

Higher Education Pattern and Prospective- An Overview

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Introduction

India possesses a highly developed higher education system which offers facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human creative and intellectual endeavors: arts and humanities; natural, mathematical and social sciences, engineering; medicine; dentistry; agriculture; education; law; commerce and management; music and performing arts; national and foreign languages; culture; communications and other subjects. The institutional framework consists of Universities established by an Act of Parliament (Central Universities) or of a State Legislature (State Universities), Deemed Universities (institutions which have been accorded the status of a university with authority to award their own degrees through central government notification), Institutes of National Importance (prestigious institutions awarded the said status by Parliament), Institutions established by State Legislative Act and colleges affiliated to the University (both government-aided and -unaided). As on 31.3.2010, there were 436 University level institutions including 40 Central Universities, 227 State Universities, 105 Deemed Universities and 5 institutions established under State Legislation, 41 Institutes of National Importance established under Central legislation and 6 Private Universities. There were 25938 degree and post-graduate colleges (including around 1902 women's colleges), of which 14,400 came under the purview of the University Grant Commission, the rest were professional colleges under the purview of the Central Government or other statutory bodies like the AICTE, ICAR, MCI etc. Of the Colleges under UGC purview 6109 have been recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under Section 2(f) and 5525 under Section 12(B) of the UGC Act, whose recognition permits them to receive grants from the UGC. In 2009-10, an estimated 13.93 million students were enrolled in the institutions of Higher Education as against 10.48 million in the previous year and the faculty strength was 0.488 million as compared to 0.472 million in the previous year. The enrolment of women students at the beginning of the academic year 2009-10 was 4.466 million, constituting 40.40 per cent of the total enrolment. Of the total women enrolment, only 12.35 per cent women have been enrolled in professional courses and the rest in non-professional courses. The women enrolment is highest in Kerala (66.00 per cent) and lowest in Bihar (24.52 per cent) in terms of percentage enrolment to total enrolment.

Level and type of higher education institutions

There are different types of universities and colleges in the higher education system in the country. They vary in terms of their academic, administrative and financial arrangements. Universities can either be established by an Act of Parliament or by the state legislatures. Those established by the Act of Parliament are the central universities and the ones set up by the state legislatures are state universities. Some higher education institutions are granted the 'deemed to be university' status by the central government through gazette notifications. A few institutions are established by the Parliament / state legislatures as institutions of national importance. Universities, deemed to be universities and institutions of national importance are degree-granting institutions.

The universities could be of unitary type with single or even multiple campuses or of affiliating type. The concept of an affiliating university is unique to South Asia where a university affiliates colleges. These colleges conduct teaching-learning under the academic supervision of the university to which they are affiliated. The colleges do not award their own degrees, but award the degree of the university to which they are affiliated.

Though there is no clear demarcation, the colleges mainly focus on undergraduate education while the universities impart post graduate education and conduct research. In addition, there are many institutions like the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) that only award diplomas. These diplomas are however equated to degrees granted by the universities. Most universities and colleges offer multidisciplinary programmes, however, there are also some that are confined to a particular discipline only – such as agriculture, law, technology, language, medical etc. There are also open universities that offer distance education programmes only.

Mapping the growth in higher education

The system of higher education in India has seen an impressive growth since independence. The number of universities has increased from 25 in 1947 to 436 in 2009-10. The number of colleges has increased from 700 in 1947 to 19289 in 2009-10. The colleges that are affiliated to 131 universities constitute the bulk of the higher education system in India, which contribute around 89 per cent of the total enrolment. The growth of higher education in India can be divided into three phases. The first phase was from 1947 to 1980 followed by second phase from 1980 to 2000. The third phase is from the year 2000 onwards. The three phases are discussed below.

