

# HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: HISTORY, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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**ABSTRACT**--India is a rapidly developing democratic country. Development of human resource in a country depends upon the quality of education prevailing in the country. Higher education imparted the education through colleges and universities. Over the last two decades, higher education in India makes remarkable transformation with well planned expansion of education. Now India has increased its enrollment numbers with improved teaching learning materials. But fostering quality teaching depict the institutions of higher education must offer that kind of education which fulfill the expectations and requirement of the students in present day context. Education in Ancient India means the education that prevailed before the coming up of the present system of modern education introduced by the British. India starts its higher education through Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi and Takshashilla which also imparted religious education and philosophy, though Takshashilla also gives imparted in professional education. Ancient Indian civilization has the most prominent place in the civilization of the world. The education system in ancient India plays an important role to transfer of oral and written tradition to one generation to next. In Vedic period, the intellectual equipment and efficiency were the corner stone of human progress. In Vedic period every person should go for their study which is known as Brahmacharya during the childhood and adolescence. In the medieval centuries (12<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>) India played a major phase of social and cultural synthesis which emphasized the interaction between new settlers from Central and Western Asia and on the other hand the early inhabitants of the sub-continent. There were some important South Indian Education Centers where Brahmin teachers along with scholars devoted their entire lives to study Vedas, Shastras and the Purans. These were Cholla, Pandaya, in the Vijayanagar Empire, Varanasi, Hardwar, Nadia and Ujjain etc. In Northern India, Madras's were the centre of higher learning. These were provided secular studies, but also took care of the religious and moral training of the students. Sanskrit and Arabic higher learning also included secular and scientific learning in law, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, literature, philosophy and theology.

**Keywords**—Higher education, history, growth and developmeny

## I. INTRODUCTION

### **Higher Education under Colonial Rule:**

In the colonial era, education was spread through the medium of Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian or Western sciences and literature as the medium of instruction. In 1780, a Madrasa in Calcutta and in 1791 a Sanskrit college were established in Benaras for imparting education among the Muslims and Hindus. After sometime, British Parliament made it compulsory for educating Indian people with the help of the Charter Act of 1813.

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Lord Macaulay played a major role in 1834 when he was appointed as the President of the Committee of Public Instruction. He tried to control the Occidental and Oriental Controversy.

The concept of establishing universities in India brining from the London University was first given by Sir Charles Wood in his Despatch in 1854 which is commonly known as “Magna Carta of English Education in India”.

In India there were first three universities set up in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857. By 1923, the total number of universities had reached twelve from three. India needs a National system of education and which was formulated by the Sargent Report of 1944. The report pointed out the failure in making university education relevant to the community needs and suggested some remedial measures. By the time of Independence, India had total eighteen universities and total student strength was little less than two lakhs.

### ***Higher Education in the Post – Independence Period***

Our society is changing with the new demands in present job market. So it is very urgent to reform our education system. India is a developing country and it has been expanding in every sphere of education. India has the third largest higher education system in world. As on 31th march 2018, the number of universities was increased up to 851 where 47 Central, 383 State public, 295 State private, 123 Deemed to be universities, 3 institutes established under State Legislation and 41012 numbers of colleges( according to AISHE, report 2017-18. According to AISHE report, the GER in higher education in India is 25.8% which is calculated for 18-23 years of age group. GER for male population was 26.3% and for female 25.4%. Students enrolment in the academic session 2017-18 in all courses including regular and distance education programme was 366.42 lakhs. The maximum number of students had been enrolled in Uttar Pradesh (64.55 lakhs), Maharashtra (41.31 lakhs), Tamil Nadu (34.41 lakhs) and West Bengal (20.35lakhs) etc.

After independence the Radhkrishnan Commission in **1948** setting the goals and objectives of higher education and gave the guidelines for structuring of higher education and recommended for the setting up of the University Grant Commission.

