large endowment funds. State and Central universities receive grants respectively from the Central and the State governments mostly.

The private sector largely relies on user-charges and is self-financed. Tuition fees are generally fixed on a cost-plus basis with some surplus for reinvestment (Agarwal 2006). The government has been encouraging private initiatives in higher education but not commercialization (CABE 2005). The prohibition on capitation fee has been clarified through various judicial interventions. Educational institutions are seen as distinct organizations than business houses and so a tough stand has been taken against for-profit higher education. In the opinion of Kapur and Mehta (2004), the scenario has resulted in a regulatory environment where the public sector is facing financial pressures due to constrained fiscal positions and ideological issues with mobilizing public funds, and the private sector is not being deregulated to allow autonomy. As a consequence the growth of the higher education sector is being challenged.

The Academic autonomy is largely governed in the form of institutional

structure. As has been discussed in the powers of various authorities of a university, like the Court, the Executive council, the Academic council, the Board of Studies, etc. the participation permitted or not permitted to the academic fraternity respectively determine the role that the academic fraternity can play in the decision making processes.

Regulations related to the staff in the higher education in India are governed by the UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education, 2010 (UGC 2010). These regulations apply to all types of universities, colleges and higher education institutions.

The quality and standards of higher education institutions in India are assured by regulatory bodies like National assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)²⁾ established by UGC in September 1994 and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) established by AICTE in 1994. Many state governments have already made NAAC accreditation mandatory. There have been attempts to link funding with quality accreditation processes. As per the Gazette notification of January 2013, it is mandatory now for institutes falling under its purview to accredit them-selves to NAAC, failing which the NAAC committee can also influence funding (for aided) or notification validity (for unaided) of such institutes (Joshi and Ahir 2013). The notification mentions that no university or college would be eligible for grants from the central government unless accredited (Mohanty 2013). But it is difficult to envisage that NAAC as a single institute can accomplish this mammoth task and so even in the 12th five year plan document it has been suggested to set up more accrediting institutes with NAAC as an apex body (UGC 2011, NAAC 2014).

The state of higher education governance in India reflects the deliberate fortitudes to support the regulatory mechanism in a dynamic changing environment. The democratic autonomy and accountability imbibed in the political economy of India is to quite extent the impetus factors in swaying the governance of higher education system. In spite of minor improvements in the regulatory mechanism as incorporated in the official and legal documents, a bigger area of concern is the operationalization,

implementation, supervision and assessment to assure that the documented objectives are realized. Both political bureaucracy and higher education institutions are attempting to achieve unified national goals associated with developing human resource potential to its fullest. But the overlaps of functions and authorities blur the demarcation of the authorities and leads to functional ambiguity. Even the State higher education departments/ ministries often become too dominating, interfering and influential to allow autonomy in the university functions. The institutional autonomy has been challenged by the political and powerful non-academic interference right from the appointment of the decision making stakeholders like the Vice- Chancellor and executive council members of the university. The rigidity of the Board of studies restricts the inclusion of industry representatives, national research laboratories or public undertakings (UGC 1990).

Despite the increase in the access to higher education in terms of enrolments, serious concerns remain regarding the determination of an ideal size of an institution to assure accountability. In India more than 100 universities have more than 100 colleges affiliated to them and about 13 universities have more than 500 colleges affiliated to each university. Rajasthan University has a maximum number of 997 colleges (MHRD 2014a).

The financial autonomy is challenged both in public and private sector. Most of the universities are facing a severe financial crisis since the endowment funds or grants are insufficient. The maintenance and operational cost of the universities are higher than the available grants and the development of infrastructure or enhancement of facilities remains another concern. Even in such crisis, the efficiencies in disbursement of funds is unchecked and unaccounted for while providing for grants from the public treasury (NKC 2009).

Various committees have highlighted the need to raise the public funding available for the provision of higher education. While the Indian higher education system is one of the world's largest system, the public provisions made for financing it as a percentage of GDP is one of the lowest in the world. Appropriate measures should be taken to tap

