



## RUSA: Expansion and future of higher education in India

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### Abstract

Higher Education has expanded rapidly in recent ages reflecting the growing importance of the sector in promoting economic growth. India has the third largest education system in the world. The XII<sup>th</sup> plan was the rejuvenating & massive plan for higher education in India, in this plan the main focus is on to promotion of economic growth, inclusive growth, sustainable development in social justice –social equity and also to generate research based knowledge for developing the skilled and educated personnel. in this connection Radha krishnan commission (1948-49) recommended for strengthening & integration of secondary and higher education in nationwide & also recommended University Grants Commission. Mudaliar (Secondary Education Commission (1954) recommended three years secondary & four year higher education system. Kothari (Indian Education Commission, (1964-66) recommended modernization of education or there should be uniform structure of education or curriculum nationwide. NPE (1986) emphasized on the improvement of quality in higher education. National Knowledge Commission (2007) frame worked on strengthening the education system. The purpose of my paper is to show the future progress of higher education in India.

**Keywords:** RUSA purpose, RUSA achievement, RUSA present situation

### Introduction

MHRD is all set to bring certain systemic changes to improve Indian higher education system through mission mode by launching' the Scheme called Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA): National Higher: Education Mission. Since RUSA Scheme is going to be a landmark scheme to improve higher education system we are taking a proactive step to seek the opinion of the critical thinkers who have concern for the welfare of Indian higher education so that we can provide some concrete suggestions to MHRD, particularly on its suitability to the universities and fitness of the purpose for which the scheme is being implemented.

### Key Issues Plaguing Higher Education

Currently the key challenges in higher education can be broadly encapsulated in the following areas pertaining to – Access, Quality, Equity, Governance and Finance.

#### Access

- Low enrolment rates in higher education with GER of 19.4 at the higher education stage (18-23 years) remains below the world average of 30% (as of 2013).
- The low GER indicates inadequate no. of institutions to meet demand or limited access to higher education.
- GER significantly less than in countries such as US (89), Russia (76), UK (59), Malaysia (40), China (24)

#### Quality

- Significant levels of faculty vacancies in institutes and inadequate research opportunities.
- Varying quality of education provided in institutes with inadequate focus on research in higher education and low

employability and skills of graduates.

- Very few institutes get regularly accredited and lack adequate infrastructure and equipment.

#### Equity

- Gender disparities in higher education (GER of 17.1 for males and 12.7 for females in 2009-10).
- Social inequities in access to higher education (GER of 12.2 for SCs and 9.7 for STs in 2009-10).
- Regional disparities in higher education including rural-urban variations.

#### Governance and Financing

- Issues in universities arising from affiliation resulting in administrative burden on universities.
- Governance issues in universities such as lack of appropriate structures and limited autonomy.
- Financial constraints in higher education, particularly for state level institutions.
- Lack of clear regulatory framework for private sector participation in higher education.

**Table 1:** Structure of Education in India

| 6 – 14 years  | Elementary Education                |  |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 14 – 16 years | Secondary Schooling                 |  |
| 16 – 18 years | Higher & Senior Secondary Schooling | Technical Education (Polytechnic)      |
| 18 – 23 years | Graduate Education (General)        | Graduate Education (Professional)      |
|               | Post Graduate Education (General)   | Post Graduate Education (Professional) |
| >23 years     | Doctoral Education                  |  |

Higher Education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills. Being at the apex of the educational pyramid, it plays a key role in producing quality teachers for the country's education. In the context of unprecedented need of explosion in knowledge, higher education has to be dynamic as ever, constantly entering uncharted areas.

**Table 2:** Number, Nature and Category of Institutions (As on August, 2016)

| Type of Institutions                                    | Number |
|---|--------|
| Central Universities                                    | 43     |
| State Universities                                      | 289    |
| State Private Universities                              | 94     |
| Deemed to be Universities                               | 129    |
| Institutes of National Importance plus*Other Institutes | 50     |
| Institutions established under State Legislature Acts   | 5      |
| Total   | 611    |
| Total Colleges  | 32,303 |

*Source:* UGC Compilation, 2016.

