

Proceedings

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**National Seminar
on
"ISSUES CONCERNING
THE HIGHER EDUCATION
IN INDIA"**

(7)

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Proceedings of the Seminar



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RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (RUSA): TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

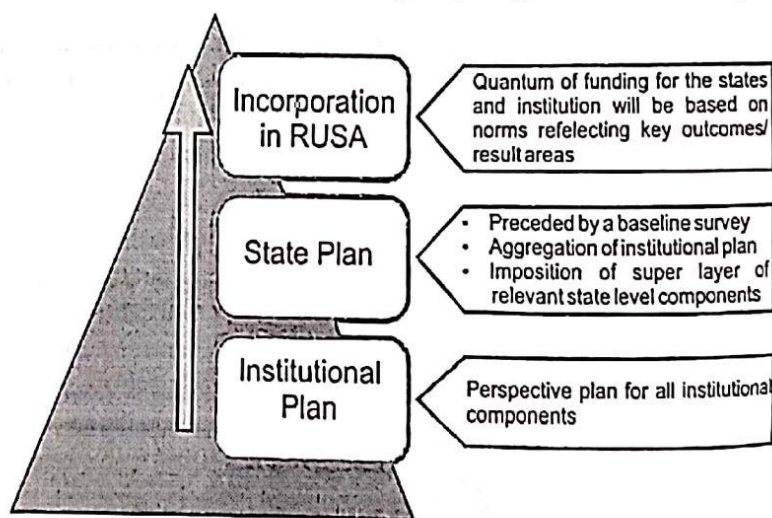
Dinesh C. Sharma

Associate Professor, Deptt. of Zoology/Nodal officer RUSA (Directorate)
Government Degree College, Pihani, Hardoi

The success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has laid a strong foundation for primary and secondary education in India. However, the sphere of higher education has still not seen any concerted effort for improvement in access or quality. In the coming decades, India is set to reap the benefits of demographic dividend with its huge working age population. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has predicted that by 2020, India will have 116 million workers in the age bracket of 20 to 24 years, as compared to China's 94 million. India has a very favourable dependency ratio and it is estimated that the average age in India by the year 2020 will be 29 years as against 40 years in USA, 46 years in Japan and 47 years in Europe. In fact, we have more than 60% of our population in the age group of 15 to 59 years. This trend is very significant and it would be a lost opportunity if we don't take advantage of this dividend. Herein lies the significance of higher education. We must strive to prepare an educated and productive workforce through a concerted effort to improve the quality and relevance of higher education. RUSA will have a completely new approach towards funding higher education in state universities; it will be based on key principles of performance-based funding, incentivizing well performing institutions and decision-making through clearly defined norms.

Planning hierarchy of RUSA

The key objectives of RUSA are to improve access, equity and quality in higher education through planned development of higher education at the state level. Such planning will include creating new academic institutions, expanding and upgrading the existing ones, developing institutions that are self-reliant in terms of quality education, professionally managed, and characterized by greater inclination towards research and provide students with education that is relevant to them as well the nation as a whole.

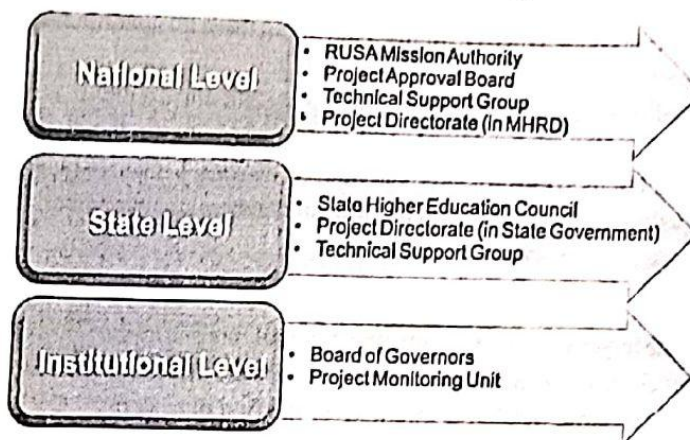


RUSA is not merely a new funding agency to support college/university/institute in the state higher education system but also the prime vehicle for implementing a comprehensive reform agenda at both the institutional and state level. The quantum of funding and further support under RUSA would be dependent upon the commitment to this reform process and the efficacy with which it is implemented.



Institutional structure of RUSA

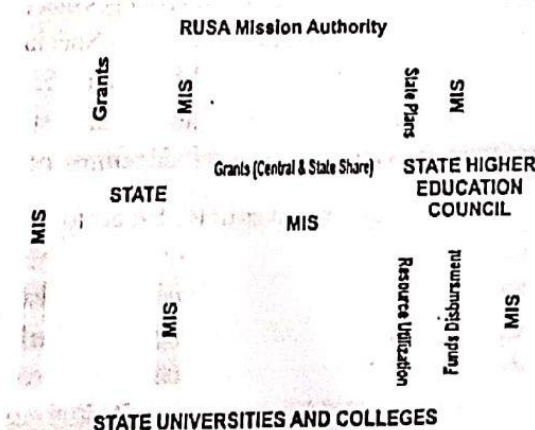
The XII Plan continues to maintain focus on higher education in the country, to make it more relevant to the global needs and to remove the inequities in access to education amongst various social groups. Such objectives are sought to be realized by providing adequate inputs and implementing much needed governance and regulatory reforms in the sector. Greater emphasis will be laid on the improvement of the quality of teaching learning processes in order to produce employable and competitive graduates, postgraduates and PhDs. A paradigm shift proposed by the Planning Commission is in the arena of funding of the state higher education system. Strategic funding of this sector has been strongly proposed in order to make a marked difference in the overall resource endowment for the state higher education sector.



The higher education system in India today suffers from many shortcomings. Our Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is only 19.4%, this means that only a fraction of the population in the age group of 18-23 years is enrolled in higher education institutions. In addition to very low access to higher education in general, there are wide disparities between various social groups. The GERs for SCs, STs and OBCs are far below the average GER and those of other social groups. There is also a wide gender disparity; GER for males is 20.9% while that for females is only 16.5%. There are also differences in the quality of institutions and enrolments between rural and urban areas and between developed states and underdeveloped ones. Given these myriad challenges, a drastic change is required in the approach that has traditionally been adopted for the development of higher education in the country.

Process flow of RUSA

There are four broad categories of higher education institutions in India, centrally funded institutions, state funded institutions, deemed institutions and private institutions. While the centrally-funded institutions (Central Universities, IITs, NITs, IISERs, Institutes of National Importance etc) receive generous funding from the center, they have a limited coverage in terms of enrollment. About 94% of the students enrolled in government funded (48% of total enrolments) or government controlled private institutions come under the state higher education system. It is worth noting that most private education institutions (52% of all enrolments) are affiliated to state universities and come under their academic and administrative control. Thus,



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