

## HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Higher education requires study for increasing demand and contribution from all parts of society. In the stride of globalization and liberalization, government has been withdrawing from incremental investment in higher education and that responsibility is gradually shifting to private stake-holders. It is reasonably essential for government to continue the support to higher education financing to achieve educational and social developmental goals. With declining public sector expenditure and significantly higher number of enrolment in private institutes indicate low quality and huge space for private investment in higher education.

**KEYWORDS:** Higher Education, Review, Globalization, Liberalization

### INTRODUCTION

Education has attained a major focus of Government policies in many countries, recently. In India, the government has taken steps to change many aspects of education provision, including curriculum, governance, finance, teaching methods and teacher training and government has legislated it. This theme focuses on the sources of reform, the policies and their adoption and implementation and their outcomes in an attempt to examine their possibilities for bringing about educational reforms.

Economic and social development of any nation depends upon the skills and knowledge of the people. And this becomes more evident with incremental stride of globalization and advancements around the globe. This implies that people with better skills and refined knowledge would always possess better chance to adapt better to the changing world and grab opportunities. And therefore countries with good level of education will secure good growth probabilities.(Carnoy, 1999)(Ilion, 1994)(Stewart, 1996)(Tilak, 2001). Thus, for India it is becoming more and more crucial to select relevant skills and put all endeavours to enhance these skills through education. The skill-sets have a variety from professional, conceptual, managerial, operational behavioural to interpersonal and inter-domain skills.(Vibrant Gujarat, 2013)

### Investment in Education

It is equally important and relevant to check the contribution of government and public in higher education to meet with the challenging pace of changes around. The trend analysis shows that the increase is not that marked if we consider the growth in enrolment.

### Trend over years

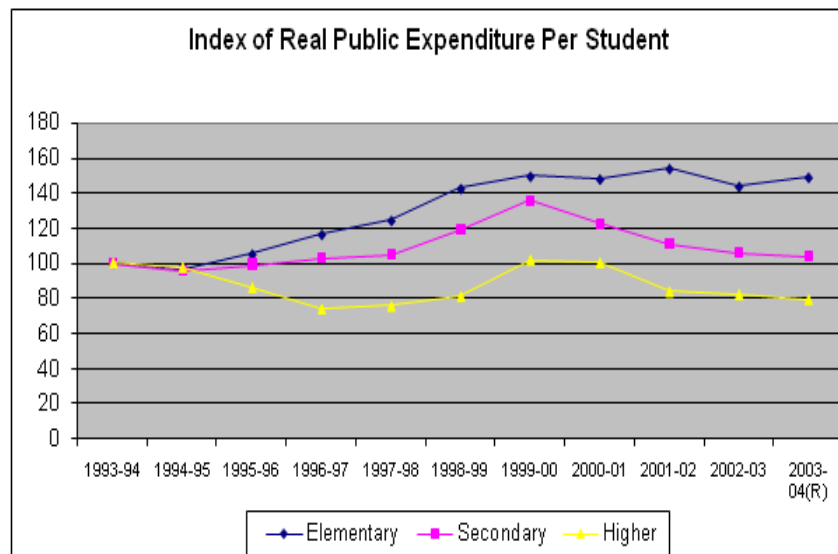
Higher Education has come to prime focus with the need felt for the role of education and skills for economic and

social development for over national growth to match pace with the global changes and advancement. But at the same time it is observed that in public expenditure it did not receive the share it deserves.

