

## **Higher Education in Bidar District, Karnataka State : Contemporary Reflections**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The current study attempts to understand the status of higher education in the historically neglected backward Bidar district, Karnataka state. The study is based on the secondary data collected from the annual reports of All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), Human Development Report, Department of Higher Education, GoK, Karnataka at a glance and earlier literature in the field. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for higher education in Bidar district over the past five years was 24.65 that was 1.42 times lower than the state average. The Gender Parity Index(GPI) for higher education in Bidar was in favour of females . The female participation in higher education in the district was growing at the rate of 6.49 per cent per annum. The higher access to education, pro-female government schemes complemented positive trajectory growth of females. However, the male enrollment in higher education is decreasing at the rate of 0.93 percent per annum. The high school-drop out rates of Scheduled Caste boys in the district, male migration, mismatch between education and employment opportunities were the major factors for lower male participation in higher education. The study suggests to improve higher education infrastructure, faculty development, establishment of vocational courses, integrate academic curriculum with local economy, upgrading existing colleges particularly in the rural regions through digital connectivity, support socioeconomically disadvantaged groups through financial aid.*

**Keywords :** Bidar, higher education, Kalyana-Karnataka, Gender Parity

### **Introduction:**

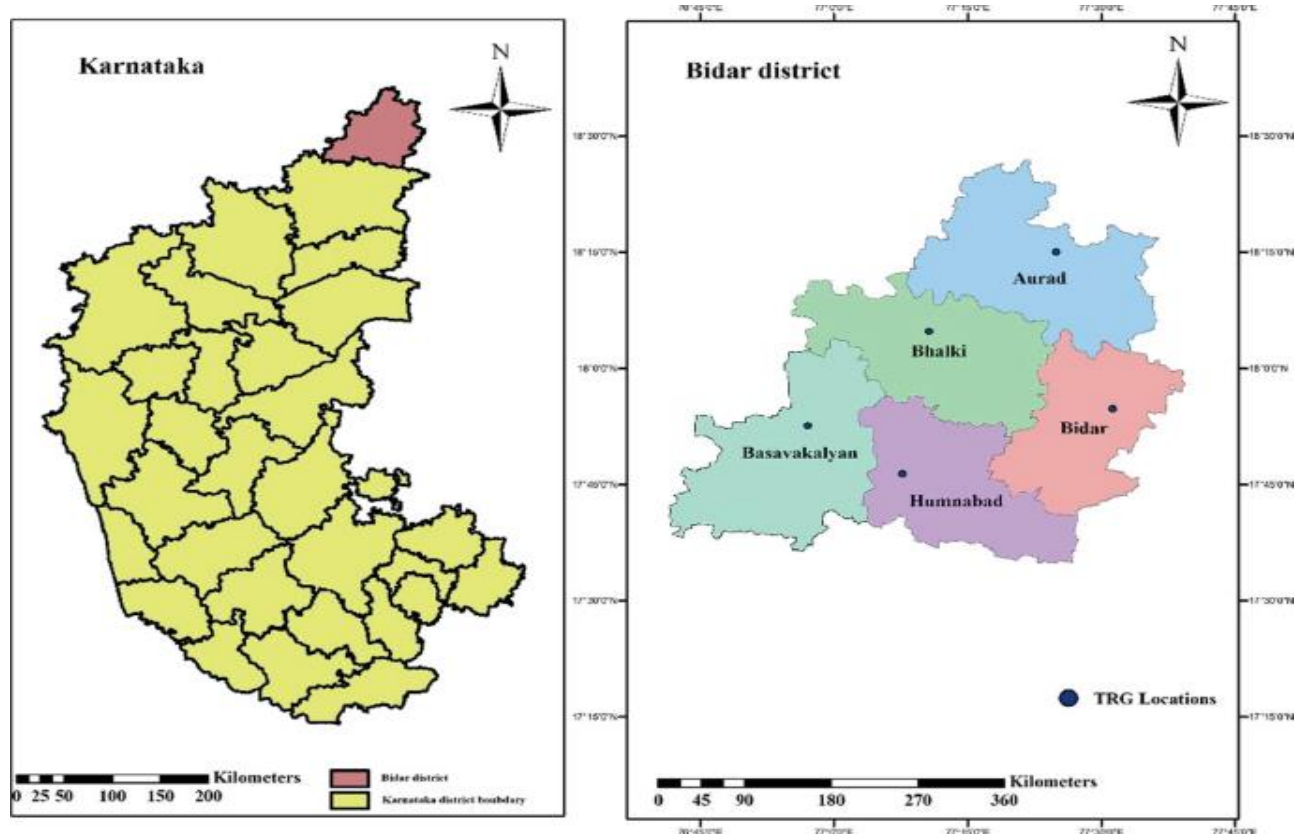
Bidar is popularly known as the 'Crown of Karnataka', located in the North-East tip of Karnataka (Figure 1). The district comes under Hyderabad-Karnataka region (now re-christened as Kalyana-Karnataka) . In 2012, article 371 J was added to the constitution to address the

