

# **EDITORIAL ANALYSIS → 06 FEBRUARY 2023 → THE HINDU:**

## **EMPOWERMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION:**

- **Context:**
- The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21 uncovers a number of fascinating trends in the growth of the tertiary sector during the previous few years.
- **The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)**
- The Union Ministry of Education (MoE) has been conducting an annual online survey called AISHE to gauge the quality of higher education across the country since 2010–11. These are useful for carrying out research and forming informed political judgements for the expansion of the educational sector.
- A wide range of information is being gathered, including information on teachers, student enrollment, programmes, exam results, educational funding, and infrastructure.
- Indicators of educational development such Institution Density, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Pupil-Teacher Ratio, Gender Parity Index, and Per Student Expenditure will also be calculated using the data obtained by AISHE.
- **The AISHE 2021 Report's findings:**
- At the macro level, the increase in higher education enrollment increased by a factor of 7.3%, more than doubling, bringing the total number of students to 4.1 crore. There are 2.1 crore male students, barely more than the 2 crore female students. As a result, there are currently 48.7% more female students overall than there were previously.

- However, it is still far from ideal that students from disadvantaged social groups are included in the classroom. According to trends over the past five years, the increase in the percentage of Scheduled Tribe (ST) students to 5.8% was even less than the increase in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) share of the total number of students.
- Even worse, at this time the percentage of Muslims students declined marginally to 4.7% while the percentage of students from Scheduled Castes (SC) stayed constant at 14.3%. This growing divide across social groups is a major issue that has to be resolved right immediately.
- Surprisingly, female students outperform male students in higher education among the major disadvantaged groups. The statistics shows that more women than men are currently enrolled in higher education, with ST students having a proportion of 50.6% and Muslim students having an astonishing 50.2%. The percentage of female SC and OBC students is 49.2%, which is higher than the national average.
- Despite these advances on the gender front across nearly all key social groupings, the disparities in overall attendance rates across social categories still grow. Only 23.1% of SC students were enrolled in higher education in 2020–21, despite the national attendance rate being 27.2%. ST enrolment was still less than average, at 18.9%.
- **Even in this dire circumstance, two positive traits stand out:**
  - The enrollment rates for women were higher than those for males in each of these categories. More notably, across all social groups, the rates of female enrolment are currently increasing more swiftly than those of male enrollment, usually at a rate twice as fast as that of the latter.
  - The gender parity index (GPI), which has been hovering around 100 for the past four years, has been maintained, which is the most spectacular accomplishment on the higher education front.
  - The number of large states that have achieved gender parity climbed from 11 to 17 during the past five years, demonstrating the importance of these gender-related accomplishments. In addition, from twelve to six states still have not reached gender parity over that period.
- The ease with which men and women can obtain education is often compared using a socioeconomic indicator known as the Gender Parity Index (GPI).
- In its simplest form, it is calculated by dividing the number of female students enrolled in a specific educational stage by the number of male students (primary, secondary, etc.). The closer a nation's GPI is to one, the closer it is to ensuring equal access for men and women.

- GPI = 1 indicates equality for men and women.
- Men are favoured in terms of gender parity, according to GPI 1.
- GPI values greater than 1 indicate favourable gender parity for women.
- **Gross enrollment rate, or GER:**
- Despite the remarkable progress made towards achieving gender parity in higher education, the industry's development is still incredibly unbalanced, with the gross enrolment rate (GER) ranging greatly amongst the states. The GER in the states with the best performance was four times higher than that in the states with the lowest performance, per the data for 2016–17. By 2020–2021, the gap had almost tripled, yet it is still far too large to be acceptable.
- Another troubling element was the dramatic disparity in the rate of GER improvement. Between 2016–17 and 2020–21, the GER climbed by more than 10 percentage points in the states of Uttarakhand and Kerala, but only by 5–10 percentage points in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. ®



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