

# Higher Education In Rural Areas: Problems And Remedies

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**Abstract** *This paper seeks to analyze the present scenario of higher educational institutions in rural areas. The brings out the gap between rural and urban India in the field of education. It throws light on various causes that affect the quality of higher education in rural areas. These affairs clearly try to show institutions present educational qualities. It makes strong plea for bridging this gap through education and new perspectives in higher education.*

*Education is one of the most important factors in achieving the developmental goals of the country. It is the key to national development. A nation is shaped by the number and quality of students coming out of colleges. Higher education is of great importance for the all round development of the country. The institutes of higher education can serve as a bridge between the community and the government. Infact higher education is the backbone of all the societies. Quality of higher education decides the quality of human resources in the country. Higher education is the source of all walks of life and therefore supplies and needed human resources in management, planning teaching etc.*

**Methodology:** In this paper, the research is based on secondary data. The data is taken from different research reports, journals, websites and research papers.

## **Objectives of the study:**

1. To find out the status of higher education in rural areas

2. Problems of higher education in rural areas

3. Possible remedies of higher education in rural areas.

According to census 2011, of the 121 crore Indians 83.3 crore [68.8%] lives in rural areas. The centre for monitoring Indian economy has estimated the average income of rural households in the year 2012-13 at Rs.116, 672 which was about half the average household income in urban areas. According to socio-economic and cast census 2011[SECC 2011] manual casual labour[51%] and cultivation[30%] constitute the main source of income in rural households. About 9.7% of rural households run on salary income, 56% households are landless. 3/4 of rural Indians earn less than rs 5000 per month. In 74.5% of rural households, the highest earning member earns less than Rs.5000 per month. A household do have more than One earning member, means children also help their parents in earnings<sup>1</sup>.

Higher education has witnessed tremendous change since 1950. Higher education institutions whether universities or colleges have increased rapidly. According to an estimate, in 1950, there were 20 universities but in 2014, they are 677. The growth of universities has increased 34 times. .Out of 677 universities, 45 are central universities, 318 are state universities, 185 are State private institutions, 129 are deemed universities, 51 are institutes of national importance under MHRD, 4 are established under various state legislatures. Of these 200

are located in rural areas. The no. of colleges has also increased tremendously .the growth of colleges is 74 times than 1950.In 1950, there were 500 colleges while it is now 37,204. 54.3% of the colleges are located in rural areas<sup>2</sup>.

### Problems of higher education in rural areas

- **Allocation of funds:** The present level of investment is as low as 3.7%

Year	Central plan	State Plan	Total plan
IX Plan	2272	1724	3996
X Plan	4183	2771	6954
XI plan	40,000	27000	-Pg 22

- **Misuse of funds:** UGC provides financial assistance to the Universities and colleges for various development activities especially in rural areas where the local bodies are not so strong and the parents of students are not conscious.Sometimes,the funds earmarked for education are spent on more pressing sectors like irrigation,electricity,,drought relief etc.

- **Lack of adequate quality institutions:** The no. of colleges and other higher institutions located in rural areas are very few. Most of the colleges are located in hilly remote and backward areas. Technical institutes are rarely located in rural areas.

- **High cost of education:** People belonging to rural areas have meager incomes. Therefore; they cannot afford to send their children to colleges especially to

[union budget 2011] which was achieved 20 yrs ago<sup>3</sup>. Out of this budget, a big amount of it goes to the payment of the teacher’s salary & for the development of the elist world class institutes of higher learning, such as the IITS, AIIMs and Medical colleges that are located in urban areas. The left over amount is reserved for rural areas. The following Table shows the expenditure on education during three plans<sup>4</sup>.

technical institutes where cost of education is very high. Most of the children from such families assist the earning member of the family to add up some etc.income.Private schools or colleges are more expensive which deter parents to send their children to these colleges.

- **Higher Teacher student ratio:** This is also a peculiar feature of rural education. Although UGC has recommended a ideal ratio of 1:30 for the general undergraduate courses. But because of lesser no. of institutes in rural areas, more and more students are bound to enroll leading to high teacher student ratio. This effect the quality of education since teacher cannot pay full attention towards each and every student.

- **Problem of faculty:** The Quality of education depends on the qualified teachers. A peculiar feature of today’s education system is

the recruitment of teachers on contract or temporary basis at lower pay scale compare to permanent teacher. It has affected the quality of education. The faculty in rural areas is poorly paid and is not well qualified. The qualified teachers prefer better colleges in terms of input, standard teacher student ratio, better facilities etc. that are quite absent in rural areas.