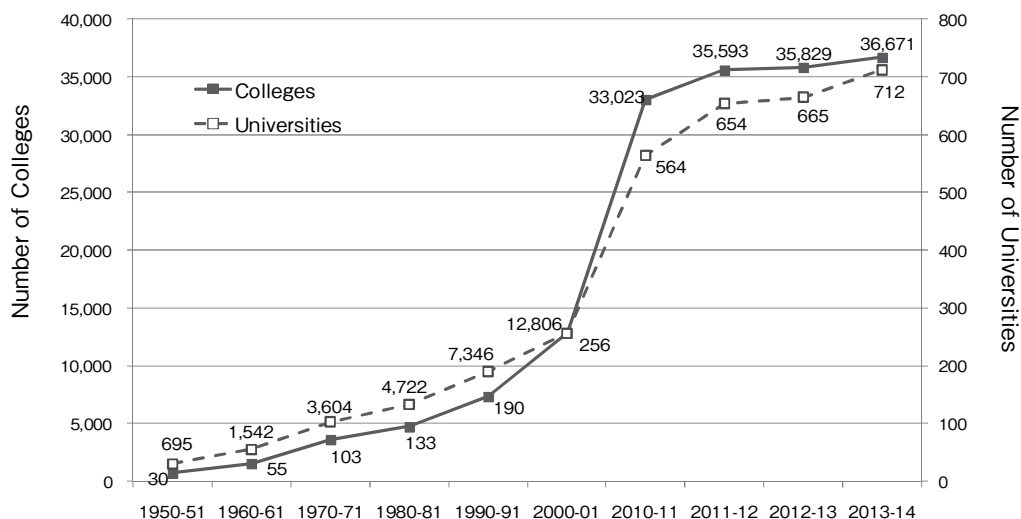
alternate resources like alumni and philanthropic contributions, consultancies, commercial use of infrastructure, etc.

The academic autonomy in India is plagued by improper governance that paralyze the purpose of knowledge production and dissemination. A large part of the higher education system is compartmentalized within the boundaries of specific faculties, disciplines, courses and institutions. Lack of effective participation of the academic community in the formation and implementation of university policy and programmes has deteriorated the academic standards. A lack of motivation for research can be observed due to paucity of funds, delay in disbursement of funds and lack of incentives to organize seminars (Bhattacharjee 2013).

Quality and efficiency requires a closer affiliation between the academic institutions, research organizations and industry. A collaborative effort to complement each other can prove mutually beneficial. To assure quality and internal efficiency enhancement a greater and participative role will have to be permitted to the research and industry experts in the decision making authorities of the university specially the academic council (OECD 2003).

3. Higher Education: Some Growth Statistics

Figure 3 shows that during a period of almost six decades in the post-Independence era from 1950-51 to 2013-14, the number of colleges increased from 695 to 36671. For the same period, the number of universities increased from 30 to 712 (MHRD 2014d). The exponential growth in the number of institutions can be observed in the post 2000 period. The colleges increased with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.43% during 2000-01 to 2013-14. During the same period, the universities increased with a CAGR of 8.19%. In 2000, only two state private universities existed, but in the year 2013, the number of state private universities touched 165 figure with CAGR of 40.42%. The institutes offering distance education programs also increased substantially during this period, reaching 197 in 2012-13 from 74 in 2000-01 with CAGR of 8.5%.



Source: UGC 2014; MHRD 2014a

Figure 3 Number of Universities and Colleges for 1950-51 to 2013-14

This growth in the number of colleges and universities took place with enormous private participation. The exponential growth of higher education has been because of; growth in the population in the relevant age cohort, lower cumulative drop-outs at earlier stages of education, increase in the transition rate from secondary to higher education, increased demand for skilled workforce, greater purchasing power of the middle class, increasing fiscal pressures and prioritized ends in favour of other social sectors, conducive environment for private sector participation and increase in the private returns on higher education. The increased demand for higher education and the inability of the regional governments to finance higher education, provided space for private participation (Joshi and Ahir 2015a). The share of private unaided³⁾ institutions in the year 2001 was 42.6%, which climbed to 64.9% during 2013. This mammoth size of Indian higher education is about seven times of the total higher education institutions in U.S., eight times of all the institutions of Europe and twelve times that of total institutions of China.

The enrolment in higher education institutions have also increased substantially. In 1950-51, the enrolment was 0.4 million, which increased to 14.3 million in 2005-06 and 29.6 million in 2012-13 (Figure 4). The enrolment share of private sector also increased during this period. In 2001, the enrolment share of private unaided institutions of the total higher education enrolment was 32.9%, which increased to 59.4% in the year 2013.

Table 2 Institutions by Type: 2013-14

Central University	42
State Public University	310
Deemed University	127
State Private University	143
Central Open University	1
State Open University	13
Institution of National Importance	68
Institutions under State Legislature Act	5
Others	3
Colleges	36,671

