



RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is a government-funded initiative aimed at improving the quality, accessibility, and equality of higher education in every state in India. Access, equality, and quality in higher education are RUSA's primary goals, and they will be attained via the strategic development of higher education at the state level.

Keywords: Higher education, attitude, awareness, teachers, degree colleges

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of higher education is to cultivate new ideas and teach students how to think critically. Whilst the present state of higher education leaves much to be desired, significant progress has been done over the years. Access to higher education that is both equitable and high in terms of opportunity and quality has been shown to be effective in reducing the effects of entrenched, systemic socioeconomic disadvantages and fostering social mobility. Colleges and universities may make significant contributions to national progress in the areas of democracy, social fairness, economic growth, and national development. Higher education is crucial to society because it provides individuals with the tools they need to succeed in the workforce.

Higher education programs in the arts, business, and science make up the bulk of the general education curriculum, while engineering technology, architecture, town planning, management, pharmacy, and applied arts and crafts are all included in the technical education curriculum. Courses in the medical area, the law, and other specialist professions are also part of professional education. If a nation invests in its higher education system, it might boost its profile abroad. When it comes to making positive changes in a country or a culture, this is the single most important factor. Gaining a college education improves one's ability to communicate well both orally and in writing, as well as one's awareness of and appreciation for the world and one's place within it. The value of a person's life rises as a result of their attainment of a college degree. India has the world's third-largest higher education system, behind only the United States and China. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is India's primary higher education regulator, responsible for enforcing standards, advising the government, and facilitating communication between the national and state levels of education.

The MHRD's 12th Plan proposal included the Scheme, which was approved by the NDC. In its meeting on November 8th, 2012, the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), the highest advisory body of the Government of India on education on policy issues, approved RUSA on a preliminary level. As a result, the reorganized CSSs included it in their list of 66 plans authorized by Cabinet on 20.06.2013 for use in the 12th Plan. On September 11th, 2013, the Scheme was reviewed by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), which ultimately gave its stamp of approval. After the success of the earlier CSSs of the MHRD—Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)—RUSA received approved from the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 3 rd October, 2013. (RMSA).

During the 12th and 13th Plan years, RUSA would be used to provide grants to states and their public higher education institutions in pursuit of educational diversity, equal opportunity, and high standards. RUSA would provide funding to the State's higher education system, which now serves more than 96% of the population, based on clearly defined standards and criteria that are tied to specific academic, administrative, and governance changes. Human Resource Development (MHRD) will be in charge of enforcing the Scheme, while the corresponding State governments and Union Territories will each provide funding on an equal basis (UTs).

LITERATURE AND REVIEW

A. Lokanath Mishra (2021) Rastriya Uchchar Sikhya Aviyan (RUSA) is a government-funded initiative aimed at improving the quality, accessibility, and equality of higher education in every state in India. The quality and availability of higher education in Mizoram, a state in the northeastern part of India, has not improved significantly despite the fact that it is home to 32 degree-granting institutions. This research looked at RUSA education in Mizoram's colleges, specifically at the best methods currently being used there. reviewed the RUSA initiative in Mizoram. The information from the 52 respondents was gathered with the use of a structured interview schedule that was created and used. Researchers found that few Mizo instructors were familiar with RUSA, a federally funded initiative. The state government of Mizoram is responsible for providing degree college faculty with an orientation training program on RUSA. The government of Mizoram has to watch how it spends RUSA money, and schools need to prioritize boosting GER.

Harpreet Kaur et al (2021) With limited funds available for education in India, it is even more important to evaluate the effectiveness of higher education institutions in terms of their efficiency in allocating and making use of those limited resources. Moreover, the efficiency of higher education has been largely overlooked in the vast majority of studies. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of India's higher education system from a technological standpoint. Statistical information for the research was gathered from secondary sources such the MHRD Reports, UGC Reports, the ESI Reports, and the AISHE Reports (AISHE). The information was analyzed using a method called data envelopment analysis. According to the study's findings, the states examined here are performing at around average efficiency.

