

Status of Higher Education in India - An Overview

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Abstract

Greater transparency and accountability of higher education institutions, qualify faculties, imparting valued education, output base scientific researches, good citations, international recognitions etc are the indicators of excellence of education. In present article, an effort has been made to address some of these indicators in context of Indian higher education system. The emphasis has been given on attributes like LR, GER, status of faculties, category, gender and discipline wise enrolment status in higher education institutions. The study also includes the potential issues that needs to pay attention and some important initiatives taken by the government to meet those challenges as well.

Keywords: Higher Education System (HES), Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Literacy rate (LR)

1. Introduction

A developed nation is inevitably an educated nation. India is also engaged using the higher education resources as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based society of the 21st Century. The higher education system of India is the third largest system in the world, next to the United States and China. India is expected to overtake China as the largest country on earth by 2022 and grow to about 1.5 billion people by 2030 (up from 1.34 billion in 2017). Furthermore, Indian professionals are considered as one of the best scholars in the world and they are in great demand across the globe. This signifies the inherent strength of Indian education system. The present review highlights current scenario of Indian higher education system and its future road map under following headings -

- Higher Education Sector in Sovereign India
- Architecture of HEIs in India
- Literacy Rate in India-Post-Independence Scenario
- Gross Enrolment Ratio
- Impression of Higher Education during 2017-18
- Apprehension in HE sectors & Government intervention

2. Higher Education Sector in Sovereign India:

India has always been a land of talented scholars and learners since its ancient times. India's Higher Education (HE) sector has been witnessed of tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions and Colleges since the independence (Sheikh, 2017).

3. Architecture of HEIs in India

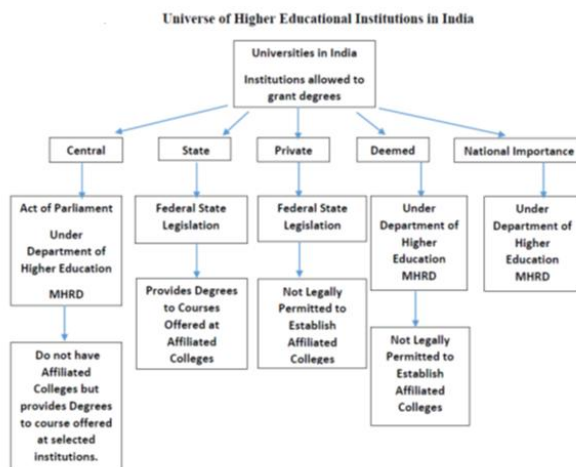


Fig. 1: Universe of Higher Educational in India

[Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/dhanurajd/the-issues-and-challenges-in-higher-education-sector-in-india>]

As higher education systems grow and diversify society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes, public assessments and international rankings of higher education institutions (Sheikh 2017). By independence of India in 1947, the country had only 19 universities and 400 Colleges and there was 5000 Secondary Schools (Choudhary, 2017). Thereafter great progress has been registered and now there are 903 Universities, 39050 Colleges and 10011 Stand Alone Institutions (Table 1).

Table 1: Progression in Higher Education Institutions in India after 2010

Year	Universities	Colleges	Stand Alone Institutions	Total
2010-11	621	32974	5713	39308
2011-12	642	34852	11126	46620
2012-13	667	35525	11565	47757
2013-14	723	36634	11664	49021
2014-15	760	38498	12277	51535
2015-16	799	39071	11923	51793
2016-17	864	40026	11669	52559
2017-18	903	39050	10011	49964

(Source: AISHE Reports)

There are more than 78.0% colleges running in Private sector; aided and unaided taken together, but it caters to only 67.3% of the total enrolment (ASHE Report 2017-18). Stand Alone Institutions are mainly run by Private sectors (75.47%). Only 24.53% institutions are in Government sector. This has accelerated establishment of institutes over the last few decades, making the India home to the largest number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the world, with student enrolments at the second highest (Shaguri, 2013).