Higher education was re-examined by the Kothari Commission of 1964-66 and the major emphasized of this commission was to improve the quality and standard of higher education and research, expansion of higher education and expectations of the people along with improvement of university organizations and administration.

TheNational Policy on Education 1986 gives emphasis not only develops the human resource but also at developing crucial values. This policy gives special attention on expansion of higher education, improvement of the quality of higher education and increase the opportunities relevance to job orientation.

The National Knowledge Commission (2005) gives recommendations regarding reforms in existing public universities, undergraduate colleges, regulatory structure, financing, quality creation of national universities as centre of academic excellence etc. Dr. Manmohan Singh delivered his speech at the launch of NKC in 2005, and he said that 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the “Knowledge Century”. The major duty of a nation is to make best use of brain power which will shape its place in the world.

Yeshpal Committee (2008) was headed by a panel along with Prof. Yashpal and the report studying the functioning of different agencies of higher education and suggests some remedial measures to restructuring the existing system. The report is a plan of strategy to achieve a particular goal for constructing the future education

in India. The report on “Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher education” was submitted to the Ministry of Human Resource Development on June 24, 2009. The committee also suggested setting up of a national commission for higher education and research, which will be an apex body in education. The committee also introduces several regulatory bodies such as UGC and AICTE, granting full autonomy to universities and supervises them.

Along with the quantitative growth of higher education it always faces some challenges time to time. The Ministry of Human Resource Development and UGC took initiatives to restore the standard of higher education. Based on the recommendation of the committee of Central Advisory Board Of Education (CABE) on reforms in universities, a new centrally sponsored scheme was launched during the 12th five year plan of state government for improving the quality of higher education named Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). The aim of RUSA is to provide greater autonomy to all universities and colleges and gives much focus on equity-based development and improve the quality of teaching learning in higher education. Under the Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development will implement the scheme with matching contribution from the state government and Union Territories. All institutions such as 12B and 2(f) and non 12B and non 2(f), the fund will be shared between the Central Government and State Government in the ratio of 90:10 North eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are 65:35 for other states and Union Territories. For achieving equity, quality and access; RUSA is the only key for strategic funding of State institutions.

#### **KEY FEATURES OF RUSA**

- (i) RUSA is a bottom up approach that would include all other existing schemes in this sector.
- (ii) Under this scheme central funding from MHRD and UGC to the institutes of higher education will give the fund with the help of State Council of Higher Education.
- (iii) One of the major features of RUSA is to improve access, equity and quality of higher education at the state level by creating convenient academic atmosphere with quality management, promote research culture and provide need based education to the students.
- (iv) All funds shall be received to the universities or colleges when they have fulfill some preconditions such as academic, administrative and governance reforms for future grants.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF RUSA**

The major objectives of RUSA would be to achieve the target of GER of 32% by the end of XIIIth plan period. The Government of India aim to enhance the quality of universities and colleges so that they became dynamic, forward looking, responsible for rapid economic and advanced technological development. Some of the major objectives were highlighted below-

- (i) Improve the overall quality of existing state institutes by adopting the mandatory quality assurance framework.
- (ii) Improve the academic and examination reforms in higher educational institutions.
- (iii) Take research conversion with the best universities in the world.
- (iv) Create a congenial atmosphere in the higher educational institutes to develop themselves into research and innovations.

(v) Expand the additional capacity in the existing institutions to fulfill the enrolment target of the institutions.

(vi) Other major objective of this scheme is to ensure that adequate quality faculty with capacity building programmes at all levels of higher educational institutions.

## **II. DIMENSION OF RUSA**

### ***EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF INSTITUTIONS***

To fulfill the demanding needs of the young one, RUSA set up some model degree colleges, centers for excellence, new universities and upgrade colleges. This will also help to all needy children to get higher education. Institutional up gradation help higher education to be more responsible to the society. RUSA suggests some ways to improve the higher education. They set up new model degree colleges in each district, set up new universities, creation of new general as well as professional degree colleges, upgrade existing colleges into *universities, upgrade autonomous colleges and established centre of excellence.*

### ***RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOCUS***

Research is an inseparable part of the higher education along with teaching learning, training and extension education. For achieving better quality research and innovation, it is more important to establish some new research centers like research universities, research hub, research and Development laboratories, introduced new and advance courses, foreign collaboration to receiving grants for research etc along with advanced technological laboratories and well qualified staff.