Lokanath Mishra et al (2020) The purpose of this research was to inquire about the perceptions and familiarity with RUSA among Mizoram's degree college educators. One hundred educators from eight different schools in the Aizawl area served as research participants. In order to gather information from respondents, a self-made questionnaire was created and distributed. The survey found that Mizo instructors are not familiar with RUSA, a program funded by the federal government. The government of Mizoram is responsible for raising awareness and organizing orientation workshops for faculty members at degree-granting institutions using the RUSA platform. New faculty members may participate in an induction program coordinated by the college's faculty development office.

A. Devi & B. Bushan (2018) The authors of the study "Rashtriya Uchhtar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) and its relevance and difficulties on inclusive expansion of higher Education" analyze the program's motivations, history, and impact on India's education system. The important work being done to improve access, fairness, and quality in India's higher education system under RUSA was also highlighted. It would be difficult to advise everyone to follow and give information into a Management Information System (MIS), which is suggested as collaboration across National, State, and Institutional levels. RUSA proposes a tactical change in the approach towards evolving the higher education system in India, and plans to launch initiatives like governance and academic reforms, performance and norm based funding, and at the state and institutional levels to discuss some of the challenges in higher education in India. Proper implementation of RUSA has the potential to be a watershed event in higher education, with implications for increasing access, equality, and excellence as well as the overall gross enrollment ratio.

Saini, M & Sood, M (2018) we looked at how RUSA's implementation affected the gross enrollment ratio; higher education is crucial to building a workforce capable of contributing to a country's social, economic, and scientific progress. It does more than increase one's brainpower; it also broadens one's view of the world. The importance and number of people who seek out university-level education are constantly growing on a worldwide scale. Access, equality, and quality are the three main problems plaguing the higher education system. Higher education institutions need to be strengthened so that they can accommodate the needs of all people who want and need to further their education. The purpose of this research was to analyze how the adoption of RUSA affected the gross enrollment ratio of colleges and universities in the Mandi district of

Himachal Pradesh. The results showed that when RUSA was put into place, the gross enrolment ratio at universities significantly rose.

FEATURES OF RUSA 1.0

This plan's most notable characteristics are as follows:

- It is an overarching plan that will be introduced in mission mode and will eventually replace all other plans in the field.
- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) will be responsible for allocating the central funds from the state budget to the various educational institutions.
- Upon the SHEP's critical evaluation, the allocation of funds to the states would be determined. Each state's plan would detail how it intends to improve higher education in terms of accessibility, affordability, and quality for all residents.
- RUSA awards in the future will be outcome-based, like the rest of the program, whereas current grants are norm-based.

Financial support will be contingent on the recipient's willingness to implement certain changes to its educational, administrative, and governing structures. Funding for the RUSA will be split between the central government and individual states at a ratio of 90:10 for states in the northeast, including Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, and 65:35 for all other states and union territories. In addition, depending on specified criteria and characteristics, private aided institutions will be eligible to receive money at a ratio of 50:50, for allowed activities (not all). Need-based and individualized equitable initiatives, quality improvement programs, and mandated certification are how RUSA plans to accomplish its goals. Problems with the faculty would be addressed by adding new positions, hiring full-time teachers for the open positions, and implementing initiatives to enhance the teaching staff. Rather than being isolated, low-impact initiatives, efforts to improve RUSA equality are being included into the overall design of the plan.

So, RUSA is a great chance for the state's higher education institutions to improve their infrastructure, knowledge resources, and skill development skills in order to train workers of worldwide caliber. In addition, RUSA would provide upgraded institutions with guidance and advice on producing high-quality research results using the related funding and knowledge. Any legitimate service-related or administrative complaints raised by the teacher organizations must be swiftly addressed by the various governments, since teachers are the backbone of any educational reform.