Growth of higher education till 1980

Till about 1980, the growth of higher education was largely confined to arts, science and commerce. The government not only supported higher education by setting up universities and colleges, but also took over the responsibility of running the institutions set up through private sector. These came to be known as grant-in-aid (GIA) institutions or private aided institutions. In such institutions, though the private sector financed a major part of the capital costs, public subsidies were provided to them to meet a part of the recurrent costs and occasionally for some capital works. Public funding was accompanied with considerable regulation of private institutions by the government (World Bank, 2003). Over the years, several private institutions had set high academic standards for themselves. With government regulation, their autonomy was compromised and standards went down. In effect, this led to the de facto nationalization of private higher education and gave serious blow to the community-led private initiatives in higher education in the country.

Growth of higher education from 1980 to 2000

In the 1980s, there was an unprecedented demand for quality higher education relevant to the needs of business and industry, putting considerable stress on governmental resources. Also, there was a substantial increase in the population in the middle and higher income groups, which could afford to pay higher tuition fees. This made the non-subsidized higher education a viable enterprise. Faced with such a situation, the state was left with no alternative but to allow the entry of private enterprise in the area of higher education. Economic

reforms in early 1990s saw the middle class grow bigger, and richer. These reforms also saw a rise in entrepreneurship in the country. The rising demand of higher education from the growing middle classes and the growing culture of entrepreneurship together accelerated the pace of growth of private higher education in the country. During this period, very few universities and colleges were set up by the government sector and fewer still were also brought within the ambit of government funding. In a way, this period was marked the near withdrawal of the government from taking over of additional responsibility for higher education in the country.

Growth of higher education from 2000 onwards

Till the late 1990s, the expansion of higher education largely took place through affiliated colleges. By then, many promoters of private unaided colleges began to realise that the regulatory mechanisms of the affiliating university and state governments were inhibiting their growth and did not allow them to fully exploit their market potential. The promoters were not able to make money from their educational enterprises. Such institutions explored the possibilities of wriggling out of the control of the state governments and the affiliating universities. Some of the institutions took the deemed to be university route to get the degree granting powers. Though, universities in the country are either set up by an Act of Parliament or State Legislature, however, certain institutions are also given the status of a deemed to be university in terms of section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956. Earlier this provision was used sparingly to declare premier institutions offering programmes at advanced level in a particular field or specialization as a deemed to be university to enable it to award degrees. Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore and Indian Agricultural Research Institute at Delhi were the first two institutions to be declared as deemed to be universities in 1958 for education and research at advanced level in the field of basic sciences and agriculture respectively.

Over the last five years, there has been sudden jump in the number of deemed universities. In the early years, this privilege was extended only to the government / government aided institutions. Manipal Academy for Higher Education (MAHE) – a pioneer in private higher education became the first totally self-financed institution to be declared as a deemed to be university in 1976. After 2000, when the provision for conferring the deemed to be university status to a de novo institution was introduced, there was sudden spurt in the growth of deemed to be universities in the private sector. Between 2009 and 2010, 42 private-sponsored institutions got the deemed university status. Though the deemed to be universities do not have affiliating powers, many of them have a number of campuses spread throughout the country. In this way, the new entities were able to wriggle out of the oversight mechanism of the affiliating universities. They were also able to overcome the service area restrictions associated with an affiliating university. This intensified the competition in higher education in the country.

Meanwhile, many state governments realised that education was on the concurrent list of the Constitution and that they could establish private universities through legislation. By early 2009, seven private universities set up in different states were recognized by the UGC. This also led to a new state - Chhattisgarh in central India indulging in an astounding misadventure by allowing the setting up of 97 private universities with all India jurisdictions in the year 2002. This was struck down by

the Supreme Court in February 2005 leaving the fate of nearly fifty thousand students registered in these universities hung in balance; the future of those who acquired degrees from these so called universities remains uncertain. The Chhattisgarh case cited above illustrates the fact that there are a number of loopholes in the regulatory system in the country. Given an opportunity, the private providers would resort to such misadventures. The fact that they resorted to such strategies in connivance with a state government indicates a major policy lacuna in the higher education sector in the country.

