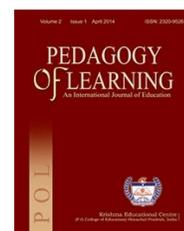


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Higher Education in Punjab: Growth of Institutions and Enrolment Trends

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Abstract

The analysis of data pertaining to the growth of higher educational institutions in the state of Punjab clearly reflects that in the recent years there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of institutions imparting higher education in the state. This growth has been witnessed in both professional institutions and general higher education institutions. However, the growth has been quite rapid in the case of professional institutions especially in the field of engineering and teacher education. One significant factor contributing towards this upsurge in the number of institutions has been the entry of private entrepreneurs in the field of higher education. The expansion in the number of higher education institutions has without doubt contributed in increasing accessibility to higher education at various levels. However, despite a rapid increase in the total number of students entering into higher education, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the state is not much above the national average. Therefore, there is a need for a better planning in developing higher education in the state so that any increment in number of institutions must also translate in improving enrolment rate. In this regard, the needs of those sections of the society who are not participating in higher education must be addressed on priority basis.

Keywords: *Higher Education, Professional institutions, Accessibility, Enrolment*

Introduction

The higher education has a very significant role in the overall development of any society. The experiences of many countries in the last decades or so have convinced many policymakers that mere physical capital resources are not enough for developing

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a nation; improvement of the quality of people is a necessary condition for achieving sustained and accelerated development (Lakshmanasamy, 2004:6). The higher education provides not only the high level skills necessary for every labour market, but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists and myriad personnel. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective governments and make important decisions which affect entire societies (World Bank, 2002:ix). Thus, higher education contributes not only to the national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills but also brings about attitudinal changes for modernisation and social transformation leading to formation of strong nation-state and promotion of higher quality of individual and social life (CABE, 2005:8). Therefore, the world over, lot of efforts are being made in order to expand the higher education system by opening new colleges and universities and to increase the participation rate in higher education by ensuring the inclusion of students from the disadvantaged sections of the society and India is not an exception.

Growth of Higher Education in India: An Overview

The higher education in India has witnessed many fold increase in its institutional capacity since independence. The number of universities in the country has increased from 27 in 1950-51 to 621 in 2010-11 and further to 711 in 2014-15 (GOI, 2016:30). Similarly, the number of colleges has shown phenomenal growth, from 578 in 1950-51 to 32,974 in 2010-11 and further to 40,760 colleges in 2014-15 (ibid.).

Further, there has been significant increase in the number of teachers at higher education level. The number of teachers has gone up from meagre fifteen thousands to more than nine lakhs from during the period from 1950 to 2012. In 2014-15, the number of teachers stood at 14 lakh, with 39% female teachers. Similarly, as against 2 lakh students in 1950-51, the total enrolment in higher education in 2014-15 was 3.33 crore, comprising 1.79 crore boys and 1.54 crore girls (ibid.).

Out of the total enrolment of about 3.33 crore, 37.41% students were enrolled in Arts, 17.59% enrolled in Science, 16.39% enrolled in Commerce and Management, and the remaining 28.61% were pursuing professional courses, including Engineering/Technology (16.27%), followed by Medical courses (4.02%) (ibid.).

However, despite such a significant growth of higher education in the country, the region-wise and state-wise distribution of higher education institutions in India is not even. An analysis of region-wise distribution of colleges vis-à-vis the population in the age group 18-23 reveals that maximum number of colleges (33%) are located in the southern region of India, followed by central region (22%), western region (19%), eastern region (11.5%) and northern region (10.5%). The north-eastern region accounts for only 3.5 per cent of the colleges in India (UGC, 2011).

In this context, the present paper is a humble endeavour to study the growth of higher education institutions in the state of Punjab along with analysing the enrolment patterns in different general and professional higher education courses. In this paper, the general higher education refer to the graduate and post-graduate courses in arts, sciences,

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commerce and home science, whereas the professional courses comprise of courses such as M.B.B.S, B.Ed. and graduate courses in engineering/technology and architecture.