FEATURES OF RUSA 2.0

1. Coverage: Only State-run and State-supported universities are included in the program. RUSA does not apply to online schools or other institutions that provide health care, agriculture, veterinary medicine, or other similar degrees. Also, RUSA places little value on single-focus academic institutions.
2. Prerequisites: States must implement the necessary academic, administrative, and governance changes in order to receive money under RUSA. Institutional guarantees to individual states and state guarantees to the federal government are both necessary preconditions. States and institutions cannot receive RUSA funding unless these requirements are met.
3. Bottom-up Approach: With the purpose of addressing various and graded disparities and promoting need-based planning, RUSA uses a "bottom-up" strategy for planning and budgeting. The future demands of higher education should be taken into account when states engage in strategic planning. The SHEPs must address problems on both the demand and supply sides.
4. Subsuming existing schemes: In its first phase, RUSA absorbed two Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Model Degree Colleges and the Sub-mission on Polytechnics. Development funds for State universities and colleges, catch-up awards, etc., from the University Grants Commission (UGC) are woven within RUSA. Yet UGC would still be responsible for individual-focused programs (for educators, students, and so forth). The second iteration of RUSA, known as Improving Quality and Excellence in select State Universities and Enhancing Quality and Excellence in select Autonomous Colleges, incorporates the UGC-administered initiative on Universities and Colleges with Potential for Excellence.

5. Preparatory Grants (under Institutional restructuring, Capacity Building and Reform): State governments get a preliminary sum under the plan to establish or bolster the institutional structure essential to meet the a priori standards and -commitments under RUSA. SHECs, the State Project Directorate, and the State Resource Center may all benefit from doing baseline studies and putting up infrastructure using the money allotted here.
6. Resource Envelope: The Resource Envelope is the total amount of money that will be available to a state in a given budget year. The Fund Equalization formula was used to determine the distribution. There is a correlation between conditionalities and reform adherence, as well as a combination of base money and performance-based financing, which determines the resource envelope for a particular fiscal year.
7. IDPs & SHEPs: Financial recommendations on characteristics that represent each institution's unique needs must be included in all Institutional Development Plans (IDPs). Each state compiles its own individual IDPs and then incorporates them into its own State Higher Education Plan (SHEP) by layering on top the elements that are most important to that state. Each state must conduct baseline surveys and interact with relevant parties to provide input for the development of IDPs and SHEPs. SHEPs must be authorized by the respective State Higher Education Councils before being submitted to the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
8. Appraisal of SHEPs: State Higher Education Plans are evaluated by the Central Government's Technical Support Group (TSG), which then allocates funds to the respective states. The State and the TSG work together to determine which components are most important within the State's resource envelope, taking into account both RUSA standards and the State's unique requirements. The Project Approval Board (PAB) is provided with a package of the priority parts for final approval.
9. Funding under RUSA: All RUSA funds are outcome-driven and based on established norms. SHEPs are used as a yardstick to measure how well a state and its institutions are doing, and this central financing is determined by how well they do in comparison. North-Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand get 90 percent of federal money, 10 percent from each state, while the remaining 60 percent goes to the federal government.

STATE UNIVERSITIES

The significance of state universities in India's rapidly growing higher education sector cannot be overstated. Many state universities are in disrepair and could use more funding from the federal government, as well as more oversight and accountability in how that money is spent, as well as changes to their affiliation structure, as well as improvements to their governance and systems of education and assessment. The state institutions in India must be included in any effort to improve the country's higher education system. We can only help lead the nation to its "knowledge society" aim if public institutions and colleges undergo significant change. Centrally sponsored universities, although excellent, are nonetheless islands of excellence, meeting the needs of just a small number of students with their specialized expertise. Many students in the public sector still have no access to a high-quality university education, and this situation must be remedied. Students enrolled in private, including aided and unassisted, institutions make up around 58% of the overall enrollment, compared to approximately 42% of students enrolled in state universities (Table 1).

Table 1 Enrolments by types of institutions (in lakhs)

Category	2007-08	2011-12	Increase	Growth Rate (%)
By type of institutions				
Government	68.07 (44.1%)	84.90 (42.0%)	16.83	4.5
Central	3.46 (2.2%)	5.10 (2.5%)	1.64	8.1
State	64.61 (41.9%)	79.80 (39.5%)	15.19	4.3
Private	86.41 (55.9%)	117.10 (58.0%)	30.97	6.4
By degree / diploma				
Degree	133.32 (86.5%)	169.68 (84.0%)	36.36	4.9
Diploma	20.89 (13.5%)	32.33 (16.0%)	11.32	9.1
Total	154.21	202.00	30.9%	5.6