Source: MHRD 2014d

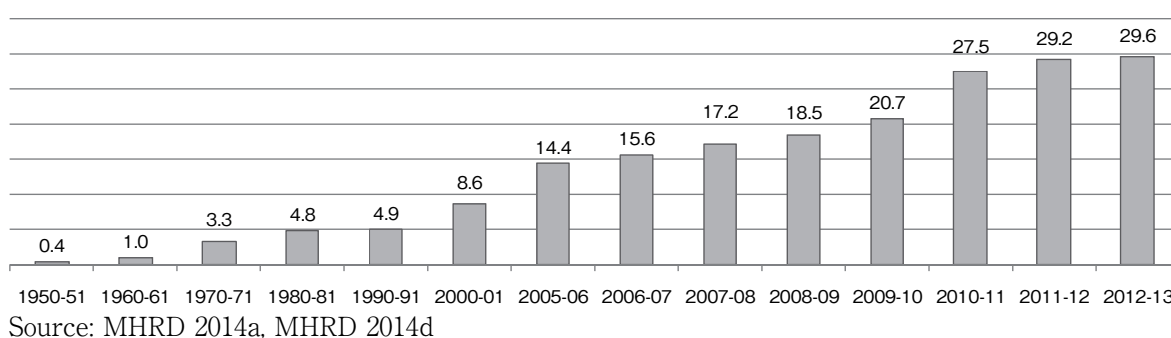


Figure 4 Number of Enrolments (in million) for 1950-51 to 2012-13

Students enroll in regular and distance mode for seeking higher education degree. The share of students enrolled in regular mode is 88% of the total enrolment and that of distance mode is 12%. The distance mode for access to higher education has enhanced in recent times. In 2000-01, about 1.38 million students were enrolled in distant mode, which increased to 5.17 million in 2012-13, reflecting CAGR of 10.69%.

The steep growth in enrolment took place in the post 2000 period with increase in the number of institutions (largely private). During 2012-13, the male enrolment in regular mode was 16.33 million and female enrolment was 13.30 million. Similarly, the enrolment in distance mode for the same period was 1.98 million for males and 1.55 million for females. The share of the girls' enrolment also simultaneously increased during the post 2000 period, although it is not comparable to other countries. In 1950-51, the share of girls' enrolment in higher education was 11.3% only which remained around 30% till 1990. In 2012-13, the female participation reached about 45% in the higher education, reflecting private demand and policy outcome.

The faculty wise enrolment data (Figure 6 and 7) for the year 2012-13 reveals that about 41% of students are enrolled in various programs of arts/humanities/social sciences faculty, which shows a decline of the faculty share from about 45% in 2004-05. The programs run by arts/humanities/social sciences faculty are inexpensive and access to these programs is easy compared to other faculty programs. Although the largest segment of unemployed youth in India possess degree from this faculty.

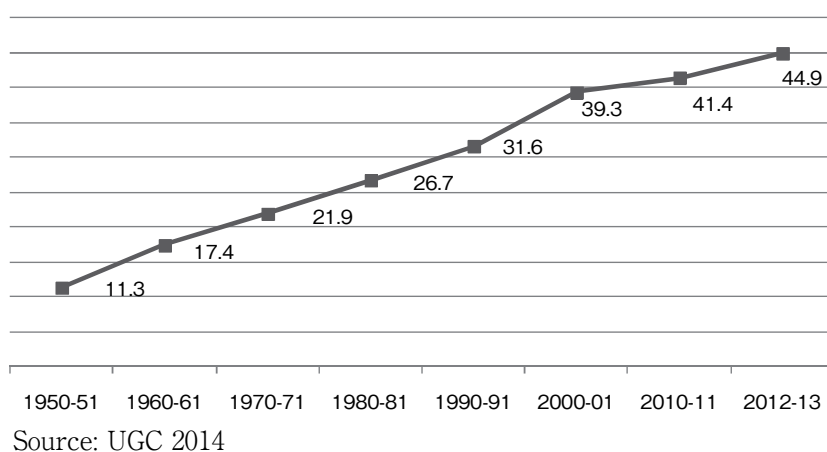
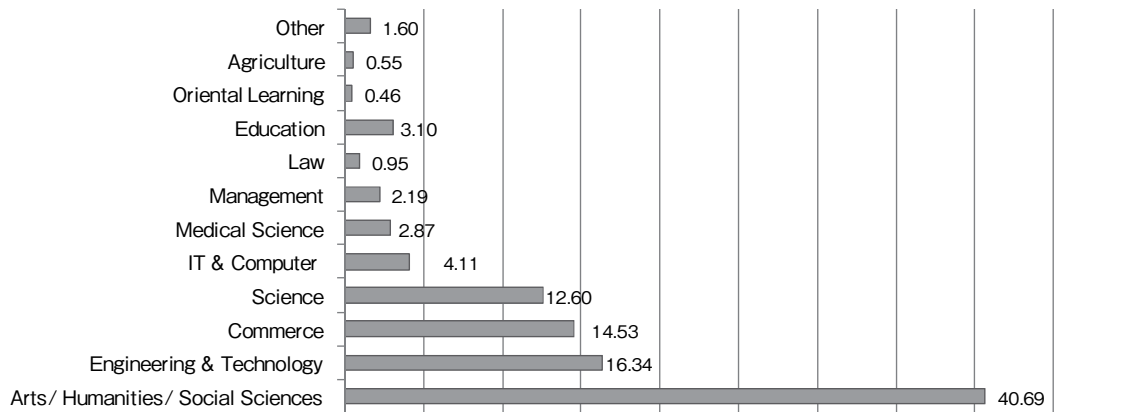


