Boosting Higher Education in India: A Study with Special Reference to RUSA

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Abstract

Government of India has taken initiatives for the development of its educational sector. Programmes like SSA, RMSA and so forth. These are for universalizing the elementary and secondary educational sector respectively. As a continuation of these programme central government planned programme for universalizing and improvement of quality standards in higher education sector in India, and a similar kind of educational scheme - Rashtriya Uchchatar Siksha Abhiyan (RUSA) has been launched by union Government to carry forward the benefits drawn from the elementary and secondary educational schemes. This paper will focus on the basic information as well as and main objectives of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) which is meant for universalizing higher education in India.

KEYWORDS: Universalization, elementary Education, Secondary Education, RMSA, SSA, RUSA

Introduction

Education is the foundation stone of nation's intellectual development. 21st century has been acknowledged as the '' knowledge century''. Now every nation of the world not only needs income oriented growth but knowledge oriented development. Education is not the preparation of life but life itself.

Higher education is that education which is provided after the completion of secondary education and the entrants are about the age of 18 years. The structure of higher education consists of 3 years of education leading to bachelor's degree, 2 years of masters and 3 years for PhD degree which generally takes longer. This structure is obtained by most of Indian states. Higher education occupies a special position in education system because it is at the apex of entire educational structure and thus influencing all levels of education. Higher education is essential for every society and individual's .thus education particularly higher education plays a complementary role for overall individual, social and national development
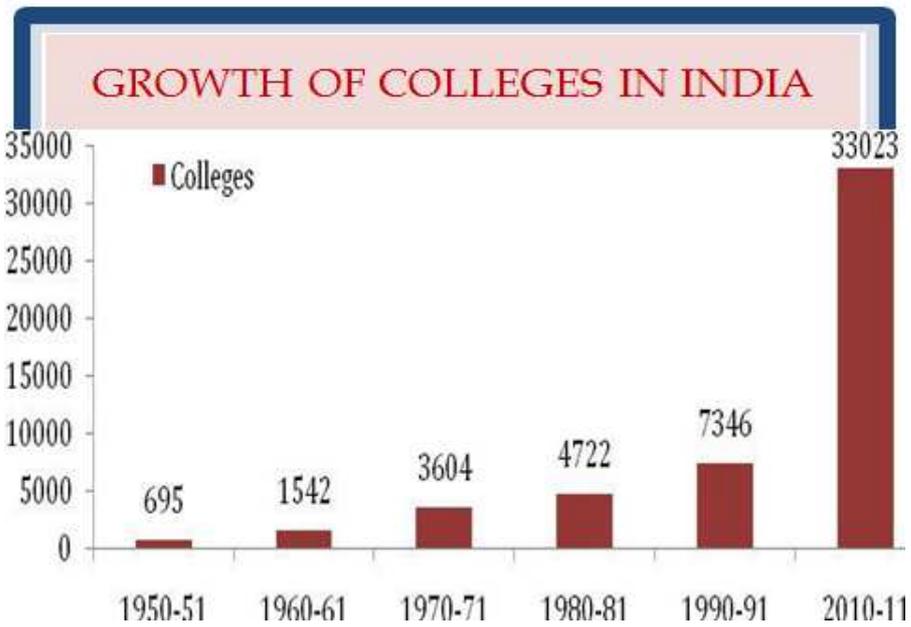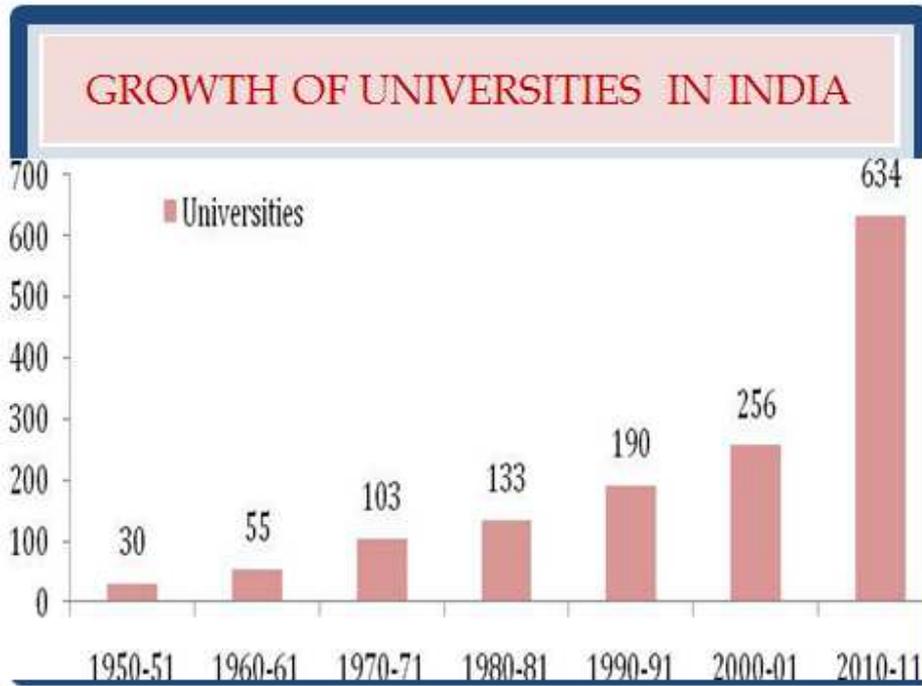
DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Vedic and Buddhist period: Even before the establishment of universities in Europe, India has long history of higher education. Since from ancient times, India has a tradition of enlightenment and scholarship in various fields. Even during Vedic period India had enlightened world through famous seat of higher learning. It is on record (radha Krishna commission 1948-1949) that the University of Takshala flourished up to the end of 5th century and Nalanda survived up to 12th century.