socio-economic and educational backwardness of Kalyana-Karnataka region. However, the district still continues to remain backward with low Human Development Index (HDI).

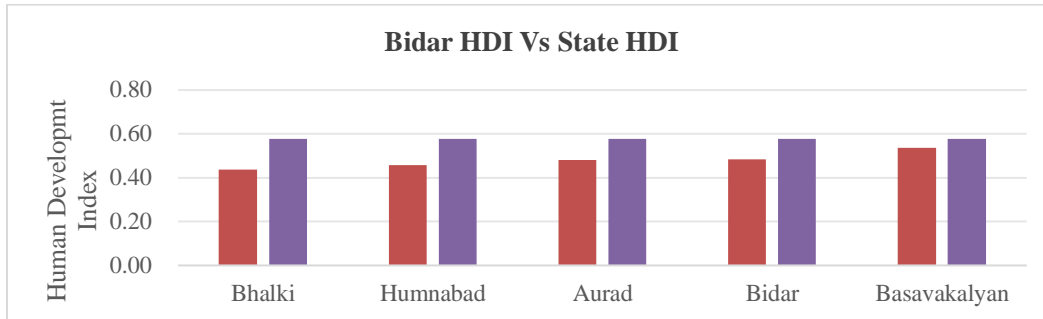
The talukas of Bidar viz., Bhalki, Humnabad, Aurad, Bidar and Basavakalyan have HDI of 0.44, 0.46, 0.48, 0.49 and 0.54 respectively below state average of 0.57. Interestingly, Bidar (0.49), Basavakalyan (0.50) and Humnabad (0.52) have educational index slightly higher than the state average (0.47) (Figure 2). While, the talukas of Bhalki (0.43) and Aurad (0.39) have the educational index lower than the state average of 0.47 (Figure 3).

On the other hand, youth (15-29 years of age) constitute for about 29 percent of the total population of the district and 2.68 percent of total population of the state. This substantial youth population represents a significant demographic dividend that could drive country's economic growth through higher education and workforce participation. In this sense, higher education prepares the youth for critical thinking, foster life skills, encourages social changes and contributes to the global economy. So what is the status of higher education in the district is the key question the paper attempts to answer.

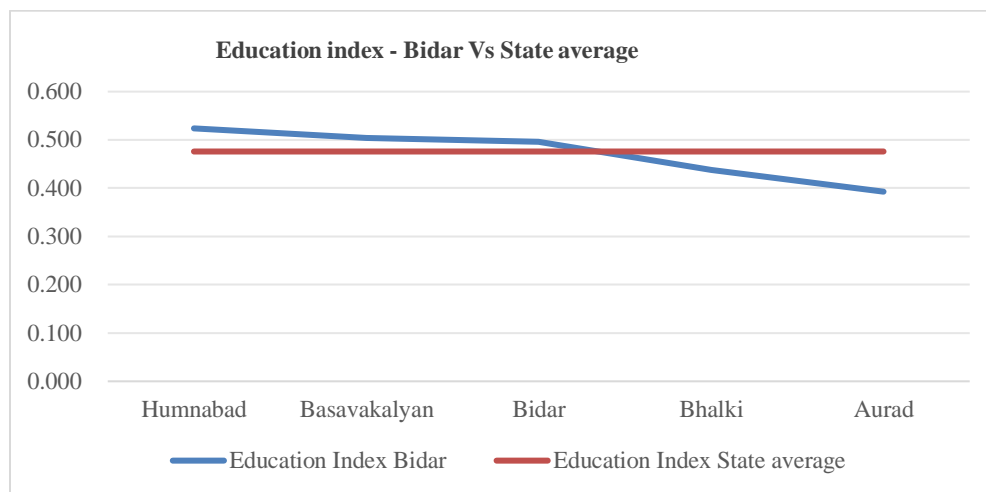
Figure 1: Map of Bidar district, Karnataka state