4. Literacy Rate in India-Post-Independence Scenario

India has placed itself away from illiteracy apprehension in past few decades. India has managed to bring its education system at par with the global standards and has made significant progress in the arena of education during 72 years journey of independence. Post-Independence scenario (1951) depicts the gradual increase in Literacy rate (LR) from 18 to 73 % in from 1951 to 2011 (latest census). It is assumed that LR of India may reach more than 80% till next census in 2021.If India is able to sustain this momentum, then the country might be able to achieve universal literacy for children and youth by 2030 (Chandra, 2019).

Literacy Rate is one of the most essential indicators of the quality of a country's human capital. Literacy rate of male population in India has increased 4th time from 21% in 1951 to 82% in 2011. The women education was not as good as now. Percentage of literate women in the country was just 8.86% in 1951 (Table 2, Fig. 2). Male literacy rate was 81.5 and female 64.6 in the year 2017-2018 with a gap of 16.9% literacy rate between male and females. Child and youth literacy numbers for both males and females show that sustained efforts to improve literacy have borne fruit over the years. The introduction of the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme 22 (1995), the Sarva Shiksha 23 Abhiyan (2001), the enactment of 24 RTE (Right to Education Act, 2009) have contributed significant role in improving literacy.

Table 2: Total Literacy rate of whole population of India Since 1951 to 2011

S.N.	Census Years	Persons	Male Literacy (%)	Female Literacy (%)	Gap in Male- Female Literacy Rate (%)
1.	1951	18.33	21.16	8.86	12.30
2.	1961	28.3	40.40	15.35	25.05
3.	1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
4.	1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
5.	1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
6.	2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59

7.	2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68
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Source: Census 2011,

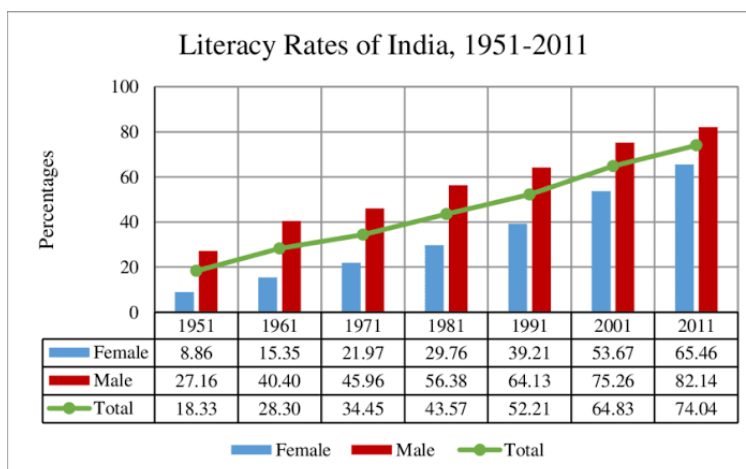


Fig. 2: Lite

racy Rate and Gap in Male- Female Literacy Rate (%) since 1951

5. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):

GER in Higher education in India is calculated for 18-23 years of age group, which are enrolled in universities in that level. As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2017-18, the GER has increased from 24.5% in 2015-16 to 25.8% in 2017-18 (Table 3, Fig. 3). In India, GER has more than double from 9% in 2002-03 to 24.5% in 2015-16 over a decade. According to Director, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India's GER in higher education is very low despite an average growth of over 7% in the last decade (The Hindu, 2018). The GER for higher education in India is fairly low compared to other countries such as the UK and USA (Nivedita, 2018).

Table 3: GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) in Higher Education (Gender and Category-wise) in last 7 years

Years	Total			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2010-11	20.8	17.9	19.4	14.6	12.3	13.5	12.9	9.5	11.2
2011-12	22.1	19.4	20.8	15.8	13.9	14.9	12.4	9.7	11.0
2012-13	22.7	20.1	21.5	16.9	15.0	16.0	12.4	9.8	11.1
2013-14	23.9	22.0	23.0	17.7	16.4	17.1	12.5	10.2	11.3
2014-15	25.3	23.2	24.3	20.0	18.2	19.1	15.2	14.3	13.7

2015-16	25.4	23.5	24.5	20.8	19.0	19.9	15.6	14.9	14.2
2016-17	26.0	24.5	25.2	21.8	20.2	21.1	16.7	14.2	15.4
2017-18	26.3	25.4	25.8	22.2	21.4	21.8	17.0	14.9	15.9