Growth of Higher Education Institutions in Punjab

In Punjab, almost all types of higher education institutions exist. These institutions include universities, institutions of national importance, colleges imparting general education, professional colleges etc. The students are not only being imparted general education in humanities, social sciences, physical sciences and life sciences, but also technical and professional education in engineering, medicine, veterinary sciences, law, education, agriculture etc. These different types of institutions have registered significant growth in past years. An account of the growth trajectory of different types of institutions in Punjab has been given below.

Growth of Universities

There has been a significant increase in the number of universities in Punjab in recent years. In the year 1971, there were only 3 universities in Punjab. However, this number remained static for a long time. With the establishment of Punjab Technical University (1997) at Jalandhar and Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (1998) at Faridkot, the number of universities in the state increased to six (Table 1).

Table 1: Universities in Punjab

Name of University	Year of Establishment
1. Panjab University, Chandigarh	1947
2. Punjabi University, Patiala	1962
3. Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana	1962
4. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar	1969
5. Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar	1997
6. Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot	1998
7. Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Science University, Ludhiana	2006
8. Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala	2006
9. Lovely Professional University, Phagwara	2006
10. Guru Granth Sahib University, Fatehgarh Sahib	2008
11. Central University of Punjab, Bathinda	2009
12. Guru Ravidas University of Ayurveda, Hoshiarpur	2009
13. Chitkara University, Rajpura	2010
14. Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo	2011
15. Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh	2012
16. Chandigarh University, Kharar	2012
17. Adesh University, Bathinda	2012
18. D.A.V. University, Jalandhar	2013

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19. Rayat- Bhara University, Mohali	2014
20. Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University, Bathinda	2015
21. Sant Baba Bhag Singh University, Khiala	2015
22. G.N.A. University , Phagwara	2015
23. Akal University, Talwandi Sabo	2015
24. RIMT University, MandiGobindgarh	2015
25. Guru Ram Das University of Health Sciences, Amritsar	2016
26. Khalsa University, Amritsar	2016

Source: Based on the Government notifications and information from the websites of the respective Universities.

The initiation of the process of economic liberalisation at national level also influenced the policy paradigms of the state government in different sectors including higher education. A significant outcome of such policy shifts has been an emphasis on the expansion of higher education and involvement of the private sector in such an expansion. As a result of these policy initiatives, within a time span of ten years, eight new universities were established in the state raising the number of universities to fourteen in the year 2011 (Table 2). At present there are 26 universities in the state (Table 2).

Among these universities, eleven are the public universities and fifteen are private universities (Table 3 & Figure 1). From amongst the public universities established in post-liberalisation period, six universities have been established by the state act. These are: Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar; Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot; Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala; Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Ludhiana; Guru Ravidas University of Ayurveda, Hoshiarpur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University, Bathinda.

Table 2: Growth of Universities in Punjab since 1970-71

Year	Number of Universities
1971	4
1981	4
1991	4
2001	6
2011	14
2014	19
2015	24
2016	26

Source: Based on Table 1

A central university namely the Central University of Punjab has been established at Bathinda in 2009 by the act of parliament (Table 1). An important characteristic of the recent growth of public universities in Punjab has been that except the Central University of Punjab, all the six public universities established are specialised universities

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dealing with technical education, medical education, legal education, veterinary education and Ayurvedic education.

Another important dimension of the growth of universities in Punjab in recent years has been the emergence of private universities. All these private universities have been established in the last eight years beginning with the establishment of Lovely Professional University, Phagwara in 2006 (Table 1). Other private universities are Guru Granth Sahib University, Fatehgarh Sahib; Chitkara University, Rajpura; Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh; Chandigarh University, Kharar; Adesh University, Bathinda; Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo; D.A.V. University, Jalandhar; Rayat-Bhara University, Mohali; G.N.A. University, Phagwara; Sant Baba Bhag Singh University, Khiala; Jalandhar; Akal University, Talwandi Sabo; RIMT University, Mandi Gobindgarh; Guru Ram Das University of Health Sciences, Amritsar and Khalsa University, Amritsar. (Table 1). The policy of promoting private initiative in education in the post-liberalisation era has therefore significantly contributed towards the growth of universities in Punjab.