Figure 5 Percentage of Girls' Enrolment to the Total Enrolment

The faculty wise enrolment data (Figure 6 and 7) for the year 2012-13 reveals that about 41% of students are enrolled in various programs of arts/humanities/social sciences faculty, which shows a decline of the faculty share from about 45% in 2004-05. The programs run by arts/humanities/social sciences faculty are inexpensive and access to these programs is easy compared to other faculty programs. Unfortunately the largest segment of unemployed youth in India also possesses degree from this faculty. The enrolment in science faculty has reduced from 20% in 2004-05 to about 13% in 2012-13, and similarly in the law faculty it has reduced from 3.16% to 0.95%. The share of engineering shows the biggest leap during last one decade from about 7% to 16%. The enrolment data shows an inclination amongst the students for professional programs, and in particular for engineering, technology, IT and computer science.

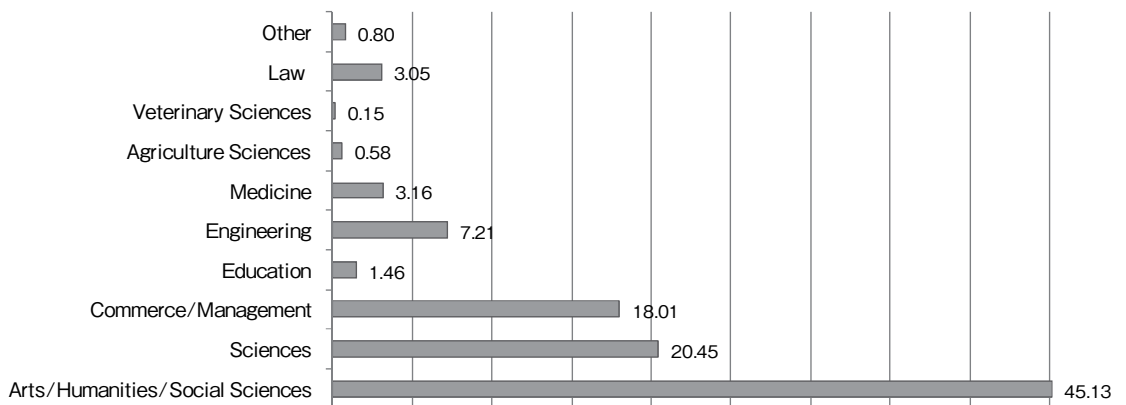
With a nominal GER of 0.7% in 1950-51 to about 21.1% in 2012-13, India has displayed the GER growth but at a slow pace as seen in Figure 6. However, the last decade is an exception. India took as long as five and half

decades to increase the GER from 0.7% in 1950-51 to 10% in 2005, whereas a rise of about 11% in GER could be observed in the last decade alone from 10% in 2005 to 21.1% in 2012-13 (MHRD 2014a).



Source: MHRD 2014d

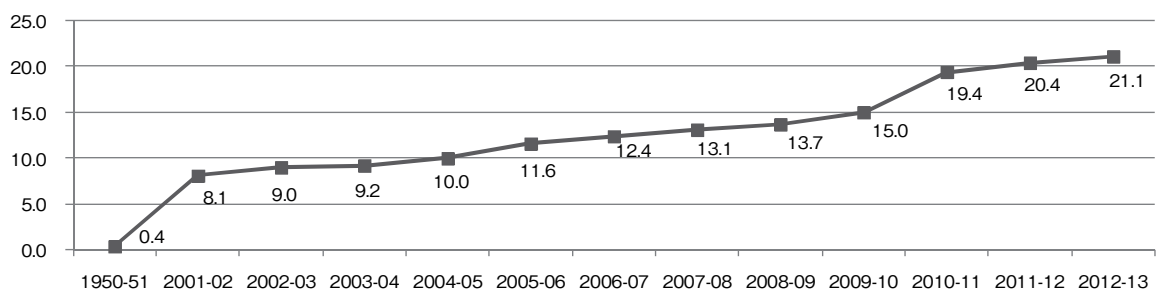
Figure 6 Faculty Wise Enrolment Share: 2012-13



Source: MHRD 2008; MHRD 2014d

Figure 7 Faculty Wise Enrolment Share: 2004-05

The growth in the GER had been resulting from a consistent rise in demand and increase in the transition rate from higher secondary to higher education (Joshi and Kinjal 2013).