(Source: AISHE Reports of last eight years)

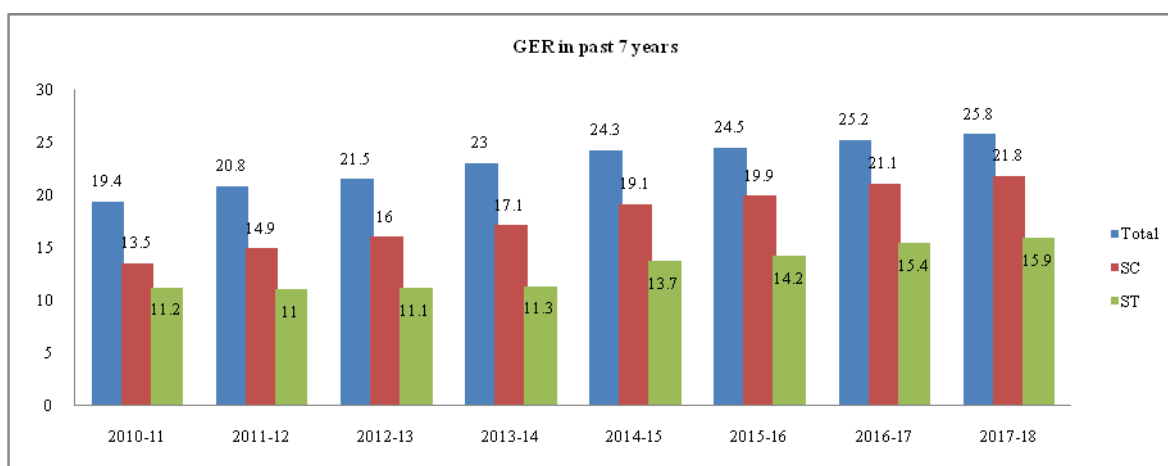


Fig.3: GER in past 7 years

6. Trend of Enrolment in Higher Education

During the academic year 2017-18, there were 36.7 million students enrolled in universities/colleges and other institutions of higher education as compared to the of 35.7million in the previous year, registered 2.52% growth (Table 4 and figure 4).

Table 4: Total Enrolment (In Millions) in Higher Education

Year	Male	Female	Total
2010-11	15.5	12	27.5
2011-12	16.2	13	29.2
2012-13	16.7	13.5	30.2
2013-14	17.5	14.8	32.3
2014-15	17.9	15.4	33.3
2015-16	18.6	16	34.6
2016-17	19	16.7	35.7

2017-18	19.2	17.4	36.6
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(Source: AISHE Reports of last eight years)