### ***IMPROVING THE GER***

The main aim of RUSA is to improve the total GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) from the current low level of about 18% to 30% before the end of XIII five year plan. It is assumed that higher GER will improve the per capita income.

### ***FACULTY SUPPORT***

Well qualified faculty strength is the backbone of every higher educational institution. Now a days we saw there are lots of problem in higher education like shortage of faculty, poor teacher student's ratio, heavy administrative burdens etc. So RUSA suggest some major components for adequate faculty support. These are immediately filling up the vacant faculty positions, provide academic freedom, pay all faculties according to the UGC regulations and latest pay band, to make transparent in the selection of faculty, training and upgrade their professional skills and creating some other faculty position to make a balance between the teachers students ratio etc.

### ***ACADEMIC REFORMS***

RUSA gives much emphasis on some of the elements which impart best quality of education which may be creative, employability and innovative. These are-

- ❖ Best on the revised curriculum and new curriculum should be developed.

- ❖ Introduced learner centric approach.
- ❖ Continuous internal evaluation, end term semester evaluation, choice-based credit system etc should be introduced to assess skills, knowledge and values of the students.
- ❖ Academic autonomy should be allowed to every teacher.

### ***AFFILIATION REFORMS***

The main function of a university until 1904 was not only to teach or research but also to affiliating the colleges. Later from the year 1950, some academicians interested in research culture but it was not up to the mark. It is seen that under one university, number of affiliated colleges should be restricted not more than 40 but it was not implemented properly. Establishing the new colleges, permission should be taken from state and central ministers, ministry of health, agriculture, environment, defense and others. But sometimes it was seen that there exist no coordination between central and state ministry.

Under one university, there exist uniformity in courses, examinations and their content. But it has been seen that affiliated universities were introduced with a few dozen of programmes and the colleges choose their programme from that. Introducing new contents will require some time to execute and teachers should need some time to examine and prepare themselves for the specific content. For establishing a new college, permission should be granted from NAAC or NBA and Government with their predetermine norms. There should have tight rules and regulation on establishing of new colleges in private sector. RUSA should give importance on upgrade of large autonomous colleges into affiliating universities. Every State should prepare their own rules and regulation along with norms which help to formulate a scientific policy on affiliating the colleges.

### ***GOVERNANCE REFORMS***

Quality of higher education system determines the fruitfulness of the governance. For regulating the perspective of education, governance of higher education is more important because it determines the framework, plans and policies of education and execute them at all institutional level. RUSA suggested some sectoral and administrative reforms for good governance.

#### **(i) Sectoral reforms:**

- ❖ Established State Higher Education Councils as agencies for functioning financing, controlling and supervision.
- ❖ Carrying an upcoming approach for planning and budgeting.
- ❖ Upgrade the colleges to the universities and redefining their responsibilities to make it more accountable.

#### **(ii) Administrative reforms:**

- ❖ Introduce democratic decision making bodies in higher educational institutions.
- ❖ For improve their flexibility and effectiveness, university should provide them academic autonomy, financial autonomy as well as administrative autonomy.
- ❖ The selection procedure of the Vice Chancellor should be transparent and the norms for selection of the Vice Chancellor should be according to the latest UGC regulation.

### ***INFRASTRUCTURAL UPGRADATION***

For any educational institutions, a good quality infrastructure plays a vital role and it improves the overall quality of teaching learning process. Under the scheme of RUSA some elements are included to achieve quality and excellence in infrastructural up gradation. These are constructions of new hostels within 50% capacity which would be used for SC/ST and socially and educationally backward classes, upgrade existing buildings into fully disable friendly environment special facilities for disable, internet facilities, construct functional classrooms, laboratories, functional hostels, girls hostels with special facilities and safety etc.