Table 3: Number of Different Types of Universities in Punjab

Type of University	Number
Central University	1
State Universities	10
Private Universities	15
Deemed Universities	2

Source: Based on Table 1

Along with these universities, two deemed to be universities namely Thapar University, Patiala and Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology, Longowal are also functioning in the state and are imparting technical education (Table 3 & Figure 1).

Institutes of National Importance

In Punjab, there are three Institutes of National Importance engaged in research and imparting specialised knowledge. These institutes are Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mohali, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) Mohali and National Institute of Technology (NIT) Jalandhar.

Further, another important development in the higher education sector of Punjab is the establishment of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) at Ropar. This IIT has been established by the central government under Eleventh Five Year Plan in 2009. Recently, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) has been established at Amritsar.

In Punjab, there exist almost all types of colleges imparting general and professional education. But their growth trajectory is not uniform. During the period from 1970-71 to 1990-91, the number of general education colleges registered a noteworthy increase. However, during this period, no major growth of professional institutions took place in the state. But since 1990-91, there has been a spurt in the number of professional colleges in the state.

Table 4; Growth of Colleges in Punjab

Year	Arts/Science/ Commerce/ Home Science Colleges	Engineering/ Technology and Architecture Colleges	Medical Colleges (Allopathic Only)	Education Colleges
1970-71	122	2	4	17
1980-81	162	3	5	17
1990-91	171	3	5	18
2000-01	204	16	6	22
2005-06	232	39	6	122
2010-11	234	84	8	185
2013-14	240	84	8	187

Source: Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (Various Years)

The number of colleges imparting general education i.e. education in arts/sciences/commerce etc. increased from 122 in 1970-71 to 162 in 1980-81 and then to 171 in 1990-91. In 2000-01 the number of these colleges was 204 which subsequently went up to 240 in 2013-14 (Table 4 & Figure 2).

As per the latest data procured from the official websites of DPI (Colleges) Punjab and different affiliating universities, there are 300 colleges imparting general higher education in the state. From amongst these colleges 48 are government colleges, 136 are government-aided private colleges, 95 private colleges and 21 university colleges (Table 5).

Table 5: Different Types of Colleges in Punjab

	Colleges Imparting General Higher Education	Professional Colleges		
		Engineering/ Architecture Colleges	Medical Colleges	Education Colleges
Government Colleges	48	5	2	4
University Colleges	21	4	1	1
Government-aided Private Colleges	136	-	-	15
Private Self-Financing Colleges	95	94	5	185
Total Colleges	300	103	8	205

Sources: Official websites of Directorate of Public Instructions (www.dpipunjab.org), Panjab University (www.puchd.ac.in), Punjabi University (www.punjabiuniversity.ac.in), Guru Nanak Dev University (www.gndu.ac.in), Punjab Technical University (www.ptu.ac.in) & Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (www.bfuhs.ac.in).

In accordance with the recommendations of the Eleventh Five Year Plan new colleges for imparting general higher education have been recently established in educationally backward districts of state. The state government with the grant from the central

