

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the higher education level in India.

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Abstract

In India, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for postsecondary education has been increasing over time, reaching 27.1% in 2019–20. However, In the relevant age range, only approximately 25% of the eligible population is enrolled in higher education. This is due to several factors, such as low access to education in rural areas, high costs, social and cultural factors, and inadequate infrastructure. Addressing these challenges is critical to increasing the GER and ensuring more There is access to higher education for students. The lack of emphasis on One of the research gaps in the study of GER at the higher education level in India is the quality of education provided. Even though the GER has been steadily increasing, the quality of education has not improved at the same pace. Therefore, there is a need to study the factors that affect the quality of education provided in higher education institutions and find ways to improve it. Moreover, there is a need to study the impact of the increasing number of educational establishments regarding the general standard of Indian higher education.

Keywords: Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), higher education, challenges, India

Introduction:

The gross enrollment ratio (GER) is a crucial measure of the proportion of eligible people in a certain age group that is enrolled in higher education (Mishra, 2019). The GER is an important indicator for measuring the level of participation of a country's population in higher education and is considered a critical factor for economic development (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2019). In India, GER is considered an essential indicator of the country's progress in the field of education and its ability to meet the growing demand for skilled professionals (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 2018).

According to a UNESCO report, India's GER at the higher education level stood at 26.3% in 2018, which is lower than the global average of 38.4% (UNESCO, 2020). The report also highlighted that India's GER has increased significantly over the years, but it still lags behind many developed and developing countries.

The low GER in India is caused by several issues, including social and economic inequality, a lack of finance, and restricted access to high-quality education (Jain & Pal, 2020). The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) and the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) are two of the measures the Indian government has introduced to address these issues and improve the quality of higher education by increasing the GER (Mishra, 2019).

In conclusion, the Gross Enrollment Ratio is an essential indicator for measuring a country's progress in the field of education. While India has made significant progress in increasing its GER, there are still several challenges that need to be addressed. The actions of the government Raising the bar for education and increasing access to postsecondary education are both constructive steps in the right direction. It is hoped that they will help India achieve its goal of becoming a knowledge-based economy.

Current Status of GER in India:

As per the latest report by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, the overall GER in higher education in India was estimated to be 27.1% in 2019-20 (Ministry of Education, 2021). However, there are significant disparities in GER across different states and categories of institutions. For instance, the GER in Kerala is the highest at 37.5%, while Bihar has the lowest GER of 14.9% (Ministry of Education, 2021). Similarly, the GER in private institutions is much higher than in government institutions, indicating the growing role of private players in higher education (Mishra, 2019).

Gross Enrolment Ratio at Higher Education level (18 to 23 years) 2016-17 to 2020-21									
	ALL			Scheduled Castes			Scheduled Tribes		
State/UTs	Female	Male	Both	Female	Male	Both	Female	Male	Both
INDIA									
2020-21	27.9	26.7	27.3	23.9	22.4	23.1	19.1	18.8	18.9
2019-20	26.4	24.8	25.6	23.2	21.5	22.3	17	17	17
2018-19	25.5	24.4	24.9	22.8	21.4	22	16.1	16.7	16.4
2017-18	24.6	24.5	24.6	21	21	21	14.5	16	15.3
2016-17	23.8	24.3	24.1	19.9	20.8	20.3	13.9	15.8	14.8

Source: AIHES, Ministry of Education (different years).

State-specific GER at Higher Education Level: 2016-17 to 2020-21

State-specific Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at the Higher Education level in India varies significantly across different states and categories of institutions. Kerala has the greatest GER at 37.5%, while Bihar has the lowest GER at 14.9%, based on data from the 2016–2017 to 2020–2021 All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE). (Ministry of Education, 2021).

The GER in private institutions is much higher than in government institutions, indicating the growing role of private players in higher education (Mishra, 2019). This could be due to the better infrastructure, quality of education, and placements provided by private institutions compared to government institutions.

It is essential to note that the data on GER at the state level is crucial for policymakers and institutions to identify the areas that require improvement and allocate resources accordingly. Additionally, this data can help understand the socioeconomic factors that influence the enrollment rate in higher education institutions in different regions of the country (Jain & Pal, 2020).