Emergence of new types of providers

The post-1980 period saw the emergence of new types of providers of higher education in India. During this period, the private institutions proliferated, the distance education programmes gained wider acceptance, the public universities and colleges started self-financing programmes, and foreign institutions started offering programmes either by themselves or in partnership with Indian institutions and the non-university sector grew rapidly.

Private institutions

In the post-1980 period, a few institutions were set up by religious and charitable trusts of repute for philanthropic purposes. Most other higher education institutions were set up by individuals or family groups. These were not financially dependent on the government and came to be known as private unaided institutions. According to Altbach (2005b) such family-style higher education institutions are a part of a worldwide trend. In such institutions, the family members remain directly involved in the administration, governance, financial control and direct and / or indirect ownership of the institution. These are de jure not-for-profit institutions; however, most of such institutions in India exhibit several characteristics of the private-for-profit institutions as elsewhere in the world. Such institutions are often referred to as self-financing institutions. For the sake of convenience, we shall call these as 'private' institutions as distinct from 'public' institutions that would include both government as well as private aided institutions.

Distance education providers

Distance education in India had its genesis in the early 1960s. It started as correspondence education -- a supplementary method of education to meet the growing demand for higher education. Since then it has expanded rapidly, particularly over the last two decades. In 2011, there were 17 open universities [including the Indira Gandhi National Open University – (IGNOU)] and 106 dual mode university distance education institutes / centres in the country, catering to over 2.8 million students. Each year, nearly

1.3 million Students register for various courses in these universities. This was considered as an economical and a quick way of increasing enrolment in higher education.

The emergence of distance education has been a major development over the last two decades. There are diverse types of providers offering a variety of programmes. The regulatory bodies have little control over them. They operate in different ways and sometimes at cross purposes with each other. The growth has been haphazard and the quality is both unsatisfactory and uneven. Also, there is an anomaly of the major provider - IGNOU being the regulator. The regulator for distance education –

the Distance Education Commission (DEC) is a part of IGNOU. This results in conflict of interest with IGNOU getting a preferential treatment over the other distance education providers from the regulator.

Nowadays, the boundaries between distance education and on-campus education are in a continuous process of convergence, and it is likely that the future interrelations between them will be marked both by a growing competition and a growing cooperation (Sarah, 1999).

Self-financing courses in public institutions

Since the 1990s, there has been an acute resource constraint in public financing of the higher institutions. This had put a brake on the expansion of the public university system. Enterprising public institutions had no option but to start self-financing courses to meet the student demand. Higher education institutions charge the students tuition fees not only to cover the operating costs, but even generate surplus from self-financing courses. The courses were obviously offered in subjects having a demand in the market, such as engineering and technology, medicine, teacher education at the undergraduate level, computer applications and management at the postgraduate level. The fee structure in conventional courses in public institutions continues to be low. The revenue from fees is often adjusted from government grants. As a result, the revenues from self-financing courses along with distance education courses form the main source of revenue for most public universities and colleges.

Foreign education providers

There is a craze for foreign education evident from the trend of a large number of Indian students going abroad for studies. Sensing a huge unmet demand for professional education, a number of small operations have sprung up in different parts of the country. As per a study conducted by NIEPA, 131 foreign education providers were identified to be operating in India in 2011 enrolling around a few thousand students in the country. The study found that the majority of the foreign education providers offer vocational or technical programmes. These were mainly from the USA or the UK. These were twinning arrangements or programme-based collaborations. There is no major foreign education provider operating in India through its offshore campus or branch campus. Vast majority of students enrolled in programmes offered by foreign providers were financed from personal funding sources. A little more than a quarter also took education loans. The fee levels were usually very high. Though, in terms of its size and impact, the foreign education provision is small in the country, yet necessity to regulate foreign providers and due to serious concerns about its quality, there has been focus on foreign providers for over a decade now.