**Table 1: Public Expenditure (in Rs.) per Student [Nominal and Real (Base Year – 1993-94)]**

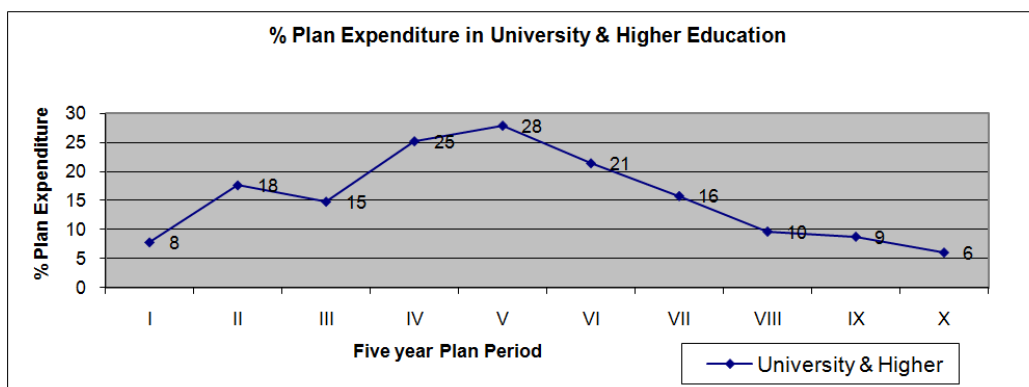
Year	Elementary		Secondary		Higher	
	Nominal	Real	Nominal	Real	Nominal	Real
1993-94	825	825	3748	3748	8961	8961
1994-95	893	793	4040	3588	9821	8722
1995-96	1052	865	4517	3715	9384	7717
1996-97	1220	959	4890	3844	8438	6634
1997-98	1361	1025	5221	3932	9003	6779
1998-99	1654	1175	6285	4467	10238	7276
1999-00	1792	1233	7392	5087	13219	9097
2000-01	1900	1220	7153	4594	13956	8963
2001-02	2047	1269	6699	4153	12099	7501
2002-03	1977	1185	6641	3982	12294	7370
2003-04®	2162	1229	6852	3896	12518	7117

And the same data gives a clearer picture in the trend chart. In terms of index of real public expenditure per student, the decline in public expenditure in higher education is equal to 21 percent during 1993-94 and 2003-04.



**Figure 1: Real Public Expenditure Index**

Total Plan expenditure in university and higher education was highest at 28% in the fifth plan. It has been continuously falling thereafter, touching the lowest level in the X Plan.



Source: Annual Financial Statistics of Education Sector 2003-04, MHRD, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2005

Figure 2: Five-Year Plans and Higher Education

### Priorities

The following table describes contribution to university and higher from total public expenditure on education.

Table 2: Sector-wise Expenditure (in Crore Rs.) on Education 2012-13

	Plan Expenditure	Plan % Share	Non-Plan Expenditure	Non-Plan % Share	Total Expenditure	Total % Share
Elementary Education	64717.68	59.09	98386.12	45.90	163103.80	50.36
Secondary Education	21437.08	19.57	75839.12	35.38	97276.20	30.04
Adult Education	915.87	0.84	272.60	0.13	1188.47	0.37
Language Development	295.11	0.27	844.56	0.39	1139.67	0.35
University & Hr. Education	11117.33	10.15	31387.28	14.65	42504.61	13.12
Technical Education	9949.68	9.09	6300.29	2.94	16249.97	5.02
General Education	1083.23	0.99	1304.03	0.61	2387.26	0.74
<b>Total Education</b>	<b>109515.98</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>214334.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>323849.98</b>	<b>100.00</b>