Source: MHRD 2014d

Figure 8 GER 1950-51 to 2012-13

5. Equity in Indian Higher Education

Addressing equity is an important aspect besides the access and quality. Almost during last two decades various government reports and policy documents have emphasized this. The nature and magnitude of the issues related to higher education equity in Indian higher education are quite different from other nations. The disparity in access in India can be classified on the basis of the existing diversity and disparities. The various forms of disparities include; ethnic diversity based disparities, religious diversity based disparities, gender based disparity, regions based disparities (interstate as well as rural-urban).

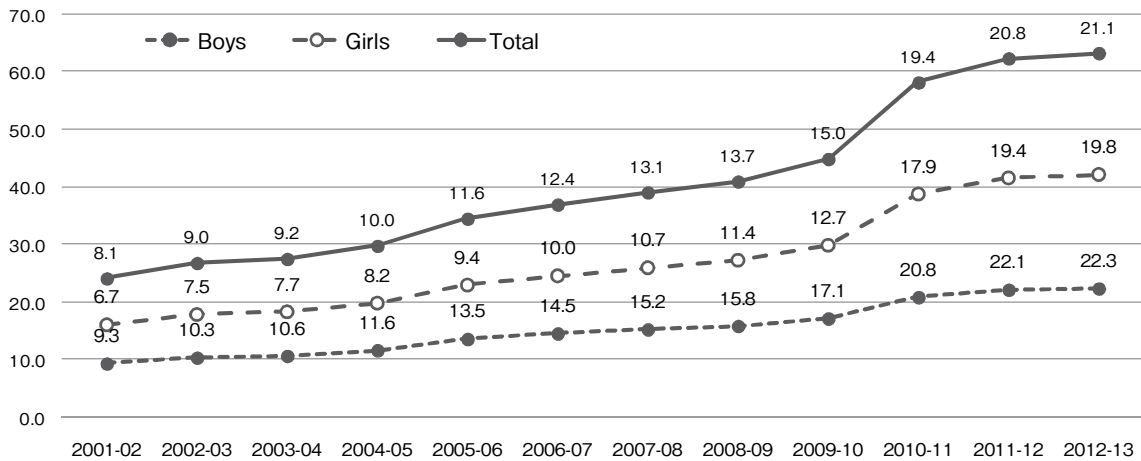
5.1 Gender based inequalities in higher education

The growth rate of GER of females has been higher than both the males and the overall (All India) during the 2001-13 period (Figure 9). Despite the absolute GER of females being lower during this period, the CAGR for females was 9.45%. The CAGR during the same period for males and overall was 7.56% and 8.42% (MHRD 2014d). This shows that the female participation in Indian higher education is reflecting progressive indications. But simultaneously, it had maintained almost equal widened gap of about 2.5 from the GER of males. This is certainly pulling down the national GER average. If the nation's GER is to be raised, both male GER and female GER have to be improved. Obviously, the latter has the added advantage of reduced disparity between the GERs of males and females. Thus, while GER figures for females' participation in higher education is appreciable as reflected from the CAGR, an effective policy intervention to increase the female GER, and reduce the disparity between the GER of males and females needs to be addressed.

While India is geographically a huge country, inter-state disparities in access to higher education for females needs attention of the policy makers.

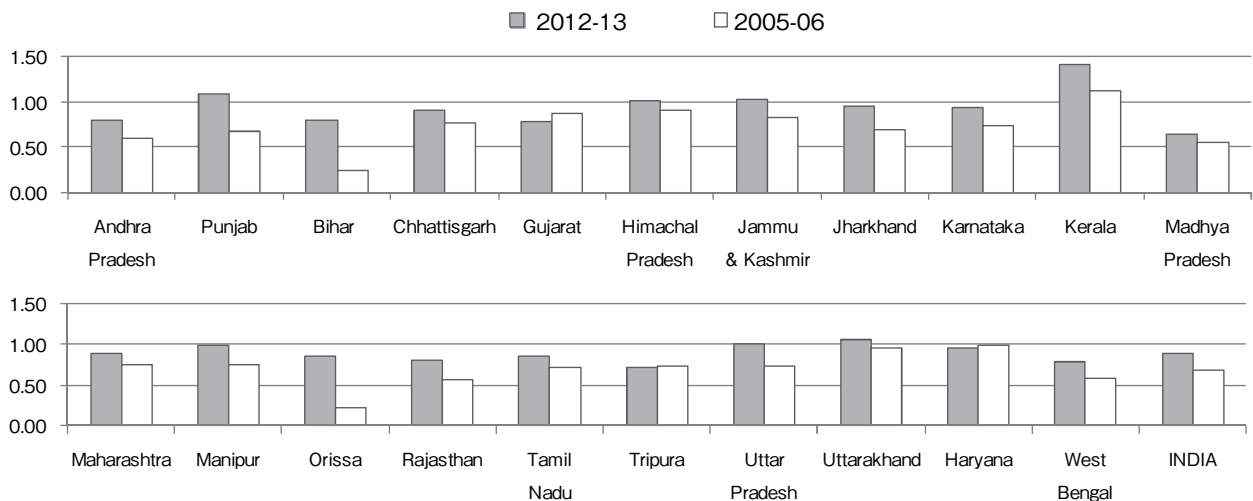
While GER of females and males need to be compared to capture the disparities, Gender Parity Index makes this comparison more categorical (Joshi 2015). Gender Parity Index (GPI) is the ratio of the female to male values of GER. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes, i.e. if the values

