A Study of the Prospects of Higher Education in the Context of Rastriyo Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

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Abstract: *The education system in India has come a long way of evolution. Education is an index of human development and social change. It is dynamic side of individual influencing his physical, mental, emotional and social development. It is pre-requisite for development. Learning organisations need to devise modes by which the great potential of human nature is encouraged. They are three strands in learning (to be competent, to be engaged and to be ethical). The present study designed the Prospects of Higher Education in the Context of Rastriyo Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). This study based on secondary data like: journals, books, news-letter and websites. This study focuses on present scenario of higher education, objective, scope, prospects and major challenges for RUSA.*

Keywords: Prospects of Higher Education and Rastriyo Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

1. Introduction

Education, including higher education, is vital to make people empowered socially, economically, politically and culturally. Institutes of higher education have the main responsibility for equipping individuals with advanced knowledge and skills. The society has lots of expectations from the HEI sand the later have tremendous responsibilities and role in the socio-economic development of the region at the first place and also of the country consequently. It is even more important for a developing country like India.

Higher Education Scenario

1) India's higher education system is world's third largest system after USA and China and it is the biggest in South-East Asia.
2) Expansion of Higher Education since Independence

Year	Universities	Colleges	Enrolment (in millions)
1947	20	500	0.1
1965-66	64	2565	0.759
2000	236	11000	8
2005	320	16000	8.8
2007	400	18000	11.03
2014-15	785	38056	33.3

Source: E. C. Report, pp.538-540; University news 54 (26)

3) According to UGC India news 1500 more universities with adequate research facilities to complete in the global market.

2. Shortcomings of Higher Education in India

As per "All India Survey on Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2010-11" the higher education system in India today suffers from many shortcomings. These are:
1) Only a small fraction of population between the age group of 18-23 is enrolled in higher education institutions as the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is only 18.8%.
2) Wide disparities between various social groups like SCs, STs, and OBCs. Falling below average GER.
3) There is also gender inequality; GER for males is 20.9% while that for females is only 16.5%.
4) There is also difference in quality of institutions and enrolment between rural and urban areas and between developed states and not so developed ones.
5) Issues in universities arising from affiliation resulting in administrative burden on universities.
6) Governance issues in universities such as lack of appropriate structures and limited autonomy.
7) Financial constraints in higher education, particularly for state level institutions.
8) Lack of clear regulatory framework for private sector participation in higher education
9) Significant levels of faculty vacancies in institutes and inadequate research opportunities.
10) Varying quality of education provided in institutes within adequate focus on research in higher education and low employability and skills of graduates.
11) Very few institutes get regularly accredited and lack adequate infrastructure and equipment

Looking at the innumerable challenges, a radical change is required in the approach that was traditionally adopted for development of higher education in the country.

3. Rastriyo Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

The Planning Commission recommended for reforms in the state higher education sectors, using central funds in strategic manner to ensure holistic planning and enhancement of allocation for state institutions, through a new centrally sponsored scheme called the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). This scheme would spread over two plan period i.e. 12th & 13th and would be an

over arching scheme for funding the state universities and colleges to achieve the aim of equity, access and excellence.

4. Salient Features of RUSA

1) Umbrella scheme in mission mode.
2) Central funding from MHRD to institutions through state budget.
3) Funding on the basis of critical appraisal of state plan for higher education.
4) Funding on norm basis depending on outcome.
5) Centre-Statefundingtowillbeintheratioof90:10forNorth-Eastern States & J&K, 75:25 for Other Special Category States (Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and 65:35 for Other States and UTs. Funding will be available to even private-aided institutions, subject to their antiquity, for permitted activities (not all) based on certain norms and parameters, in a ratio of 50:50.

5. Goal of RUSA

The central objective of RUSA was to achieve the target of GER of 30% by the year 2020. Other main objectives were as follows:

1) Improvement of overall quality of existing state higher educational institutions.
2) Academic and Examination reforms.
3) Availability of quality faculty in state higher educational institutions.
4) Additional capacity in existing institutions and establishing new institutions to meet GER of 32% by the end of 13th five year plan.
5) Removing regional imbalances by opening quality institutions in urban and semi urban areas, rural areas both un served and underserved areas.
6) Improved equity by providing adequate opportunities of higher education to SC/ST and socially and educationally backward classes, promote inclusion of women, minorities and differently abled persons.

6. Scope of RUSA

1) All state universities and colleges (both 12B and 2(f) compliant and non-12B and non-2(f)) from all states and UTs are eligible under RUSA.
2) Subject to eligibility 306 state universities and 8500 colleges will be cover.
3) Private colleges on some components with 50:50 ratios.

7. Problems and Prospects of RUSA

Multidimensional prospects and issues of higher education if we are to be on per with the world class institutions.
1) **Broadening the aims:** Professional and Vocational Courses, Generating new Knowledge and application to life.
2) **New Roles of University:** Universities are international institutions with life blood of HE and colleges are veins to whole nation, stress on quality and all institutions play their role for discipline perspectives.
3) **Universalisation of Higher Education:** Largest system of higher education but GER is only 23.6%.

4) **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Need to increase GER, online education, electronic networks sharing of academic resources and technological upgradation.
5) **Financial Crises:** For education need of 6% of GDP presently it is 3-4%.
6) **Autonomy and Accountability.**
7) **Curriculum and Methodology:** Reengineered according to market forces, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, theoretical and practical skills to be combined.
8) **Quality Teachers.**
9) **Brain Drain.**
10) **Governance**

8. Major Challenges for RUSA

Most important task for RUSA is improvement in access, equity and quality across India. In other words, homogeneous improvement in all the three areas i.e. access, equity and quality across India would be a key challenge for RUSA.

Parts of India which is in the nascent stages of higher education may only be able to work on access and equity, while quality improvement may take some more time to be visible. Reaching out to rural India and socially and educationally backward class maybe also be another challenge.

According to the structure of the scheme co-ordination between RUSA Mission Authority and State Higher Education Council (SHEC) is proposed, which may also be a difficult task. A Management Information System (MIS) is proposed for all co-ordination between National, State and Institutional level. During the initial years, it would be a challenge to train and align each individual to comply and feed information into MIS system.

9. Conclusion

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. It 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 can 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.

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