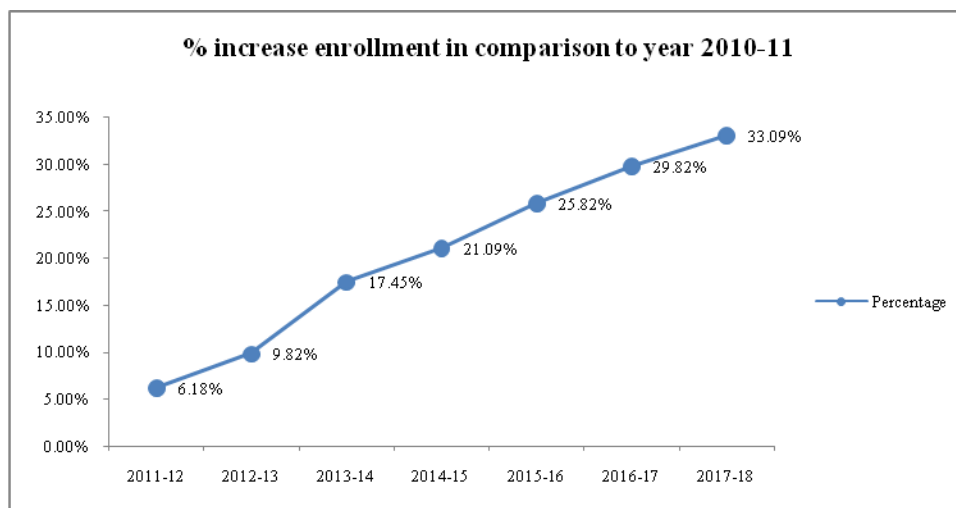


Fig.4: % increase enrolment in comparison to year 2010-11

7. Growth of Higher Education during 2017-18 -

In terms of state-share of enrolment, Maharashtra tops in the enrolment of students in Universities with 951642. This is followed by Tamil Nadu with 800516 students and Delhi with 753585 students (AISHE Report, 2017-18). There are more than 78% colleges running in Private sector; aided and unaided taken together, but it caters only 67.3% of the total enrolment.

7.1 Enrolment status under various categories

A report of All India Survey on Higher Education elucidates that India has 141829528 numbers of populations under the 18-23 age group, which constitutes 52% (73121283) males and 48% (68708245) females (Fig. 5). While, total enrolment was 36642378 which constitutes 19204675 males and 17437703 females for all of the categories for the year of 2017 (Table 5, Fig. 6). Only 5% students were from ST categories, having only 2% females. Meagre share is from the ST population and majority were from General categories (Fig.7).

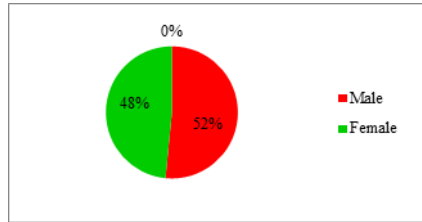


Fig 5: Population in the Age Group 18-23 years for 2017 (AISHE 2017-18)

Table 5: Category wise enrolment: 2017-18

Category	Male	Female	Total
General	8739085	7876063	16615148
OBC	6688668	6144337	12833005
Sc	2774933	2505428	5280361
ST	1001989	911875	1913864
Total	19204675	17437703	36642378