of the GER for males and females would be same, the GPI would be 1, indicating a perfect balance between the two genders. GER above one indicates that a higher proportion of females belonging to the eligible age cohort are enrolled as compared to their male counterparts. But in countries facing gender disparity the GPI is likely to be below one.



Source: MHRD 2014d; MHRD 2014a

Figure 9 GER in Higher Education of Males and Females from 2001-13



Source: MHRD 2014d

Figure 10 State-wise Gender Parity Index for Higher Education India for 2005-06 and 2012-13

As can be observed from figure 10, the national overall average of the GPI for India too only stood at 0.89, a rise during the period from 2005-06

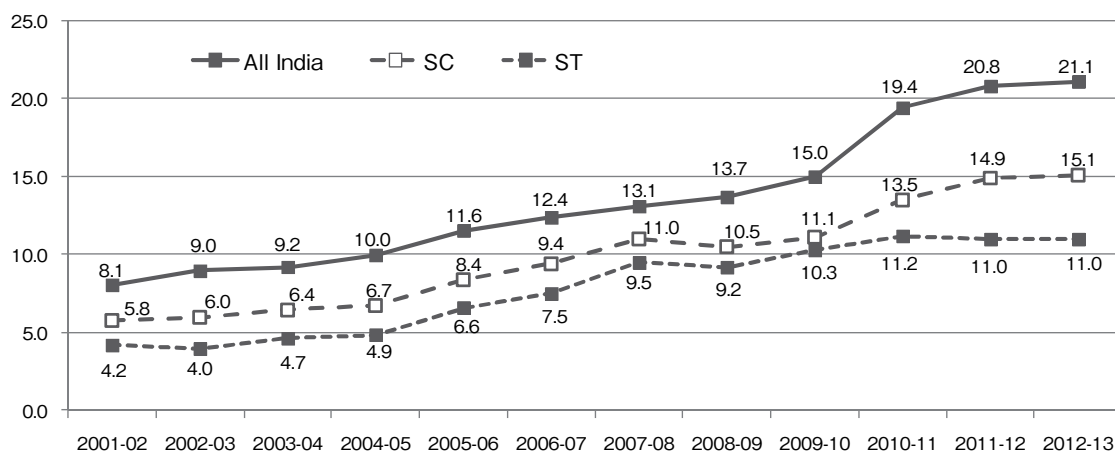
to 2012-13, from 0.69. It will still not be a revelation, since only a few states like Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab have a GPI above one, while most of the states have a GPI below 1 with most of them being between 0.7 and 0.9. The states like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal will have to enhance the female participation and develop appropriate policy frame to reduce the gender disparity.

5.2 Ethnic-based inequalities in higher education

In India, the ethnic-social stratification categorizes the disadvantaged as Scheduled Castes (SCs)⁴⁾ and Scheduled Tribes (STs)⁵⁾. The Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are the most impoverished as well as socially disenfranchised groups in India. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 listed 1,108 castes across 25 states in its First Schedule, while the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 listed 744 tribes across 22 states in its First Schedule. The Hindu caste system divided the society into four 'varnas' corresponding to the social divisions and hierarchy of status, of which the Shudras (menial workers) and the Ati shudras (performing the most menial tasks), referred to as SCs/'Dalits' were enforced hereditary occupations that made an upward social mobility unacceptable by the society. They were discriminated by hostile interactions between classes in the form of exclusion from places of worships, residence, commercial places, etc. STs are the indigenous people or original inhabitants of the country and amongst themselves too they are distinct in their cultures, social practices, religions, dialects, and occupations (Joshi 2015, Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2014). Their heterogeneity is a function of the environment in which they live, the degree of exposure to the mainstream Hindu population, government involvement in their daily lives, their economic status, and past history (Sedwal and Kamat 2008). STs being community oriented, their habitat is treated as their internal colony and such resource ownership in isolation gives them self-sufficiency, isolating them from mainstream economic, social and political activities. A major issue affecting the STs have been the displacements, particularly resource displacements, resulting from deforestation and inward movement by non-tribal

peasants, traders and businessmen into such colonies (Xaxa 2001).