**Figure 2 : Human Development of Bidar Vs State average**



**Figure 3 : Education Index of Bidar district**



## Methodology

The study is based on secondary data collected from the annual reports of All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), Human Development Reports of the state, Department of Higher Education, GoK, Karnataka at a glance and earlier literature in the field. Simple averages, tabular presentation, percentage and Compound Annual Growth were used.

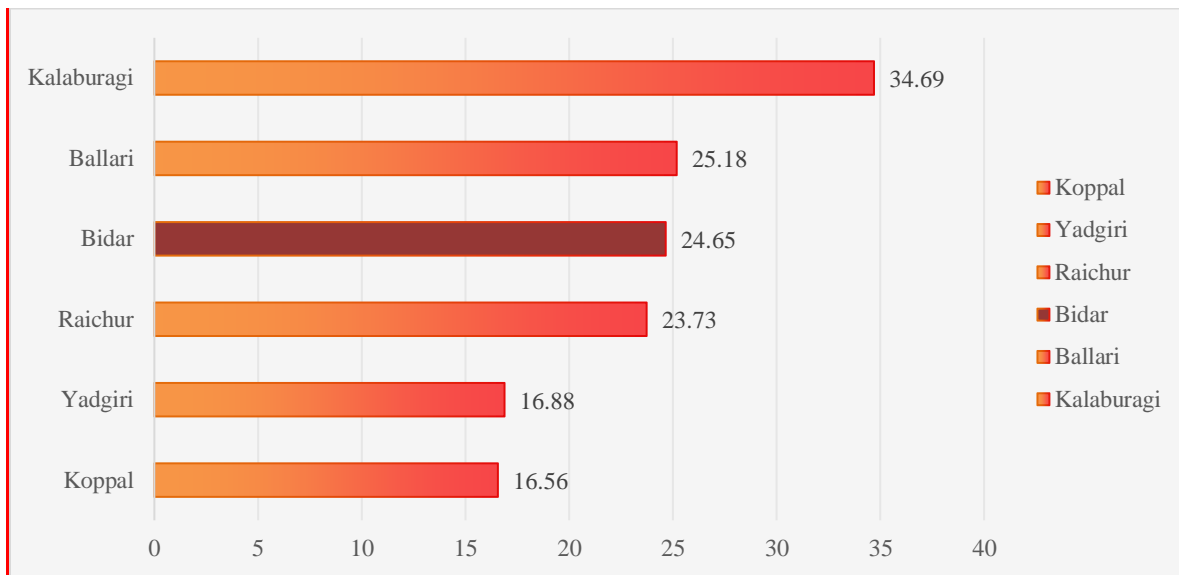
## Results and discussions

### Status of higher education in Bidar district

The overall Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for higher education in Bidar district over the past five years was found to be 24.65 (Figure 4). However, this GER was 1.42 times lower than the

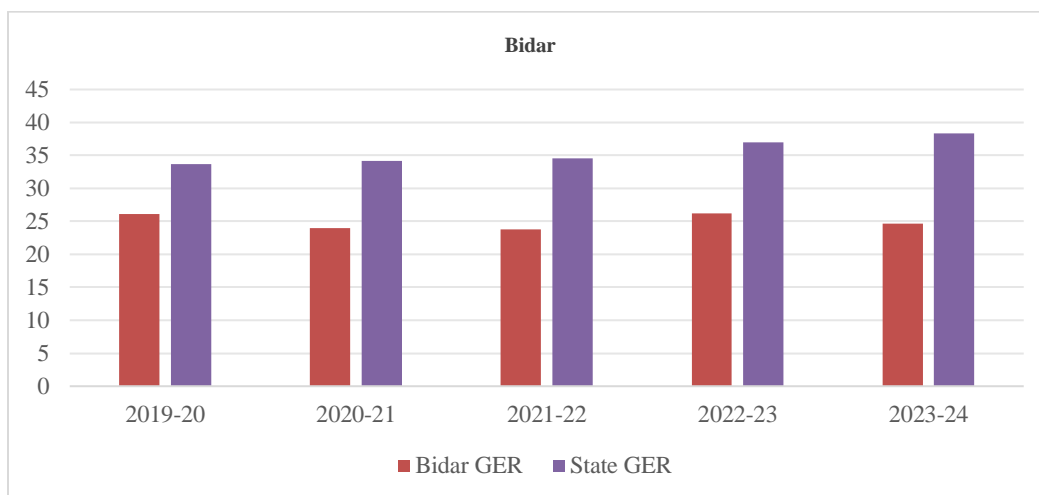
state average (Figure 5). Further the pass percentage among the PUC students was merely 42 percent further hindering their access for higher education (Table 1). While Rajshekar *et al.*, 2007 noted that between 10 to 13 percent of the children in the 5-17 years age group were out of school viz., drop out or never attended schools paving way for child labour.

