Real Scenario of Higher Education in India

Why in news?

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According to official sources higher education in India has grown exponentially in recent years.

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What is the present status of higher education in India?

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- A survey by the All India Survey on Higher Education published in July this year shows that the gross enrolment ratio (GER) was 25.8% in 2017-18, up from 10% in 2004-05.
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- GER is the ratio (expressed as percentage), of the total enrolment within a country in a specific level of education, regardless of age, to the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education.
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- For higher education, the survey calculates the ratio for the age group 18 to 23 years, internationally, the age group 18 to 22 is also used.
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- For India, the Survey gives the corresponding figure as 30%.
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What is the significance of higher education in real life?

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- The use of energy on a large scale and the continued availability of energy in an environmental-friendly manner are challenges which cannot be addressed by narrow specialists.
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- There are technical advances every day, influencing everyday life in diverse ways.
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- This is also leading to concerns about privacy, technology-driven social and workforce changes, and the evolving need for individuals to retrain themselves to remain in employment.
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- In such a scenario, it is important that professionals study the impact of innovations on society in a holistic manner.
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- Certain educational experiences that integrate the arts and humanities with STEM at the undergraduate level are associated with increased critical thinking abilities, higher order thinking and deeper learning, content mastery, creative problem solving, teamwork and communication skills.
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What is the reality of higher education in India?

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- In India HEIs are far from integrated, as far as the inclusion of elements of general education in the curriculum for undergraduates is concerned, the situation is mixed.
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- Several engineering, and science education and research institutes have embedded general education programmes at the undergraduate level.
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- Such programmes are missing in most university-affiliated science colleges.
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- Rather, there are institutions that cater to a single stream which precludes the possibility of even an informal interaction between students and faculty with different specialisations.
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What measures needs to be taken in this regard?

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- Though the GER for higher education in India is still less than what it is in developed countries, the growth rate is still quite impressive.
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- The next step is to ensure that the outcome of academic programmes by higher education institutes (HEIs) is acceptable.
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- There needs to be attention on the content of higher education in HEIs.
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- The development of general ability for independent thinking and judgement should always be placed foremost, not the acquisition of special knowledge.
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- The focus of undergraduate education should be on classical disciplines, with enough credits for general education.
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- Thus Focus on specialisation can wait until the post graduate level.
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Source: The Hindu

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