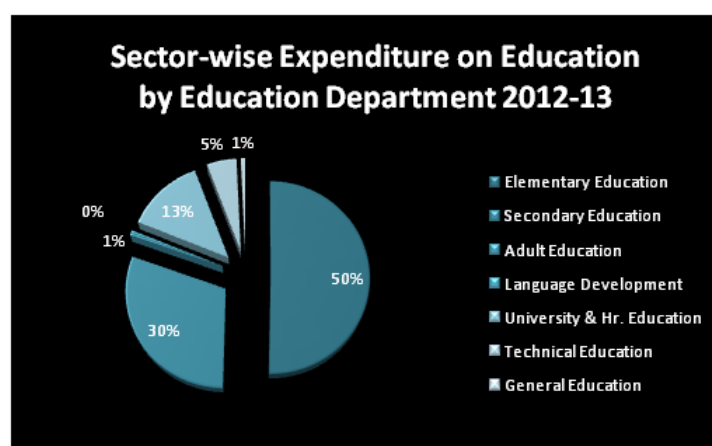


Figure 3: Sector-Wise Expenditure on Education

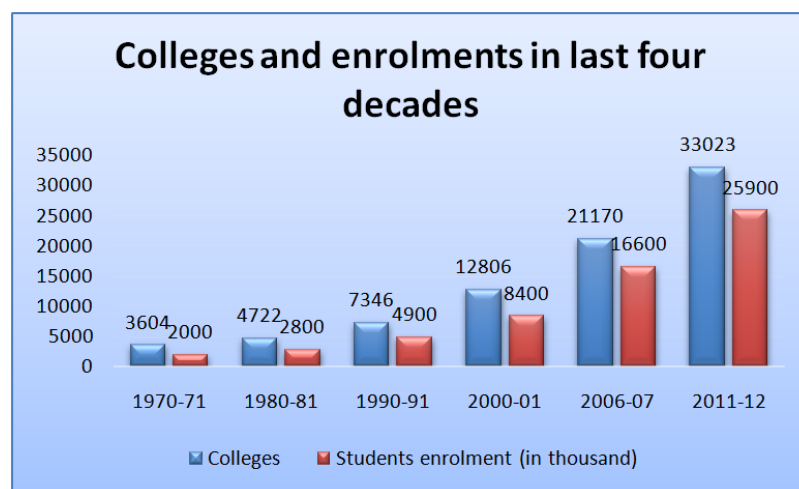
As shown in the table and figure, university and Higher Education secures about 13% of the total expenditure on education by education department, as against almost 50% of investment on elementary education and 30% on secondary education.

### Changes in Public Expenditure on Education

Government and UGC find it utterly difficult to continue with present level of financing to higher education institutes. Quoting the approach paper to the Ninth Five-Year Plan - “Grant-in-aid will be linked to performance criteria to improve quality and inject accountability. Fees will be restructured on unit cost criteria and paying capacity of the beneficiaries. Additional resources will be generated by involving industry and commerce and through contribution from community.” (Government of India, 1997).

### Growth in Enrolments

Enrolments have been exponential in their increment over decades, but the pace with changing global trends is startling.



**Source:** Higher Education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) and beyond

**Figure 4: Colleges and Enrolments**

As it is clear from Figure 4, there is a substantial growth in number of colleges, post liberalization. And at the same time, number of students enrolled also shot up at the tremendous rate. Overall, comparing the year 1970-71 with 2011-12, there is a growth by more than 12 times in the total enrolments, which was responded with about 8 to 9 times of addition in number of colleges.

### Quality of Education

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 (as on 31st March 2006) has increased by 18-times, the number of colleges by 35 times and enrolment more than 10 times (MHRD, 2006-07).

The Higher Education sector ensures quality of the educational process with the help of accreditation agencies established for the purpose. The main agency which accredits University and Colleges in general education is the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) established by the UGC in 1994, whereas similar function is done for Technical Education by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) set up by AICTE in 1994, and for Agricultural

education by Accreditation Board (AB) set up by ICAR in 1996.

As on May 21, 2006, NAAC has accredited only 128 universities and 2879 colleges and reaccredited 4 Universities and 43 Colleges (NAAC Website), whereas NBA by June 2005 has accredited merely 1232 programs from 325 institutions (NBA Website) as against a total of 14000 programs in 3589 approved UG and PG and 1608 diploma institutions.

