

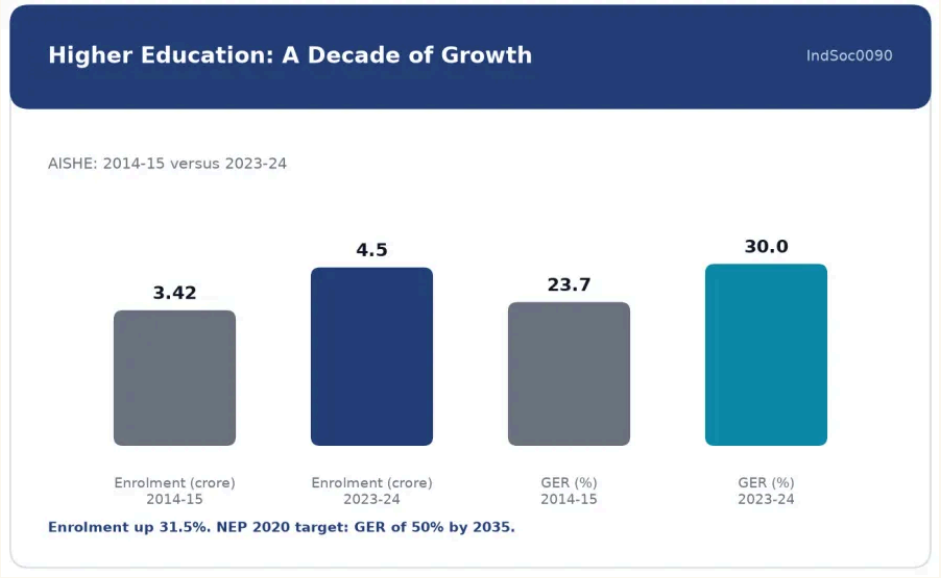
MCQ Question · mcqquestion.com

India’s Higher Education Sector: A Decade of Growth

Free · Share

India’s Higher Education Sector: A Decade of Growth

Picture a college gate in 2014. Now picture the same gate today, with far more students walking in. **This is the story of how India’s campuses filled up in ten years, and who is now walking through.**



Enrolment and GER, 2014-15 versus 2023-24 (AISHE).

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
Enrolment

3.42 crore (2014-15) to 4.50 crore (2023-24).

02
GER

23.7% to about 30%. NEP target is 50% by 2035.

03
Institutions

Universities up from 760 to 1,289.

04
Women

Female enrolment up 42.2% to 2.24 crore.

AISHEAll India Survey on Higher Education. The yearly count by the Ministry of Education.
GERGross Enrolment Ratio. Students enrolled per 100 young people of college age.
GPIGender Parity Index. Female enrolment divided by male enrolment.
STEMScience, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Chapter 1: Counting the Campus

Must Know

What counts as higher education?

- Higher education is any study after class 12.
- It covers degrees, diplomas and doctorates, from a B.A. in history to a B.Tech.
- It happens in three kinds of places: universities, colleges and standalone institutions.
- Think of school as the foundation of a building. Higher education builds the floors above it.
- It is the main road to skilled jobs, research and growth.

How do we know the numbers?

- The Ministry of Education runs **AISHE** every year.
- Every college and university reports its students, teachers and courses.
- The ministry joins these reports into one national scorecard.
- AISHE works like a census for education. A census counts people so the state can plan. AISHE counts learners so the country can plan classrooms.
- The latest report covers 2023-24.

Chapter 2: The Crowd at the Gate

Must Know

More students than ever

- In 2014-15, India had about 3.42 crore students in higher education.
- By 2023-24, the number was 4.50 crore.
- That is a rise of about 31.5% in ten years.
- It means over one crore extra students.

- Picture a stadium that held 3.4 lakh fans. Now it holds 4.5 lakh.
- More colleges, more seats and families who value study all pushed the number up.