• **Dropout rate very high:**

Dropout rate in rural areas is very high. It simply means leaving school or college life for practical reasons or necessity by any person, without completing the prescribed course. High dropout rate is high for many reasons like failure in exams, burden of family, financial reasons; attitude of parents towards higher education etc. Drop out rate is high during sowing or harvesting season when students help their parents in the fields.

• **Medium of instructions:**

Education system in India is bilingual. Two languages are compulsory for students to complete school or college life. In Govt. schools the medium of instruction is regional language while in Private schools it is in English. Since majority of schools are imparting education in mother tongue language, the student of these schools find it difficult to cope up or proceed to

Total	Rural	Urban
12.59	7.51	23.79
Males	males	Males
14.42	9.28	24.77
Females	Females	Females
10.57	5.67	22.56

The rural urban divide continues as urban GER is about 3 times higher than the rural. For women, it is 4 times higher whereas for urban men, it is about twice and a half higher than the rural men.

the higher level. Since most of the books are in English language, students do not understand resulting in lack of interest in studies.

• **Weak Primary education:** It is the foundation of a nation, which among other things depends on the status of its school going population. However, it is sad to note that quality of Indian school system in rural areas is very poor. When they go for higher education, they face a lot of difficulties. Most of the students find it difficult to pass the completion exams like NET, CET etc.

• **No College does admission test or screening of applications at the time of admission:**

Colleges in rural areas rarely conduct entrance test for admission. Whoever applies [interested or disinterested] gets admission to the college. Infact, most of the students are not academically prepared to carrier in higher education. They simply take admission for time pass or pressure of parents<sup>5</sup>.

• **Low Gross Enrolment rate [GER]:**

measures the access level by taking the ratio of persons of all age groups enrolled in various programmes to the total population in the age group between 18-23<sup>6</sup>.

• **Poor infrastructure:** According to NAAC, the higher institute of rural areas are lacking behind in different aspects as compared to the institutes of urban areas. For example in rural colleges facilities like teaching equipment, playground, canteen, common hall,



guestroom,computers,hostels,labs,lights,toilets,a auditoriums,libraries are not well maintained.

**Lack of proper transportation:**

Every village is not provided with schools means that students have to go to another village to get education. Most villages have poor connectivity from one place to another and that is often one of the main reasons why despite efforts by local governing bodies to build schools or colleges, often go in vain.

Growth of private institutions in India<sup>7</sup>.

Year	Total no. of higher education institutes		No. of Private institutes	
	Universities	Colleges	Universities	Colleges
2011-12	642	34852	195	25442
2012-13	665	35829	201	17626

**Remedies:** Textbooks related to education should be made more interesting. In case of rural areas, textbooks related to their culture, their tradition and values should be there so as to create students interest in studies.

Improve the conditions of government schools.

Highly qualified and committed Teachers should be hired, and given high salaries

Encourage the genuine rural students who are interested in education and make them competent

Infrastructure needs of the rural schools and colleges should be improved. :

**Growth of private institutions:**

Private institutions are rapidly increasing in higher education. In the year 2000-01,there were 13072 higher institutes of which 42% were private, many of these colleges are aided while others are not .Due to lack of funds, ill equipped labs, infrastructure etc.,the colleges are not running properly. But there are many colleges which are running successfully.

Higher educational institutes should be highly committed to establish the relevance and meaningfulness of their existence. These institutes should participate in the development process of the society. This process involves expansion and improvement of the relationship of the institutes with the society;

Widening or increasing access of higher education for economically and socially backward population .for instance through distance learning whether via traditional courses or online; Open University and distance education have been designed to promote the accessibility of education at higher stage as well as making higher



education as flexible as is required by the learners.

Improve educational infrastructure especially computers, internet, labs, class rooms;

Emphasis on English language and communication skills should be improved;

Higher Educational institutions such as universities and other research based institutions in rural areas should act as a hub

for research activities that are linked with the problems and issues of rural life and their needs at the ground level;

Provide career guidance and practical labour market information [e.g. in schools training facilities and community based associations] to enable rural youth to make informal choices about their education, training and employment in the rural context<sup>8</sup>;

Focus on providing technical and vocational training by reducing financial entry barriers ,

To conclude, students whether hailing from urban or rural areas or belonging to the privileged or disadvantaged segments of the society, are the responsibility of all the educators alike. No doubt much needs to be done at primary, secondary and higher level which is a huge challenge for our us. Meanwhile significant role of higher education institutions towards equity cannot be denied. Concrete efforts towards this direction is needed. The huge Urban-rural divide can be overcome by adopting multi-pronged approach that comprise lifting of the standards of higher institutes in rural areas. The collective efforts of educators as well as govt. is needed in this field.

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