**Figure 4 : GER in Higher Education in Kalyana-Karnataka districts (2019-20 to 2023-24)**



( Source : Department of Higher Education, GoK)

**Figure 5: Bidar GER Vs State GER in Higher Education**



( Source : Department of Higher Education, GoK)

**Table 1: Pass percentage in Bidar district**

Talukas	PUC Pass (%)
Kamalanagar	36.33
Basavakalyan	38.78
Hulasuru	38.78
Chitguppa	43.29
Humnabad	43.29
Aurad	43.99
Bidar	44.22
Bhalki	52.68

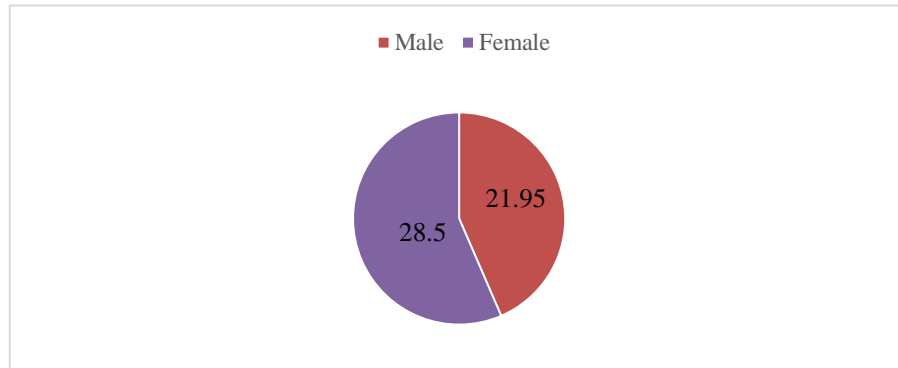
(Source : Human Development Report, 2022)

**Gender Parity Index (GPI) in higher education**

Interestingly, the GER of females (28.50 percent) outnumbered males (21.95 percent) over the past five years (Figure 6). Interestingly, the GER for the past five years, reflects that the female participation in higher education is increasing at the rate of 6.49 percent per annum,. However, the worrying factor is that the GER of male students is decreasing at the rate of 0.93 percent per annum (table 2), though the Gender Ratio in the district is 956 females per thousand males and literacy rates of male and females stand at 79.09 and 61.55 percent respectively.

This is a positive trajectory growth of females in higher education. Even at a macro-level also the Gender Parity Index (GPI) is in favour of the females. This is also in contrast to the conservative Indian society and their deep rooted gender stereotype that deny female access to higher education (Ghosh *et al.*, 2021).Overall the female participation in higher education reflects the district’s progress towards gender equality in liu with the sustainable development agenda of the United Nations for achieving gender equality in education sector.