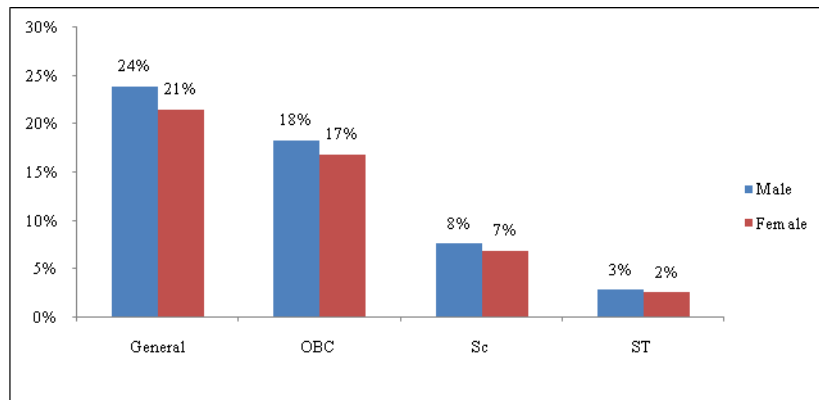


Fig. 6: Percentage share of Male-Female Population of Total Population

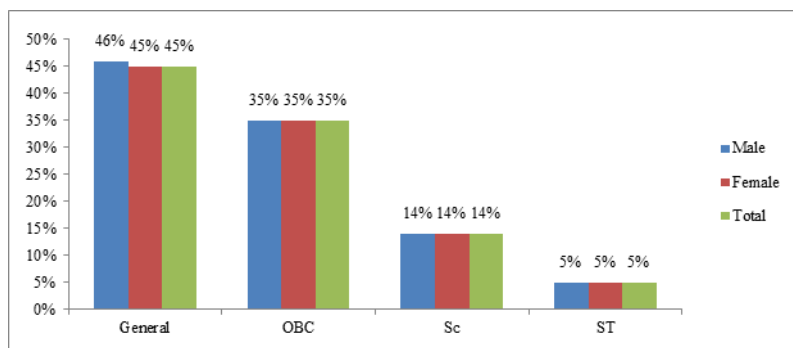


Fig.7:Category wise percentage share within category

7.2 Level-wise Total Enrolment

There are three levels afterward a higher education aspirant opts for a specialised discipline - one after 12th, next level is after completion of UG programme and then third level after finishing the PG Degree Programme. The enrolment of students in higher education institutions in India during 2017-18 are given in table 6. It is apparent that majority of youth were pursuing the graduates in different institutions. However, enrolment in Post-graduate level programme revealed that 9% of total number of students were opted for PG Programme, which is mere 11% of the UG level students (Fig.8). Whereas a 9.3% of total students were shown their interest in various diplomas, certificates or some integrated programme. Table 6 shows that majority of students were leaning to opt for regular courses especially for UG level and diploma Programme. However, PG Level courses and various certificates, which were on offer through distance mode, were very popular among students. Only 11% of total students were enrolled in distance mode education during 2017-18 (Fig. 9).

Table 6: Enrolment in Regular and Distance Mode - Year 2017-2018

Category	PhD	M. Phil	PG	UG	PG Diploma	Diploma	Certificate	Integrated	Total
Regular	161417	34109	2935803	26461938	145184	2585190	91621	195526	32610784
Distance Mode	0	0	1178506	2554411	90079	122744	85602	251	4031594
Total	161412	34109	4114309	29016349	235263	2707934	177223	195777	36642378

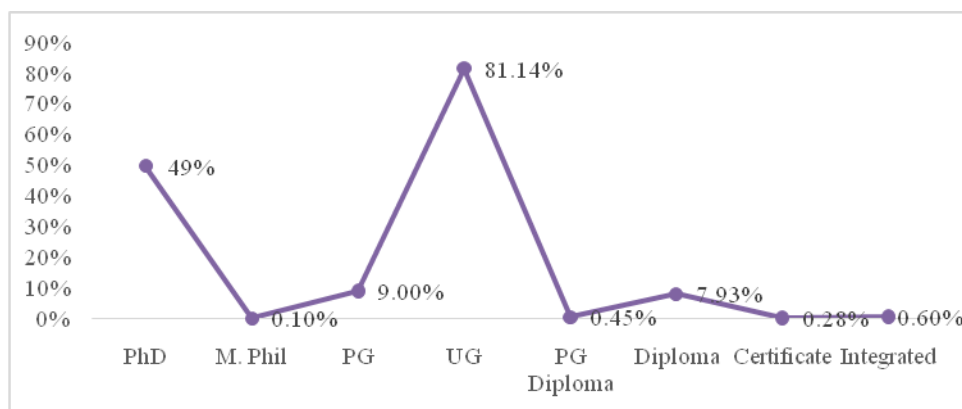


Fig.8: Percentage of Students enrolled in Regular Institutions

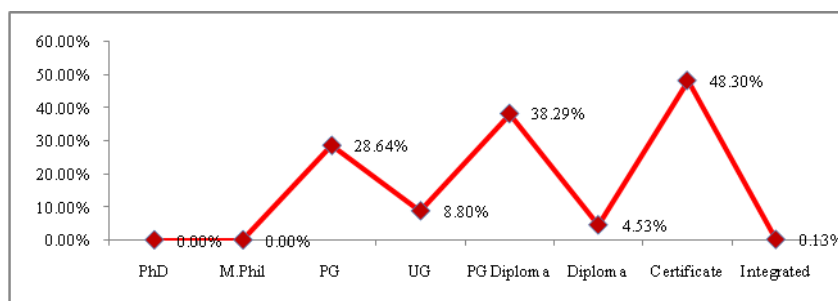


Fig.9: Percentage of Students enrolled in Distance Mode

7.3 Status of Faculties in HEIs

It reveals that mere 8.9% teaching has been done by experienced professors. Lecture, assistant professor or equivalent level faculties constituted about 70% of total. Less than 1% teaching were doing by visiting or guest faculties. The pictures are entirely different from the actual, where majority of teachings are being done by the adhoc, guest, temporary or visiting faculties in HEIs. Student teacher ratio exhibits that higher number of faculties lowers the ratio of students. Lowest student teacher ratio shows by assistant professor/lecturer level of faculty, where less than 50 number of students were behind one faculty.