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government has got these colleges established by three universities viz. Punjab University, Punjabi University and Guru Nanak Dev University. Punjab University has established four colleges within its jurisdiction at Sikhwala (Sri Muktsar Sahib), Balachaur (SBS Nagar), Nihal Singh Wala (Moga) and Guru Harsahai (Ferozepur). Similarly, Punjabi University established 7 Colleges at Ghanaur (Patiala), ChunniKalan (Fatehgarh Sahib), Moonak (Sangrur), Jaito (Faridkot), Dhilwan (Barnala), Sardulgarh (Mansa) and Ghudda (Bathinda). This university has established two more colleges at Meerpur (Patiala) and a girls' college at Mansa. Guru Nanak Dev University has established 5 colleges at Chung, Mithra, Verka, Narot Jaimal Singh and Patti. From the academic session 2016-2017, thirteen new colleges will start functioning at various places in the state of Punjab. This includes two specialized colleges, that is, an Arts and Sports College at Jalandhar and an Aeronautical college at Patiala. Besides, eleven new colleges will be opened at Pathankot, Nakodar, Sujampur, Gurdaspur, Ferozepur, Mansa, Sangrur, Barnala, Phillaur, Moga and Faridkot. The state government has to spend Rs. 6.5-14 crore on each of these eleven colleges for creating infrastructure, while the specialized colleges have been constructed by the state under the Rashtriya Uchtaar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) at a cost of Rs 26 crore each. These colleges (excluding the specialized ones) have been handed over to the Panjab University, Punjabi University and Guru Nanak Dev University (The Tribune, 2016).

On the other hand, as far as the growth of professional colleges in Punjab is concerned, the number of Engineering/Technology and Architecture colleges increased from 2 in 1970-71 to 3 in 1990-91 adding only one college. But afterwards, there has been a rapid growth in the number of these colleges, as their number increased to 16 in 2000-01 to 39 in 2005-06 and then to 84 in 2013-14 (Table 4 & Figure 2). As per the latest data available, the number of Engineering/Technology and Architecture colleges in the state stands at 103 (Table 5). Most of this growth in the number of Engineering/Technology and Architecture colleges could be easily attributed to the involvement of the private sector as the state government established only five technical institutions, whereas most of these institutions have been established by the private entrepreneurs. The number of allopathic medical colleges in the state however did not register a rapid growth, as their number increased just from four in 1970-71 to six in 2005-06 and then to eight in 2013-14 (Table 4 & Figure 2).

Further, there has been a phenomenal growth of education colleges in the state in the post-liberalisation period. The number of these colleges has increased from 18 in 1990-91 to 22 in 2000-01 and then to 122 in 2005-06 (Table 4). In the year 2013-2014, the number of these colleges has reached to 187 (Table 4 & Figure 2). The recent available data place the number of education colleges at 205 (Table 5). The analysis of this data shows that except one university department and a government college, all the education colleges established during the post-liberalisation period have been established by the private entrepreneurs. Thus, the above analysis of data pertaining to the growth of higher education institutions in the state of Punjab reveals that a striking feature of growth of professional education in Punjab is the significant role played by the private sector. Now the private institutions occupy the central position as far as the provision of professional education in the state is concerned.

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This rapid expansion of higher educational institutions in Punjab has without doubt led to increasing accessibility to higher education in the state. Such a situation may lead to a belief that there would also be a steep hike in the number of students entering into higher education institutions during these years. Therefore, in order to get an insight into the patterns of higher education participation in the state, the data pertaining to enrolment in higher education have also been analysed.

Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education in Punjab

The access to higher education is generally measured in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) which is a ratio of persons enrolled in higher education institutions to total population of the persons in age group of 18 to 23 years. The GER in higher education in Punjab is 26 per cent which is just above the national average GER of 23.6 percent. The further analysis of state specific data on GER in higher education reflects that Punjab is far behind the states of Tamil Nadu (44.8%); Telangana (39.9%); Manipur (38.5%); Uttarakhand (34.9%); Andhra Pradesh (29.9%); Sikkim (29.4%); Goa (27.7%); Maharashtra (27.6%); Kerala (27%) etc. which are having the GERs above the GER of Punjab (Table 6). Even the states adjoining the Punjab as Himachal Pradesh and Haryana are also having the GER in higher education considerably higher than Punjab with figure of 30.4 and 27.9 percent respectively (Table 6). Thus, despite the good economic state of Punjab the low GER in higher education is a matter of concern and needs a sound policy intervention both at the national as well as the state level.