The State-specific Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for the years 2016–2017 to 2020–2021 at the Indian Higher Education level is presented in the table below (AIHES, Ministry of Education).

State/Uts	Female	Male	Both
India	27.9	26.7	27.3
Andhra Pradesh	23.3	21.3	22.4
Arunachal Pradesh	12.2	13.5	12.8
Assam	18.4	18.1	18.2
Bihar	11.1	18.7	14.9
Chattisgarh	23.1	24.5	23.8
Goa	28.5	25.1	26.7
Gujrat	25.1	25.7	25.4
Haryana	29.3	30.3	29.8
Himachal Pradesh	28.7	26.3	27.5
Jammu & Kashmir	14.7	15.2	15
Jharkhand	15.2	19.3	17.2
Karnataka	27.2	24.8	26
Kerala	43.3	32.1	37.5
Madhya Pradesh	20.4	22.8	21.7
Maharashtra	25.9	25.2	25.5
Manipur	15.6	13.4	14.5
Meghalaya	20.4	18.3	19.3
Mizoram	19.6	19.6	19.6
Nagaland	15.2	16.5	15.8
Odisha	23.5	24.3	23.9
Panjab	30.7	24.9	27.7
Rajasthan	20.9	23.3	22
Sikkim	26.2	23.4	24.8
Tamil Nadu	30.4	24.9	27.8
Telangana	23.6	22.1	22.9
Tripura	19.4	19.2	19.3
Uttar Pradesh	21.1	21.9	21.5
Uttarakhand	28.7	25.2	26.9
West Bengal	25.2	21.9	23.5

Source: AIHES, Ministry of Education

The table shows the GER for pupils, both female and male in different states and union territories of India. As per the table, Kerala has the highest GER for pupils, both female and male students at 37.5%, while Bihar has the lowest GER at 14.9%. The data also shows that there are significant differences in GER across states and categories of institutions, with private institutions having a higher GER than government institutions.

The Indian higher education sector's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), broken down by state, is shown in the table for the years 2016–2017 through 2020–2021. The Graduate Enrollment Ratio (GER) is the proportion of students enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions to the eligible population within a given age range.

The GER for male and female students in various Indian states and union territories is displayed in the table. The data in the table reveals that there are significant variations in the GER across different states and categories of institutions. Kerala has the highest GER for both male and female students at 37.5%. It is followed by Haryana, where the GER is 29.8%. On the other hand, Bihar has the lowest GER of 14.9%, which is less than half of that of Kerala.

The data also shows a gender disparity in enrollment in higher education institutions in India. The GER for male students is 26.7%, while that for female students is 27.9%. However, the table reveals variations in the GER for male and female students across different states. For instance, in Kerala, the GER for female students is 43.3%, which is much higher than that for male students at 32.1%. In contrast, in Bihar, the GER for male students is 18.7%, which is significantly higher than for female students at 11.1%.

It is important to note that private institutions have a higher GER than government institutions. This indicates the growing role of private players in the higher education sector in India. The data in the table also highlights the need for targeted interventions to promote female education, particularly in certain states and socio-economic groups. In conclusion, the state-specific GER for higher education level in India provides valuable insights into the enrollment patterns across different states and categories of institutions. The data reveals significant variations in GER across different states, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to improve access to higher education in certain regions.

Challenges in Achieving Higher GER:

The low enrollment of female students in higher education institutions is one of the main obstacles to reaching greater GER in India. As per the latest data, the GER for male students is 29.2%, while that for female students is only 24.5% (Ministry of Education, 2021). This gender disparity is more pronounced in certain states and socio-economic groups, indicating the need for targeted interventions to promote female education (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 2018).

The dearth of high-quality faculty and facilities in many universities, especially those in rural areas, is another problem. This has led to a brain drain and the loss of tremendous potential as many students are opting to continue their further education abroad (Mishra, 2019).

Challenges Faced in Higher Education in India:

1. Limited Access to Education: One of the primary challenges in higher education in India is limited access to education, particularly in rural areas (Mishra, 2019). This is due to inadequate infrastructure, a lack of resources, and a shortage of qualified teachers.