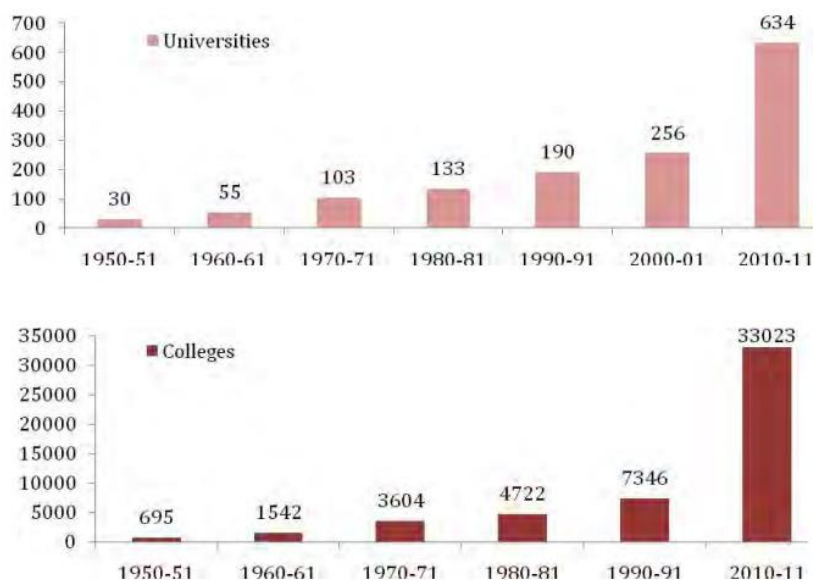


Figure 1: Growth of universities and colleges in India

Given the crucial period of development that our country is in, the topic of GER and educating the young has taken on added relevance. It is projected that by 2020, India would have 116 million employees aged 20 to 24 years old, compared to 94 million in China. India has to improve its higher education institutions immediately if it wants to take advantage of this demographic dividend (and if it wants to avoid the social and economic issues that would arise from having such a big and potentially unemployed young population).

There are a number of obstacles that need to be overcome in order for the higher education system as a whole to succeed. These include issues of funding and administration, as well as those of access, equality, and relevance. Higher education is the most effective means of creating a wealthy knowledge-based society, hence these concerns are of critical significance to the nation. As daunting as it is to ensure that all students can pursue a high-quality higher education, this challenge presents a once-in-a-generation chance to address long-standing inequalities in access, revitalize institutions, raise global standards of excellence, and push the boundaries of human understanding.

FUNDING STRATEGY

Norm-based Funding

1. Strategic central financing based on SHEPs is envisioned under RUSA.
2. Any money allocated via RUSA would have to be used on higher education in the state, but it wouldn't replace existing state spending, since each state would have to boost its yearly commitment by the same predetermined proportion.
3. Some academic and governance improvements within a certain industry are tied to central financing.
4. In addition, organizations would be pushed in the direction of independently raising cash legally.

Funding eligibility should be determined through filters used at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels as part of the larger norm-based financing scheme. In the RUSA document, you may find a schema example.

The standards would not only evaluate the institutions on their degree of conformity to rules to decide the quantity of financing, but would also assess the eligibility of the institutions to receive funds in the first place. The amount of funding that will be available to institutions is determined by their objective score against these standards.

Performance-based funding

1. The performance of a State and its institutions is measured against SHEPs.
2. Future financing would be determined on the success of previous endeavors.

Competitive funding

3. States with higher performance standards might vie for more funding.

Planning and funding at state level

The way grants are distributed now is rather outdated. The 1956 system remains in use today. Funding is awarded on the basis of specific schemes and projects rather than general guidelines. There is a pressing need for a significant modification of existing criteria for financial support. More norm-based and performance-based funding is required. Normative and performance-linked financing would boost university performance in place of giving cash in response to the needs of individual institutions applying for specific programs. This kind of investment would improve the efficiency with which public monies are used and would also encourage more system-wide openness and responsibility. Although Section 12B of the UGC Act must be obeyed, the UGC, the major money allocation body to state universities, cannot finance new institutions or even fund all of the current ones.