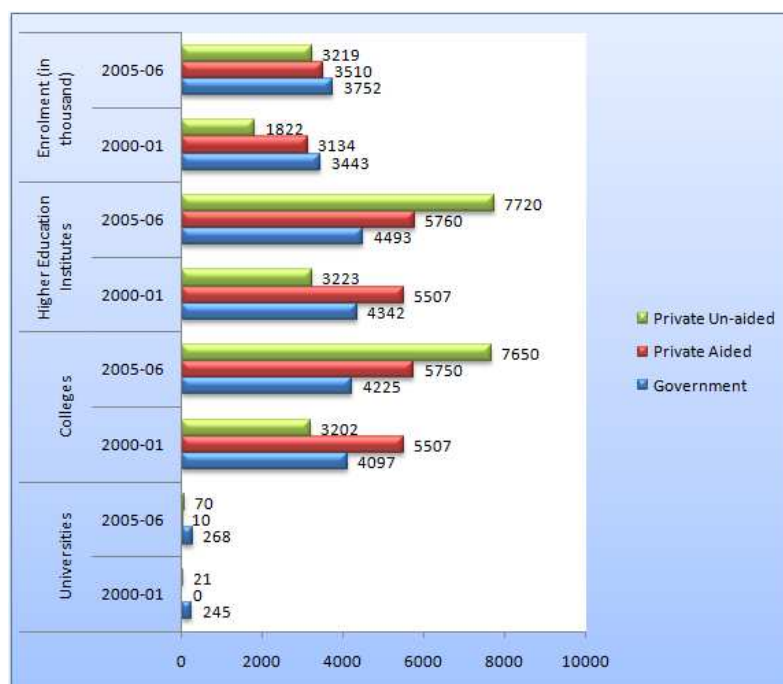
In addition to National accreditation, local quality inspection of affiliated colleges is carried out by the affiliating University to ensure provision of adequate academic infrastructure and satisfactory teaching-learning processes. Analysis of examination performance of students is also used by Universities to assess the quality of educational offerings of individual colleges.

At the same time it will be interesting to have a glance at enrolment in public and private institutions, which also reflect the quality anticipation and fulfilment.

**Table 3: Higher Education Institutions and Enrolment (by Type of Management)**

Type (by Management / Funding)	Universities		Colleges		Higher Education Institutes		Enrolment (in Thousand)	
	2000-01	2005-06	2000-01	2005-06	2000-01	2005-06	2000-01	2005-06
Government	245	268	4097	4225	4342	4493	3443	3752
Private Aided	#	10	5507	5750	5507	5760	3134	3510
Private Un-aided	21	70	3202	7650	3223	7720	1822	3219

And it is clear from the following graph that despite various measures in the form of accreditation and quality assessment, enrolments have increased in private institutes at an increasing rate.



Source: University Grants Commission (India) and (Agarwal, 2006)

**Figure 5: Higher Education Institutions and Enrolment (by Type of Management)**

As per Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) norms, only teachers having a Master's degree or a PhD can teach students of B. E. or B. Tech programmes. If the ideal student-to-teacher ratio is set at 10:1 (as suggested by the Ministry), around 45-50 per cent of teaching positions at engineering colleges currently lie vacant. While 65-70 per cent of positions for faculty possessing a doctorate lie unoccupied, similarly, 35-40 per cent of positions for teachers having a Masters' degree have no takers at the moment.(CRISIL, 2014)

As per (Planning Commission, 2007), out of total 367 university level institutions and 317 total universities under UGC purview, only 128 universities scored above 60 per cent and accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council - NAAC. And out of total 17, 625 colleges and 14000 colleges under UGC purview, only 2780 or twenty per cent colleges were accredited by the NAAC.

### Level-Wise Enrolment

As per the All India Survey (MHRD, 2012) enrolments have occurred at various levels in the following fashion.

**Table 4: Level-Wise Enrolment in Universities and Colleges (2010-11)**

Level	University	Colleges
Ph.D.	57346	4781
M.Phil.	16985	1471
Post Graduate	995742	505672
Under Graduate	1951245	5471311
PG Diploma	80373	10128
Diploma	93913	119041
Certificate	17391	9975
Integrated	192725	10712
<b>All India</b>	<b>3405720</b>	<b>6133091</b>

Data shows an obvious high rate of enrolment at under graduate level, but at the same time, there is noticeably high rate of enrolment in integrated programmes also. Ph.D. enrolments are almost five times that of in M.Phil.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Increasing emphasis on quality and accountability for higher education institutes is the call of the hour. Secondly, government has acknowledged increasing requirements for resources. And finally, appeal for contribution from industries, commerce and society as a whole. From 1970-71 we have witnessed a more than 12 per cent rise in enrolments and more than 10000 colleges and higher education institutes are at their aid. But quality of the education offered and contribution to higher education in social, economic, ethical and national development still have to face a lot of questions.

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