2. High Costs: Another significant challenge is the high cost of education, which makes it difficult for students from economically weaker sections to pursue higher education (Jain & Pal, 2020). The cost of education includes tuition fees, accommodation, and other expenses, which can be a significant burden for many families.

3. Social and Cultural Factors: Cultural and social aspects are also very important in limiting access to education, particularly for women and marginalized communities (Mishra, 2019). Discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, and ethnicity can prevent many students from pursuing higher education.

4. Quality of Education: Despite the increasing Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), the quality of education provided in higher education institutions in India remains a significant concern (Mishra, 2019). Many institutions lack adequate facilities, qualified teachers, and modern teaching methods, thereby causing a drop in educational quality.

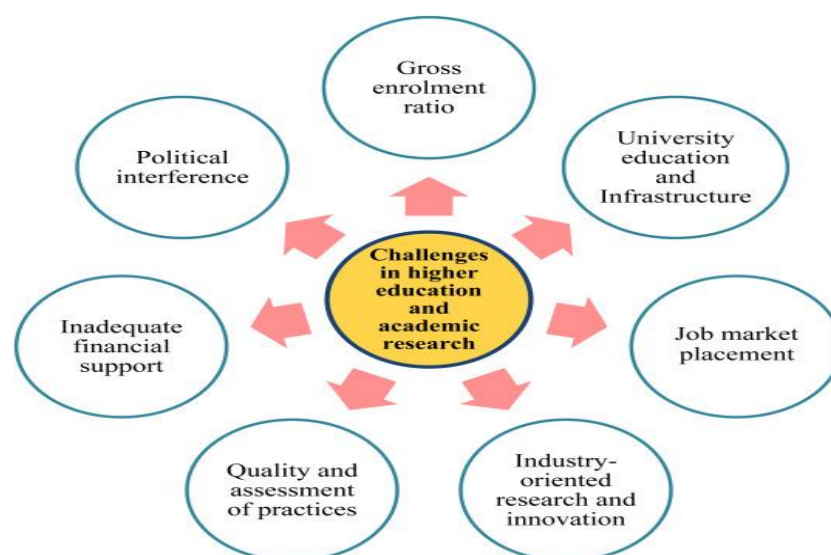
One of the research gaps in the study of GER at the higher education level in India is the lack of attention to the quality of education provided (Singh & Srivastava, n.d.). The GER has been rising gradually, but educational quality has not kept up with this increase. Consequently, it is imperative to investigate the variables influencing the caliber of education offered in postsecondary educational establishments and devise strategies to enhance it. Furthermore, research is required to determine how India's growing higher education sector is affected by the country's growing number of educational institutions.

5. Inadequate Funding: Inadequate funding is another significant challenge faced by higher education institutions in India (Jain & Pal, 2020). The government's funding for education has remained stagnant over the years, which has resulted in a shortage of resources and infrastructure in many institutions.

Role of school education in higher education

An individual's future and capacity for success in postsecondary education are significantly shaped by their education in school. A 2010 study by Stearns and Glennie found a direct correlation between high school academic preparation and college success. According to the study, high school College success was more likely for students who completed advanced coursework, such as Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

Furthermore, students are better prepared to tackle the demands of higher education when they have a solid foundation in fundamental areas like math and science during their schooling. Students who completed advanced math and scientific classes in high school had a higher likelihood of majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) in college, according to National Scientific Foundation (NSF) research (NSF, 2017). Apart from preparing students academically, education in schools is also essential for the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Success in both the workforce and higher education requires these abilities. A Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) survey states that businesses view Communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities are necessary for success in the job (P21, n.d.).



Source: <https://www.drishtias.com/daily-news-editorials/higher-education-in-india-3>

In conclusion, school education plays a significant role in preparing students for success in higher education. Students who receive a strong academic foundation, take advanced courses, and develop essential skills during their school education are better equipped to succeed in college and their future careers.