Non-university sector

The post-1980s saw the growth of the non-university sector to meet the immediate demand of skills from a growing economy. There was rapid expansion of polytechnics and industrial training institutes for the training of supervisors in industrial setting training of workers in various skills, respectively. The capacity addition in these two categories of institutions was largely through private sector. In addition, private for-profit training providers emerged to meet the growing demand for usable training.

Trend towards privatization

Growth trends in India show that the higher education sector was controlled by the government till about 1980 after that there has been a clear trend towards privatisation of higher education. Figure 3 shows the growth of higher education institutions in the country in the period between 2000/01 and 2005/06. This is based on the data provided in Table A2. Whereas the number of public institutions – both government and aided institutions has increased only marginally, private institutions have increased significantly. Nearly 30 per cent enrolment is in private unaided institutions, which do not receive any grants from the government. The growth has been predominantly in institutions offering professional courses. Private universities and foreign education providers that financially independent are also emerging on the scene. In future the number of government and private aided universities and colleges is not likely to increase significantly while the number of private unaided higher education institutions may increase.

Type of Higher education Institutions in India

Type	Ownership	Financing	Number of institutions*	Number of students*	Growth trends
Universities under the	Public	Public	240	1,000,000	Not growing
Private Universities	Private	Private	7	10,000	Emerging on the
Deemed Universities	Private or Public	Public	38	40,000	Growing slowly
Deemed Universities	Private	Private	63	60,000	Growing rapidly
Colleges under	Public	Public	4,225	2,750,000	Not growing
Private Colleges	Private	Public	5,750	3,450,000	Not growing
Private Colleges	Private	Private	7,650	3,150,000	Growing rapidly
Foreign Institutions	Private	Private	150	8,000	Emerging on the
Total			18,123	10,468,000	

Source: Various MHRD Reports, Ministry of Human Resource of India.

Financing in this case refers to the meeting the operating costs and is not related to the initial investment. Promoter either government or a private entity makes initial investments in infrastructure and facilities of a university or a college. This gives them the ownership. These are usually in the name of the government

or the non-profit society or trust that sets up the institution. This is not of much consequence because infrastructure and facilities of educational institutions can not normally be alienated and put to any alternate use. Thus, the source and manner of meeting day-to-day expenses of the university or college determines its financing pattern. The private unaided universities and colleges are financed through 'donations' and the like, most of which is paid in cash and either not accounted for or only partly accounted for in the accounts of the institutions. These payments, mostly at the time of admissions are referred to as capitation fees. Despite several laws being passed and interventions by various courts over the years against these practices, the practice of capitation fees continues

Growth of Higher Education in India

In its size and diversity, India has the third largest higher education system in the world, next only to China and the United States. Before Independence, access to higher education was very limited and elitist, with enrolment of less than a million students in 500 colleges and 20 universities. Since independence, the growth has been very impressive; the number of universities has increased by 18-times, the number of colleges by 35 times and enrolment more than 10 times. The system is now more mass-based and democratized with one third to 40% of enrolments coming from lower socio-economic strata, and women comprising of some 35% of the total enrolments. It is little more than half a century ever since the government initiated a planned development of higher education in the country particularly with the establishment of University Grants Commission in 1953. Thus early 1950's is an important reference points from which we could look back at our progress of higher education. Among the 104 deemed universities, there is greater diversification. Apart from majority being in technological discipline, there are universities in specific research areas such as English and foreign language, yoga, brain research, dairy research, mines, basic science, neuro science, physical education, fisheries, economics and politics, development research, armament technology, population science, social science, IT, management, education, home sciences, rural studies, music, veterinary research, forest research, drama, planning and architecture, foreign trade, educational planning and administration.