Table 6: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education in India

State/ Union Territory	GER (%)	State/ Union Territory	GER (%)
Andhra Pradesh	29.9	Odisha	17.5
Arunachal Pradesh	26.0	Punjab	26.0
Assam	16.8	Rajasthan	19.7
Bihar	12.9	Sikkim	29.4
Chattisgarh	14.4	Tamil Nadu	44.8
Goa	27.7	Telangana	39.9
Gujarat	20.1	Tripura	16.4
Haryana	27.9	Uttar Pradesh	22.1
Himachal Pradesh	30.4	Uttarakhand	34.9
Jammu & Kashmir	26.0	West Bengal	17.1
Jharkhand	13.4	Chandigarh	55.6
Karnataka	26.1	Delhi	43.3
Kerala	27.0	Puducherry	31.2
Madhya Pradesh	19.6	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	11.4
Maharashtra	27.6	Dadar & Nagar Haveli	8.1
Manipur	38.5	Daman & Deo	5.3
Meghalaya	21.0	Lakshdweep	3.9
Mizoram	23.9	India	23.6
Nagaland	15.6		

Source: GOI (2015)

Enrolment Trends in Higher Education in Punjab

The enrolment patterns in higher education in Punjab were studied at graduation, post graduation and professional level. It was observed that with the increase in the number of colleges and universities in Punjab, the accessibility to higher education has at least increased in the state.

The number of students at the graduation level increased from 64850 in 1970-71 to 77732 in 1980-81 and to 78798 in 1990-91. This number further increased to 160405 in 2000-01, to 170729 in 2010-11 and further to 234684 in 2013-14 (Table 7). Similarly, the number of students at postgraduate level in the state also showed an increase. In 1970-71 there were 4471 students at the post-graduate level and their number got increased to 6667 in 1990-91 which is a steady growth. But within a decade there was a spurt in the enrolment of students and their number went up to 13497 in 2000-01 and to 23948 in 2010-11 (Table 7). Afterwards, also the growth showed an upward pattern and in 2013-14 the number of students pursuing a post-graduate course was placed at 40864 (Table 7).

Table 7: Enrolment Patterns in Higher Education in Punjab

Year	Number of students at Graduation level	Number of students at PG level	Number of students at Professional Level
1970-71	64850	4471	6610
1980-81	77732	6548	6621
1990-91	78798	6667	7743
2000-01	160405	13497	19412
2010-11	170729	23948	57301
2013-14	234684	40864	72896

Source: Statistical Abstracts of Punjab (Various Years).

Similarly, the number of students in the professional institutions in the state increased from 6610 in 1970-71 to 6621 in 1980-81 and further to 7743 in 1990-91 (Table 7). But, afterwards with the massive increase in the number of professional institutions in the post-liberalisation period, a four-fold increase in the number of students pursuing professional courses has been registered. Their number increased from 7743 in 1990-91 to 19412 in 2000-01 and in 2010-11 number of students in professional courses was 57301 and in 2013-14 the number increased to 72896 (Table 7).

Conclusion

The above analysis of data pertaining to the growth of higher educational institutions in the state of Punjab has clearly reflected that in the recent years there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of institutions imparting higher education in the state. This growth has been witnessed in both professional institutions and general higher education institutions. However, the growth has been quite rapid in the case of professional institutions especially in the field of engineering and teacher education. One significant factor contributing towards this upsurge in the number of institutions has been the entry of private entrepreneurs in the field of higher education. Most of the professional institutions established in the state recently have been established by private entrepreneurs with profit generation as their primary motive. As a result, we

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now witness a process of commercialization of professional education in the state. Moreover, the rapid increase in the number of private universities in the state in recent years has added another dimension to the changing scenario of higher education in the state.

The expansion in the number of higher education institutions has contributed in increasing accessibility to higher education at various levels. The enrolment trends bear a testimony to this fact. However, despite a rapid increase in the total number of students entering into higher education, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the state is not much above the national average. Therefore, there is a need for a better planning in developing higher education in the state so that any increment in number of institutions must also translate improving enrolment rate. In this regard, the needs of those sections of the society who are not participating in higher education must be addressed on priority basis.

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