Table 8: Faculties in HEIs – Year 2017-2018

Post	Male	Female	Total	Student Teacher Ratio
Professor & Equivalent	83507	30663	114170	320.9458
Reader	88415	51028	139443	262.7767
Lecturer/Assistant Professor	511034	377393	888427	41.24411

Demonstrator/Tutor	2268	41998	64266	570.1674
Temporary Lecturer	33335	33523	66858	548.0627
Visiting Faculty	6488	5103	11591	3161.278
Total	725047	539708	1284755	28.5209071

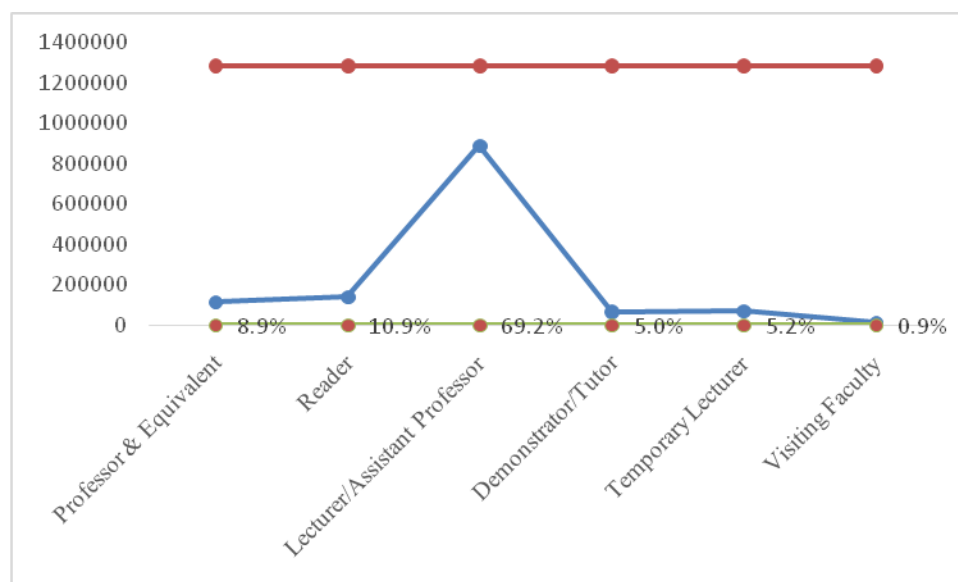


Fig. 10: Status of Faculties at different level

The total number of teachers are 1284755 out of which about 58.0% are male teachers and 42.0% are female teachers. Scenario of faculties in HEIs illustrate that there are merely 72 female teachers per 100 male teachers across the country (Table 8, Fig.10). While the student's enrolment in higher education is growing faster in the last few years. In most of the universities more than 30% of faculty positions are lying vacant (Sharma and Sharma, 2015). Higher student teacher ratio emphasises the need of more qualified faculties in HEIs.

8. Major Apprehensions about Higher Education Sector in India

The Post-independent of HEs is now 72 years old seamlessly committed to empower the human resource capitals in India academically, intellectuals and competitive globally. However, none of the Indian University has acquired a rank in list of top 100 universities of the world. Rate of enrolment, quality of curriculum, faculty and research, skilling of faculties, student teacher ratio, adequate infrastructure, colleges and universities, facilities for research, inadequate funds, accreditation, research and innovation in terms of output, citations, collaborations with industries, low-employability, multi-dimensional inequalities etc are factors which determine the quality of HEIs (Kumar (2015); Satyanarayana, 2019). The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India envisioned and initiated

the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in 2014 with a vision to transform the state higher education institutions in India into repositories of excellence.

Conclusion

From the above observations it can be said that there is requirement of surge of GER in higher education in India. Affords need to be done to improve the participation of socially underprivileged group in higher education. Concept of inclusive learning may be included at University level. Prevalence of students are high in conventional educational institutional. Lower participation of experienced faculties like professors or equivalent are required pay attention. The needs of higher education cannot be met by the Government alone.

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