What GER tells us

- GER shows how many young people of college age are actually in college.
- The formula is students enrolled ÷ population aged 18-23 × 100.
- India's GER rose from 23.7% to about 30%.
- A GER of 30 means about 30 of every 100 young people are enrolled.
- Think of 100 seats for a village's youth. Only 30 are filled.
- The NEP 2020 target is a GER of **50% by 2035**.
- GER can mislead a little. It also counts older or younger students outside the age group.

Remember: GER counts students per 100 of college age. It does not count buildings.

> **Quick check 1.** India's higher-education GER rose from 23.7% to about 30% between 2014-15 and 2023-24. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Chapter 3: New Doors Open

Good to Know

More places to study

Type	2014-15	2023-24
Universities	760	1,289
Colleges	38,498	48,246
Standalone institutions	12,276	15,221

- Universities grew by 69.6%. Colleges grew by 25.3%.
- Say a city has 10 schools and needs 20. Adding 7 is a 70% jump. That is the scale of university growth.
- New colleges in smaller towns bring study closer to home.
- Standalone institutions give diplomas and certificates, so more kinds of learners find a place.

Women move to the front

- Female enrolment rose from 1.57 crore to 2.24 crore. That is a 42.2% jump.
- It grew faster than total enrolment, so women's share of students rose.

- Women are now about half of all students: 2.24 crore of 4.50 crore.
- The **Gender Parity Index** rose from 0.92 to 1.08.
- A GPI of 1 means equal numbers. Below 1, men are ahead. Above 1, women are ahead.
- At 1.08, there are about 108 young women enrolled for every 100 young men.
- It is a ratio of GER, not of head-count.
- Why does it matter? Educated women mean better health, smaller families, more skilled workers and more equality.
- See the girl-child schemes behind this trend in Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana.

Who else walks through the gate?

Group	Share in 2014-15	Share in 2023-24
SC	13.44%	15.5%
ST	4.8%	6.4%
OBC	32.8%	40.1%

- OBC share saw the largest gain of any group.
- Scholarships, reservation and nearby colleges all helped.
- Groups once left out are now on campus. That makes the system fairer.

> **Quick check 2.** India's GPI in higher education fell from 1.08 to 0.92 over the decade. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Chapter 4: Engineers, Teachers and Foreign Students

Great to Know

The knowledge economy grows

- STEM enrolment rose from 91.5 lakh to about 1.02 crore, up about 11.5%.
- Teachers rose from 14.73 lakh to 17.32 lakh, with more women among them.
- A country that wants more roads and bridges needs more engineers. A country that wants more engineers needs more teachers.
- More foreign students are also coming. That shows India is becoming a study destination.
- The result is a system that is more capable and more global.

> **Think it through: why can GER rise even when the number of colleges grows slowly?**
> GER counts students, not buildings. Existing colleges can add seats, run evening shifts or offer distance courses. More students then enrol without new campuses. Quality can suffer if teachers and labs do not grow too.

> **Quick check 3.** GER measures how many colleges a country has per 100 students. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Chapter 5: The Roadmap and the Catch

Great to Know

NEP 2020: the roadmap

- If education is a journey, **NEP 2020** is the new map.
- Its headline goal is a GER of 50% by 2035.
- It backs flexible courses, multidisciplinary study, vocational exposure and multiple exit points.
- It links to Sustainable Development Goal 4, quality education for all.
- The AISHE numbers are the progress report. The rising GER, female enrolment and inclusion figures match the policy's aims.
- Read the policy in National Education Policy 2020.

The catch: growth is not even

- A rising tide lifts most boats, but not all equally.
- Some states, districts and groups still lag.
- Male enrolment still exceeds female among persons with benchmark disability.
- Labs, libraries and faculty quality differ widely between institutions.
- Experts say quantity is growing faster than quality.
- The next goal is not just more students, but good education for every one of them.