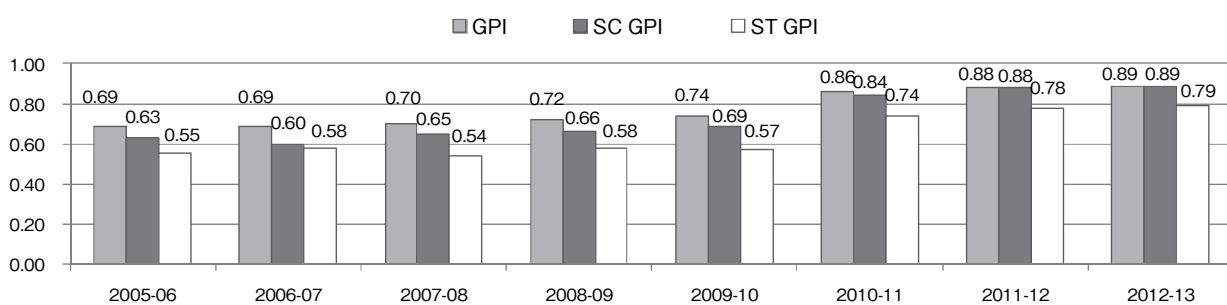
The GER for SCs and STs shows consistent improvement as seen in figure 9, during 2001-02 to 2012-13. But the GER for SCs and STs remained below the GER for all categories combined. The GER for all categories in 2012-13 was 21.1%, the GER for SCs was 15.1% and for STs it was 11.0%, showing the disparity between the disadvantaged group and the rest of the population.



Source: MHRD 2014d

Figure 11 GER for All Categories, for SC and for ST from 2001-02 to 2012-13

During 2012-13, the GPI for STs was lower than the GPI for all categories including the SCs, with a huge gap as could be observed in figure 10. But the GPI for the other disadvantaged group SC was at par with the GPI of all categories.



Source: MHRD 2014d

Figure 12 Gender Parity Index for People Belonging to SC, ST and All Categories

The primary issue of concern is the states in which the overall GER among tribals was below 10% in the year 2012-13. This includes

Chhattisgarh (5.03%), Gujarat (9.7%), Jammu & Kashmir (7.3%), Jharkhand (5.7%), Orissa (6.1%), Madhya Pradesh (7.5%), and Tripura (7.2%). The female GER in these states is also low, which reflects the explicit gender inequality persisting in tribal communities.

Besides SCs and STs, there is also another disadvantaged section (comparatively much less underprivileged than the former two) within the Indian population and is known as the Other Backwards Castes (OBCs)⁶. It is also referred to as Social and Economically Backward Castes (SEBCs). This section of the population has also low GER, but are better placed compared to the SCs and STs. This segment has also been provided incentives and considered affirmative action policies through various measures.

5.3 Interstate Disparities

Inter-state disparities also exist in India. While states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Tripura had a GER below national average, states like Goa, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh had a relatively appreciable GER. As per NSSO 66th round, the GER in rural location is 13.9% and in urban areas 32.5%. This disparity is largely due to economic reason besides the better schooling facility in urban areas resulting in higher transition rate. The disparities by location viz., rural and urban also exists in India and the degree of disparity between these two is much wide. As per the NSSO estimate, the GER in rural area was 13.9% whereas in urban areas it was 32.5%.

5.4 Religious Disparities

As for the religious disparities in higher education, as per the NSSO estimate, a huge gap in GER between the Muslims population and Non-Muslim population was quite apparent. As per NSSO 66th round, the Muslims' GER was the lowest at about 11%, the GER for the Buddhists was about 18%, for the Hindus 20%, and for the Sikhs about 23%. GER for the Christians was about 31%, 55% for the Jains. The highest GER among different religions was of Zoroastrians, about 64%.

6. Conclusion

Indian higher education system is the largest in the world by institutional count and second largest by enrolment count. The Indian higher education has witnessed colossal growth during last 15 years through private participation. Despite this, the Indian higher education has various complexities in context of regulations, access, financing, equity, efficiency, quality etc. The GER is still very low about 21% and the efficiency of higher education is also reflecting obscure accomplishments due to high rate of unemployment among the highly educated.