**Figure 6: GER of male and female students in higher education – Bidar district**



**Table 2: Male Vs female GER in higher education over the years**

	Male	CAGR	Female	CAGR
2019-20	22.37		22.37	
2020-21	20.85	-6.79	27.85	24.50
2021-22	21.72	4.17	26.40	-5.21
2022-23	23.51	8.24	29.56	11.97
2023-24	21.31	-9.36	27.99	-5.31
		-0.93		6.49

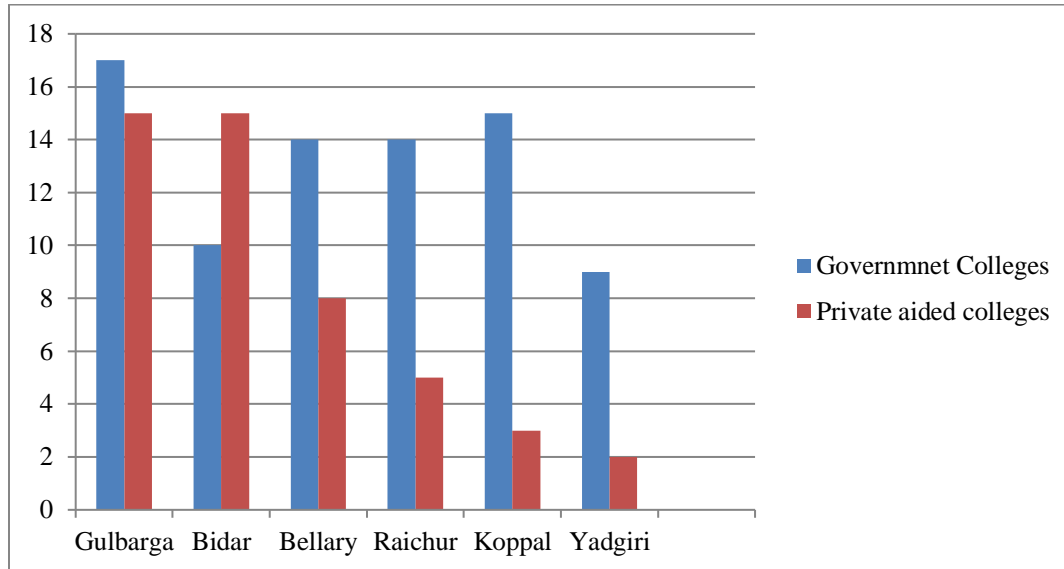
( Source : Department of Higher Education, GoK)

**Reasons for higher female participation in the district**

The higher female participation in higher education is linked to greater access to higher education and the pro-female government schemes (Ganashruthy, 2023).

**1. Greater access to higher education in the district**

One of the major reasons for greater participation of females in higher education can be attributed to higher access to higher education. The district has total of 25 colleges viz., 10 and 15 government and private colleges respectively (Figure 7). Among the Kalyana-Karnataka districts, Bidar and Kalaburagi has the highest number of private aided colleges. This ensures both quality and inclusiveness in higher education.

**Figure 7 : Government and private colleges in Kalyana Karnataka region**

## 2. Pro-female government schemes

The Government of Karnataka offers financial aid and free tuition fees for females in the government degree colleges. Sanchi Honnamma scholarship, C.V.Raman scholarship, Kittur Rani Chennamma, residential colleges for female students are to mention a few. The Karnataka government in collaboration with Azim Premji Foundation has launched Deepika student scholarship scheme for female students who have completed Pre-University Colleges (PUC) in government colleges and enrolled for higher education.

### Male participation lower in Bidar district

1. **Drop-out rate** - One of the reasons behind this low GER could be the highest drop-out of Schedule Caste boys at secondary school level in the state. This higher drop-out rate is often viewed as the entry into workforce, particularly in the region with higher financial challenges particularly agrarian and unorganized sectors.

2. **Male migration** - The male migration (15-30 years of age) in the district is high in the district. This is primarily driven by the lack of agricultural income and better employment opportunities. This is also a major hindrance for pursuing higher education among the men. These young men prioritize financial earnings for the family over higher education.

3. **Mismatch between higher education and employment opportunities** - Currently the job market demands a higher skilled workforce *viz.*, industry specific skills. However, the

oversupply of graduates in the job market has resulted in mismatch between higher education and employment opportunities for the youth. Further, the accessibility and affordability to vocational education is low in the district, for which the minimum qualification in SSLC (Anil Kumar, 2012). However, the district has also witnessed higher male school-drop out rates at the High School level.

### **Policy Implications**

The study suggests to improve higher education infrastructure, faculty development, establishment of vocational courses, integrate academic curriculum with local economy, upgrading existing colleges particularly in the rural regions through digital connectivity, support socioeconomically disadvantaged groups through financial aid.

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