In this way, a self-perpetuating loop is formed that stifles the development of new state institutions. The necessary infrastructure and facilities are assumed to exist prior to the start of UGC financing under Section 12B. Nonetheless, institutions of higher education that are lacking in this area should get priority funding. UGC was established at a time when there were comparatively few colleges and universities in the nation. The UGC's ability to oversee the distribution of funds to so many different organizations is strained to the breaking point. The current situation calls for the establishment of a new system in which a more manageable number of organizations are grouped together under one body, and the unit of planning is less expansive than the whole nation. By doing so, we can better allocate resources and keep tabs on their use.

ACADEMIC AND AFFILIATION ISSUES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES

The quality of basic services, facilities, and teaching staff in public universities varies widely. Inadequate funding is a major factor in the variation in standard at the nation's public institutions. State colleges have challenges beyond financial constraints, including cumbersome bureaucracy, ineffective management, a lack of transparency, an onerous affiliation system, and political meddling.

Table 2 Universities with largest number of Affiliated Colleges

University	Number of Colleges
Osmania University, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh	901
Pune University, Pune, Maharashtra	811
Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj, Nagpur, Maharashtra	800
Rajasthan University, Jaipur, Rajasthan	735
Bangalore University, Karnataka	687
Mumbai University, Mumbai, Maharashtra	711
Tamil Nadu Teachers' Education University, Tamil Nadu	661
Gautam Buddha Technical University, Uttar Pradesh	614
Andhra University, Andhra Pradesh	614
Rajeev Gandhi Health Sciences University, Karnataka	560
M.L.C National Journalism & Communications, Madhya Pradesh	549
Kakatiya University, Andhra Pradesh	480
Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Andhra Pradesh	451
Maharishi Dayanand University, Haryana	448
Kurukshehra University, Haryana	435
Sant Gadge Baba University, Maharashtra	401
Dr. NTR Health Sciences University, Andhra Pradesh	400

The top twenty universities in the United States by the number of linked institutions are shown in Table 2. The majority of Indian university students attend an institution that is part of an affiliated network. Around 89.3 percent of all first-year students, 72.6 percent of all master's students, and 20.6 percent of all doctorate students are enrolled via them. The affiliation system provides the state university with a valuable source of revenue in the form of affiliation and examination fees. The quality of higher education, however, has declined dramatically due to the explosion in the number of institutions linked with universities.

GOVERNANCE ISSUES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES

Several issues have been raised about the management and leadership inside educational institutions. Several outside organizations have numerous touchpoints with university administration, particularly with the Executive Council and the Finance Committee. The external delegates nominated by the Chancellor or state government representatives weaken the administrative authority of the Vice Chancellor in two crucial committees, the Executive Council and the Finance Committee. In addition, this scenario generates a number of areas where agreement between the external stakeholders (Chancellor and government) is required. It's important to give some thought to the selection process for Vice Chancellors, since it varies by state and by the federal government. The leadership and vision of a university's president may make all the difference in the world for the institution, particularly a brand-new one. So, it is impossible to overstate the significance of the first Vice Chancellor's position at the institution.

Also, reputable personnel should carefully search for candidates using acceptable and fair search techniques before scheduling any follow-up visits. Thus, it is crucial that defined processes in these situations be followed to in order to assure transparency and the selection of eligible individuals. In an ideal world, political intervention in the appointment of Vice Chancellors would be nonexistent. But it's concerning that in certain states, VCs are being chosen based on factors other than talent and leadership potential. Those with experience managing the administrative affairs of universities and other educational institutions are in high demand in the higher education industry.

It is necessary to train experts in the field of higher education, just as there is a cadre of hospital administrators and managers in the healthcare industry. The government's participation in the sector is so great that it calls for investigation into the possibility of outsourcing some of the sector's operations. The moment has come, however, to consider the possibility of contracting out to specialized organizations those tasks that are not central to the mission of universities. Another area of weakness is academic leadership; not enough faculty members have been prepared to assume administrative roles in academic institutions. There may be a need to revitalize and improve state academic staff colleges in order to close this gap.

CONCLUSION

The human resources, physical infrastructure, and teaching resources of educational institutions are the primary determinants of educational quality. More effort will be made by the educational institutions to raise GER. The governing body may set up a system to keep tabs on how the RUSA money is being used across the many projects.

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