Growth Trend of Colleges and Universities in India

	No of Colleges	Growth Percentage	No of University	Growth Percentage
1950-51	578		27	
1955-56	684	18.3	31	14.8
1960-61	1819	165.9	45	45.2
1965-66	2306	26.8	64	42.2
1970-71	3277	42.1	82	28.1
1975-76	6943	111.9	101	23.2
1980-81	6963	0.3	110	8.9
1985-86	5600	-19.6	126	14.5
1990-91	5748	2.6	184	46.0
1991-92	6008	4.5	196	6.5
1992-93	6323	5.2	207	5.6
1993-94	6764	7.0	213	2.9
1994-95	7319	8.2	219	2.8
1995-96	7923	8.3	226	3.2
1996-97	8529	7.6	228	0.9
1997-98	9274	8.7	229	0.4
1998-99	9607	3.6	237	3.5
1999-00	9906	3.1	244	3.0
2000-01	10152	2.5	254	4.1
2001-02	11146	9.8	272	7.1
2002-03	11776	5.7	304	11.8
2003-04	12178	3.4	304	0.0
2004-05	13578	11.5	364	19.7
2005-06	14393	6.5	379	4.3
2006-07	15544	8.5	390	3.2
2007-08	16943	9.2	406	4.4
2008-09	17960	6.1	422	4.3
2009-10	19289	7.4	436	3.4

Source: compiled from various issues of selected educational statistics.

MHRD

The growth trend of the colleges and Universities in India 1950-51 to 2009-10, with respect to colleges in 1950-51 the number of colleges were 578 which is increased to 19289 in 2009-10 with the hike of 3,300 percent in 60 years, the growth trend were positive from 2001-02 onwards , with regard to Universities the number of Universities were 27 in 1950-51 which is increased to 436 in 2009-10 with the escalation of 1514.8 percent during the period. Especially after 2001-02 onwards the importance of higher education was recognized as the demand for skillful and competent man power increase as the economy grows due to impact of liberalization. The younger skillful man power is the driving force of the economy thus, the importance of higher education became very vital. In the same line the participation of Government in the provision of higher education has been shrinking and Government facilitates the private to participate in the higher education. The worrisome factor is that more private domination might nullify the social justice and widen the inequality among the people since Indian society has already been structurally divided into various segments which concede privileges and subordination to the people, however the growth of higher education is an important tool for development and therefore there needs to be caution in the facilitation showered by Government towards Privatisation of private participation in higher education.

Higher Education in Tamil Nadu

YEAR	Arts and Science college				Engineering colleges			
	No of colleges	Percent	Students	Percent	No of Colleges	Percent	Students	Percent
2001-02	440		430821		218		48887	
2002-03	440	0.0	405742	-5.8	234	7.3	49031	0.3
2003-04	440	0.0	472598	16.5	231	-1.3	48106	-1.9
2004-05	444	0.9	525436	11.2	222	-3.9	49466	2.8
2005-06	490	10.4	568226	8.1	233	5.0	66261	34.0
2006-07	499	1.8	600156	5.6	247	6.0	73953	11.6
2007-08	517	3.6	674486	12.4	272	10.1	94350	27.6
2008-09	548	6.0	685866	1.7	344	26.5	118565	25.7
2009-2010	578	5.5	777572	13.4	440	27.9	114518	-3.4
2010-2011	611	5.7	846521	8.9	473	7.5	154923	35.3

Source: Compiled from educational statistics of Higher education of Tamil Nadu.

The growth trend of the colleges and the enrollment of both Arts & science colleges and Engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu from 2001-02 to 2010-11, with respect to Arts and Science colleges in 2001-02 the number of colleges were 440 which is increased to 611 in 2010-11 with the hike of 27.8 percent in 10 years. The growth trend were positive from 2005-06, with respect to students participation in Arts and Science colleges. 430821 were enrolled in 2001-02 and which has increased to 846521 in 2010-11 with the increase of 96.7 percent of hike which is almost double of the students enrolled in 2001-02. With regard to Engineering

colleges the number of colleges were 218 in 2001-02 which has increased to 473 in 2010-11 with the escalation of 116.7 percent during the period and in connection with the students participation the enrollment were 48887 in 2001-02 which has increased to 154923 in 2010-11. With the increase of 216.8 percent during the period, while analyzing the trend it could be inferred that Engineering colleges have been escalating in fast pace while compared to Arts and science colleges during 2008-09 and 2009-10. More number of colleges have opened, higher education infrastructure was quite high compared to rest of the states in India, however, it is essential to address the public provision of such services which have ample of potentiality to emancipate the socially deprived people to include in the main stream society.