#### ***Establishing management information system***

An integrated management information system is needed for continuous monitoring and implementation of RUSA scheme. For achieving equity, quality and access in higher education management information system, it is important to execute the plans and policies of RUSA. This will also help to know the flow of information online and in real time.

#### ***Other Initiatives of Indian Government to promote and develop the system of higher education***

Many times, Government of India had taken some initiatives for development of higher education system. Some of these are discussed below-

#### ***International collaboration initiatives***

For teaching in Indian Higher Educational Institutes, Global Initiative for Academic Network (GIAN) has been introduced to invite prominent scientists and entrepreneurs around the world for impart their knowledge. For collaboration between industry and institutes of higher education Council for Industry Higher Education Cooperation has been established. Research parks have been formed to develop a knowledge and innovation focus system with the help of industry and academia.

#### ***Technology for Knowledge and Transparency***

To distribute the knowledge among all the students and maintain the transparency, some initiatives have been taken by the government of India namely – Know your college, National e- library, SWAYAM: online open courses platform, National digital library of e- books , classes taken by the professors of IIMs and IITs free of cost.

#### ***Connect Higher Education to Villages***

Some schemes were introduced by the Government of India to promote the skills, design and technologies in traditional art and craft which was known as YUKTI (YogyaKalakriti Ki Takneeki). Another schemes called UBA (Unnat Bharat Abhiyan) under which villages and other problems relating to water management, renewable energy, organic farming etc were connected to higher educational centres.

### ***Make in India***

Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi has been launched “Make in India” in 2014 to motivate multinational companies to manufacture their products in India and that will create lots of employment among the educated youth of India.

### ***Other schemes to promote Higher Education***

To prepare ranking framework for teachers and institutions, a committee on National Ranking Framework has been formed. A mission namely Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission has been launched to cope up with the problems and issues in respect to teachers, teaching style, their development, curriculum development and focuses on development of skilled teachers by establishing performance standards. National Skill Qualification Framework ( NSQF ) works on skill development and provides competent workforce. For labor market information system, identify skill development needs, develop a skill development plan and to develop skill competency standard and qualifications Skill Assessment Matrix for Vocational Advancement of Youth ( SAMVAY) has been formed. To focus on industry requirement, competitive skills and training facilities KausalKendras have been set up to develop courses at PG level.

### ***Recommendations***

Government takes necessary initiatives to attract foreign students by sponsoring educational programs, internship programs should be provided to the students by the higher educational institutes in collaboration with companies. Research hub should be introduced in Indian Higher Educational system and raise the funding amount on research and development. For providing the quality and developed education, higher educational institutes should appoint foreign faculties and experts with their relevant areas.

## **III. CONCLUSION**

Higher education is playing a proactive role in transforming Indian society and also helps the individual to grow. Agencies of higher education are continuously striving hard to improve institutional performance with the help of different innovative strategies. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, “India needs 1000 new universities and 50,000 colleges by 2020 to meet the demand of its young population”(Hindusthan Times, Kimberley Dixit, 9.12.2015). Indian higher education system has grown remarkably after independence but today’s higher education system needs to maintain excellence.

RUSA is a good approach to the state universities to upgrade all sides of higher education including education system, research, infrastructure, faculty strength, skill development programme to produce quality manpower. RUSA has transforming higher education of our country which helps to achieve equity, justice, liberty and opportunity. So all stakeholders warmly welcome the new centrally sponsored scheme which attempt to restore the rights and the privileges of the state. UGC made various reforms to improve the condition of higher education such as Choice Based Credit System, Regular updating the curricula, prescribing minimum standard for appointment of teachers etc. To promote equality some schemes were implemented such as Ishan Vikas,

Pragati Scholarship for girls in technical education, Saksham Scholarship for differently able students etc. All this kind of initiatives are the indicators to improve the quality of higher education.

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