As we see in the Table 1 the picture at the macro level becomes clear. The number of colleges operating in India is quite enormous. The future scope however hints towards many more colleges. Additionally India requires not only quantity but quality of H.E. institutions also. Despite having over 300 universities, not a single Indian university is listed in the top 100 universities of the world.

## Background and Overview of RUSA

### Background

- Higher education systems in India face issues relating to inadequate financing, ineffective planning at the state level and lack autonomy, thereby ushering in the immediate need for strategic intervention.
- With over 96% of students enrolled in the state higher education system, there is a need for state colleges and universities to be strengthened through strategic central funding and implementing certain much needed reforms.

### Overview

- The National Development Council (NDC) approved Rashtriya Uchchakra Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) as part of the 12th Plan. It was subsequently included in the list of 66 schemes approved by the Cabinet on 20th June 2016, as part of the restructured CSSs for implementation in the 12th Plan.
- RUSA will be a new CSS spread over two plan periods, for improving access, equity and quality in the state higher education system.
- RUSA also aims to incentivize States to step up plan investments in higher education.
- An umbrella scheme to be initiated in mission mode project that would subsume other existing schemes in the higher education sector.
- The central funding would flow from MHRD to institutions, through the State budget.

## Key Goals and Objectives of RUSA

### Key Objectives

- Improving the overall quality of existing state higher educational institutions by ensuring conformity to prescribed norms and standards and adoption of accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework.
- Correct regional imbalances in access to higher education through high quality institutions in rural and semi urban areas as well as creating opportunities for students from rural areas to get access to better quality institutions.
- Setting up of higher education institutions in un-served and underserved areas.
- Improve equity in higher education by providing adequate opportunities to socially deprived communities; promote inclusion of women, minorities, SC/ST and OBCs as well as differently-abled persons.
- Ensure adequate availability of quality faculty in all higher educational institutions and ensure capacity building at all levels.
- Create an enabling atmosphere in higher educational institutions to devote themselves to research and innovation.
- Integrate skill developments efforts of the government with the conventional higher education system through optimum interventions.

### Key Goals

- Through planned development of higher education at the state level, the overall aim is to improve access, equity and quality in higher education across the country.
- The goal is to improve the current GER from 19% to 32% by 2022, thereby incentivizing states to increase 'plan investments' in higher education.

**Table 3:** Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education

|        | 2015-2016 | 2015-2016 |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Male   | 20.8      | 21.6      |
| Female | 17.9      | 18.9      |
| Total  | 19.4      | 20.4      |

*Source:* All India Survey on Higher Education (2015-2016) and 2015-17 (provisional)

### Benefits of RUSA

- RUSA introduces a significant strategic shift in the approach towards developing the higher education system, by focusing on state level institutions which have been neglected over the years in relation to centrally funded institutions.
- Seeks to introduce measures such as performance and norm based funding as well as governance and academic reforms at the institutional and state levels to address some of the challenges in higher education in India.
- If implemented swiftly and efficiently, RUSA will be a turning point for the Indian higher education system as it seeks to achieve higher enrolment rates and address access, equity and quality related concerns.

### Conclusions

Higher education needs to be viewed as a long-term social

investment for the promotion of economic growth, cultural development, social cohesion, equity and justice. The globalization era has necessitated inculcation of competitive spirit at all levels. This can be achieved only by bringing quality of higher standards to every sphere of work. RUSA is a national mission for promoting HE. Focusing on all the areas of HE and particularly on each states HE requirements through strategic planning & management to meet the needs of quality concern and also to get central funds & grants through RUSA the govt. should now focus on revamp the institutions with attractive and modern infrastructure i.e. classrooms, hostels, research laboratories, training equipment, aids etc. RUSA has potential of putting the higher education in India on a dynamic fast track. By fulfilling the above goals we may be reached the highest position in higher education among the world.

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