> **Quick check 4.** NEP 2020 aims to raise the higher-education GER to 50% by 2035. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Exam Edge

Previous Year Questions

NEP 2020 is a favourite for statement-based questions.

In the News: A Decade of Growth, 2026

Current Affairs

Fee certainty in professional courses, October 2026

[SC Ruling] In October 2026, a Supreme Court Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe barred **mid-course fee hikes** in professional courses. Exceptions cover only unforeseeable economic conditions or changes in law. The authorities must notify the fee for the **whole course** before admission. (Source: The Hindu.)

PIB factsheet

- On 30 August 2026, PIB released a factsheet titled “A Decade of Growth, Access, and Inclusion”.
- It repeats the AISHE 2023-24 figures: 4.50 crore students and GER near 30%.
- It ties the numbers to NEP 2020 and SDG 4.
- It highlights women outnumbering men and the rising share of SC, ST and OBC students.
- Source: PIB, India’s Higher Education Sector.
- The official view celebrates growth. Independent reports warn that quality lags and benefits are uneven. A fair reading welcomes the progress and watches the gaps.

Quick Q&A

Total enrolment?

4.50 crore in 2023-24.

GER now?

About 30%.

NEP GER goal?

50% by 2035.

GPI 2023-24?

1.08.

Universities?

1,289.

Practice: higher education growth

5 verified questions from this topic.

More Indian Society Practice

Related Topics

All Indian Society Articles

National Education Policy 2020

GK0080 — Education in India

IndSoc0012 — Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana: Girl Child Schemes

IndSoc0081 — Population Education: Objectives and Measures in India

Practice MCQs

1. NEP 2020 targets a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 50% in higher education by 2035. What was India's GER at the time of the policy's approval, and what is the recommended public education spending target?

A. 20.1%; 5% of GDP

B. 26.3%; 4.5% of GDP

C. 30.5%; 4% of GDP

D. 26.3%; 6% of GDP

See answer ↓

2. Under NEP 2020's Four-Year Undergraduate Programme, what does a student receive after exiting in the second year?

A. A bachelor's degree

B. A research degree

C. A certificate

D. A diploma

See answer ↓

3. Consider the following statements concerning the National Education Policy, 2020:

1. At least 50 percent of learners through the school and higher education system are to get exposure to vocational education by 2025.

2. Secondary schools should collaborate with ITIs, Polytechnics and local industries.

3. Vocational education is to be exclusively provided by NGOs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

See answer ↓

4. In August 2025, a Parliamentary Standing Committee recommended which quota structure for private higher education?

A. No quotas, only voluntary targets

B. 27% OBC, 15% SC, 7.5% ST

C. 50% OBC, 20% SC, 10% ST

D. 10% OBC, 10% SC, 10% ST

See answer ↓

5. Under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, what is the minimum number of villages each participating Higher Education Institution must adopt?

A. 3

B. 1

C. 10

D. 5

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **D.** NEP 2020 aimed to raise GER from 26.3% to 50% by 2035, and recommended public education spending reach 6% of GDP — a target actual spending (around 3.5-4%) still hasn't met. ↑ Q1
2. **D.** The FYUP's exit points are: certificate after one year, diploma after two years, bachelor's degree after three years, and a research degree after four years. ↑ Q2
3. **B.** NEP 2020 genuinely sets the 50% vocational exposure target by 2025 and calls for secondary schools to partner with ITIs, polytechnics, and local industry. It never says vocational education must be exclusively run by NGOs. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** The Committee recommended 27% OBC, 15% SC, and 7.5% ST reservation, funded by the government. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** Each participating institute must adopt at least 5 villages under UBA, working with local communities to identify and address development challenges using appropriate technology. ↑ Q5

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2
3. **False.** ↑ 3
4. **True.** ↑ 4

Curated by Arsalan Zuberi · mcqquestion.com

Scan to read online

https://mcqquestion.com/articles/indsoc0090-indias-higher-education-sector-a-decade-of-growth/