Conclusion

In this paper an empirical mapping of the growth of higher education in India since independence (1947) has been done. The mapping has been carried out with an international comparative perspective with particular reference to the private initiatives. The paper notes that the higher education in India has grown fast over the last two decades. Private higher education institutions that started emerging on the scene in early 1980s now occupy centre stage. Tamil Nadu's higher education in engineering with the 70 percent share with above 50 percent share of enrollments in the private sector, still operates in a largely effectively under regulated space. The most acute problem is quality on account of lack of competent faculty. This coupled with a lack of accountability raises serious doubts as to its ability to address the huge latent demand for quality higher education in the state. As aptly put, "There is a place for the market, but the market must be kept in its place" Hence, a more effective regulatory framework needs to be developed to address the problem of imperfect information on the quality of teaching and student learning. While improved information sharing on academic quality would be an obvious regulatory mechanism, some form of "enforced self-regulation" is needed for more effective private higher education. This would entail government incentives and sanctions designed to reform and strengthen institutional and professional mechanisms for assuring academic quality, expressed as early as in the middle of nineteenth century. Hence, it is important to regulate market through both short-term and long-term policies. In the short run, it needs to focus on ensuring quality and accountability of the private higher education system immediately. In the long run, the 'state' should raise some fundamental and forgotten intrinsic values such as positive externalities, the social purpose that higher education serves, the nation building role it performs, the public good and the human right natures of higher education are to be brought back. Given these inherent and intrinsic values of higher education, some basic questions like - Should the expansion of private higher education continue? How much responsibility does it owe to the public good? How to revive the abandoned scholarship? How to save the core of the ideals of modern higher education in the face of market forces serving private interests rather than the public good? etc., are to be the policy concerns in the middle to long run.

In several cases the public funds are not optimally utilized and the mechanism promotes inefficiencies. In most cases, public higher education institutions have no incentives for internal resource generation. The funding mechanism has to change to promote efficiency. Public higher education institutions need to be supported by the central and state governments to reach the minimum standards. Competitive grants need to be provided to encourage healthy

competition in higher education. Public funds would have to be used in areas and for subjects where private sector may not venture. Demand-driven, efficient and targeted funding of students from poor background by initiating a social equity fund should be taken up on a big scale. Collaborative activities that are far and few in between require to be supported through public funding. The deficit in financing of higher education has to be met by pooling resources from all possible sources, such as the government at the centre and the states, and the households, including education loans. The possibility of attracting foreign and corporate agencies in the knowledge economy sectors through a proactive approach could be explored. To address equity issues, a social equity fund to cater to the need of students from poor background could be set up. A suitably designed affirmative action policy should also be put in place.

The paper has found that in order to enable the formulation of policy at the central, state, and institutional levels, there is an immediate need for conducting a baseline survey of higher education and training system – both in the public and the private sector. The changing national and global circumstances require that we evolve a new paradigm in higher education. There is a need to agree on a basic framework for change. With a view to initiate changes, action is required on several fronts. In some areas, detailed analysis is required to chalk out a plan of action, in other cases; action could be initiated right away. Whereas radical changes are required and tinkering would not work, strategically an incremental approach has to be adopted to build commitment for change. Important and urgent activities that are inexpensive and would take short time could be taken up initially. In many cases, we can learn from international experiences and avoid committing mistakes. For structural changes, detailed studies would be required.

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