The state of higher education governance in India reflects the strengths to support the regulatory mechanism in a dynamic changing environment. In spite of minor improvements in the regulatory mechanism as incorporated in the official and legal documents, a bigger area of concern is the operationalization, implementation, supervision and assessment to assure that the documented objectives are realized. Both political bureaucracy and higher education institutions are attempting to achieve unified national goals associated with developing human resource potential to its fullest. But the overlaps of functions and authorities blur the demarcation of the authorities and leads to functional ambiguity. The transparent and effective governance can improve the accountability and quality of this large higher education system. Various stakeholders will have to play a decisive role to bring in this pragmatic governance.

Even though the data reflect indistinct engagements of access and participation for disadvantaged groups when considered in absolute figures, the comparative data for the last decade demonstrate a significant improvement.

What factors have played a vital role in enhancing access and participation of these disadvantaged groups? The most prominent policy for promoting access to higher education has been reservations. The policy of reservation in higher education is based on the assertion that participation of disadvantaged groups has been low, and reservation would enhance their participation. Along with reservation, the government provision of scholarships, special hostels, meals, book loans and other

schemes have encouraged the participation (Joshi 2010).

Discrepancies and gaps in educational achievements are related not only to sub-castes, region and social groups, but are also sturdily linked to other indicators such as earnings, gender, region and location of residence. Therefore, we need to develop a meaningful and inclusive policy structure that would account for the multi-dimensionality of differences that still continue among these impoverished groups.

Despite the mammoth growth, the Indian higher education data sets are not comparable to other akin countries. Indian higher education will have to address access, equity, quality and efficiency issues to become globally competitive through effective policy framework.

Notes

1) A Central University is established or incorporated by a Central Act. A State University is established or incorporated by a Provincial Act or by a State Act. An Open University imparts education exclusively through distance education in any branch or branches of knowledge. A Private University is established through a State/Central Act by a sponsoring body viz. a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, or any other corresponding law for the time being in force in a State or a Public Trust or a Company registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956.

An Institution Deemed to be University commonly known as Deemed University refers to a high - performing institute, which has been so declared by Central Government under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956. Currently many private institutions have also acquired the status of private deemed university although they are not high performing institutions.

Institute of National Importance is an Institution established by Act of Parliament and declared as Institution of National Importance such as All Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), National Institute of Technology (NIT). Institute under State Legislature Act are established under State Act (Agarwal 2006).

2) The process of NAAC involves submission of self-study report, its validation through on-site visit of the institute, followed by the submission of peer team report which is then evaluated by executive committee to give the final institutional grade. Institutes are accredited on seven criteria namely:

Curricular Aspects, Teaching-learning and evaluation, Research, consultancy and extension, Infrastructure and learning resources, Student Support and progression, Governance, Leadership and Management, Innovation and best practices.

- 3) Two types of private institutions exist in India. The first one is private aided, also known as private grant-in-aid, which receives assistance from the government. The second, private unaided institutions do not get financial assistance from the government and their major source is tuition fees.
- 4) The term scheduled caste (SC) is now used to refer to the communities listed in the government schedule as “outcastes.” The notion of “outcastes” is premised upon the Hindu caste system, which divides society into the four broad categories of Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders), and Shudras (menial workers) (Dirks, 2001). Today, the SC population represents 16.6% of the country’s population and still struggles to achieve social equality. There remain geographic divisions within Indian cities and villages which exemplify the role that the caste system plays in today’s society (Desai et al., 2010).
- 5) Scheduled tribes (STs) in India are generally considered to be adivasis, meaning indigenous people or original inhabitants of the country. The adivasis or the tribals (STs) constitute the second-largest minority social group (the first being SC) in India (Maharatna 2005) and account for approximately 8.6% (equivalent to 104.3 million people) of the total population. The total number of tribal communities recognized by the government as STs is 701, each with its distinct cultures, social practices, religions, dialects, and occupations (Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2014).
- 6) OBCs stand for *Other Backward Castes*. A community is classified as “OBC” if it qualifies as “backward” based on a complex set of social, economic, and educational criteria, as specified by the National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC).

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インド高等教育におけるガバナンスおよび 経済成長と社会的公正性

ジョシ・マヘンドラ・キショア

＜要 旨＞

高等教育は現在、経済成長を促進する主要な手段として広く認知されている。インドの高等教育機関数は世界一、学生数は世界2位である。在学学生数は2960万人であるが、該当世代の在学率は21.2%と低い。大学が712校、カレッジが36671校あり、この大部分は過去20年間に急拡大した私立大学である。これらの高等教育機関は、様々な省や組織が相乗りする形で統制されている。公正を実現するためにさまざまな介入がなされているが、性、民族、経済状況、地域などによるアクセスの不均衡が残っている。

本稿は、インドにおける高等教育の出現と成長について描出するとともに、ガバナンスや社会的公正性についてもその実態を明確にしようとするものである。