India's higher education system is influenced by the following factors:

- 1. Faculty shortage:** The lack of experienced and qualified faculty personnel is one of the main concerns impacting the quality of higher education in India (Kumar, 2019).
- 2. Outdated curriculum:** Another important factor is the outdated curriculum, which does not equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge required in the current job market (Sahu, 2019).
- 3. Inadequate infrastructure:** Lack of infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, and technology-enabled classrooms also affects the quality of education (Jain & Pal, 2020).
- 4. Low research output:** The low research output of higher education institutions in India is another factor affecting the quality of education (Mishra, 2019).
- 5. Limited industry interaction:** Limited interaction between higher education institutions and industry also affects the quality of education as it does not provide students with practical exposure and hands-on experience (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 2018).
- 6. Lack of autonomy:** Government regulations and interference in higher education institutions affect their autonomy and hinder their ability to innovate and raise the standard of instruction (Kumar, 2019).
- 7. Quality assurance mechanisms:** Inadequate quality assurance mechanisms in higher education institutions also affect the quality of education (Sahu, 2019).

Impact of increased GER in Higher Education in India

- 1. Providing Career Counseling:** Schools can play an important role in guiding and counseling students about higher education options and career paths. By providing information about various courses and colleges, schools can help students make informed decisions about their future (Kumar & Singh, 2018).
- 2. Offering Remedial Classes:** Many students in India face challenges in transitioning from school to higher education due to the differences in teaching methodologies and syllabus. Schools can help bridge this gap by offering remedial classes and coaching for students to improve their academic performance (Kumar & Singh, 2018).

3. Encouraging Extracurricular Activities: Participation in extracurricular activities can enhance a student's skills and abilities, which can be useful in higher education. Students can engage in sports and cultural events through the schools., and other events that can help them develop leadership, communication, and teamwork skills (Kumar & Singh, 2018).

4. Providing Access to Technology: With the increasing use of technology in higher education, schools need to provide access to computers, internet, and other digital resources. By providing access to technology, schools can help students develop computer literacy skills, which are essential for success in higher education (Kumar & Singh, 2018).

5. Fostering a Research Culture: Schools can encourage a research culture among students by providing opportunities for them to conduct research projects and participate in science fairs and other competitions. This can help students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills, which are important for success in higher education (Kumar & Singh, 2018).

India's economic and social development may be significantly impacted by higher education's increased GER. A study by Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (2018) found that having more education can result in greater job possibilities, higher income, and improved productivity, which can contribute to economic growth. Moreover, higher education can play a crucial role in reducing social and economic inequalities by providing equal opportunities for all sections of society (Jain & Pal, 2020). In addition, growth in GER may also result in a greater need for qualified workers across a range of industries, assisting India's transition to a knowledge-based economy (Mishra, 2019).

However, it is essential to ensure that the quality of education provided in higher education institutions is also improved along with an increase in GER (Mishra, 2019). This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure, providing quality faculty, and implementing effective teaching methods (Jain & Pal, 2020).

Strategies to Raise the Standard of Education in India

1. Enhance Faculty Development Programs: Faculty development programs can be designed to help teachers acquire new teaching techniques and skills. These programs can help teachers design and deliver courses that are more engaging, interactive, and student-centered (Gupta & Gupta, 2020).

2. Modernize Curriculum and Pedagogy: Curriculum and pedagogy need to be updated to make education more meaningful and relevant to students. New courses and modules can be introduced that focus on emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and digital marketing (Jain & Pal, 2020).

3. Encourage Collaborative Learning: Collaborative learning can be encouraged to promote peer-to-peer learning among students. Group projects, team assignments, and discussions can be designed to help students learn from each other and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Gupta & Gupta, 2020).

4. Promote Research and Innovation: To motivate instructors and students to participate in cutting-edge research and development, higher education institutions must support research and innovation. This could aid in the development of new products, information, and technologies that could advance the economy of the nation (Jain & Pal, 2020).

5. Improve Infrastructure and Technology: Infrastructure and technology need to be upgraded to provide students with a conducive learning environment. This can include the provision of modern classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and digital infrastructure that supports e-learning and remote learning (Gupta & Gupta, 2020).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, GER is an important metric that reflects the state of higher education in India. While the overall GER has improved in recent years, there are significant disparities across different states and categories of institutions, as well as gender disparities. Addressing these challenges will require a multi-pronged approach that focuses on improving the quality of education, promoting equity and inclusion, and leveraging technology to enhance access and affordability.

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