Muslim Period: Medieval period was the period of conquest, destruction and loot. However Mohammad Ghauri, who was the first Muslim ruler to start a madrasah at Ajmer, encouraged higher education. Some more school (maktabs) and colleges (madrasah) were set up by some other Muslim rulers at Lahore, Delhi, Rampur, Bidar, Lucknow, Allahabad, Agra, Fatehpur sikri etc. and medium of instruction was Arabic and Persian.

Pre-Independence Period: The East India Company which came to India in 1600 CE paid no attention to education till 1813. The British parliament directed the Company ''TO accept the responsibility of education of Indians''. But the Company was reluctant to make any attempt in this direction because the officers of company suspect that western education might encourage the growth of nationalism among the people of India. Therefore they adopted the policy of encouraging the Indigenous system of education and opened ''Calcutta madrasah in 1781'' to encourage and develop education in Persian and Arabic .This was done to appease the Muslims of Bengal. Similarly to appease the Hindus they opened ''Banaras Sanskrit college in 1791'' to encourage and develop education in Sanskrit. The western higher education began with the establishment of `` Hindu college at Calcutta in 1817'' by ``Raja Ram Mohan Roy One interesting fact about Indian higher education is that colleges were established even before the birth of universities. On the recommendation of Woods despatch 1854, the first 3 modern universities were established at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay in 1857.the function of these universities was to conduct exam, award degree. With the rapid rise in enrollment, the university of Punjab at Lahore (1882) and university of Allahabad (1887) were established. Later on more universities were established. At the time of independence in 1947, there were 19 universities and several hundred affiliated colleges   (CABE, 2005).

Post-independence period: After independence, which coincided with the post-Second World War era, India made efforts to improve access to higher education and the system grew rapidly after independence. The department of education created in 1945 was converted into full-fledged ministry of education. Higher education was the first sector of education to attract the attention of the union government. As the first step, ``university education commission 1948-1949'' was appointed, which recommended rapid expansion of higher education in India on a priority basis. During the period of 3 years from 1947-1950, seven new universities were established raising the total number of universities 27. By 1980, there were 132 universities and 4722 colleges in the country enrolling around five percent of the eligible age group in higher education. No doubt Indian higher education is one of the second largest; other one is China and the United States. Yet is one of the most complex ones

GROWTH OF UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA

■ Universities

30	55	103	133	190	256	634
1950-51	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	2000-01	2010-11

GROWTH OF COLLEGES IN INDIA

■ Colleges

695	1542	3604	4722	7346	33023
1950-51	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	2010-11

Current Status of Higher Education

Type of Institution	Number
Central Universities (Public)	44
State Universities (Public)	306
State Universities (Private)	154
Deemed Universities (Private or Public)	129
Institution of National Importance (Public)	67
Total Degree-granting Institutions	700
Affiliated Colleges (Public or Private)	35,539

Enrollment of Indian Students by Level of Education

Level	Number ('000)	% of Total
Graduate (Bachelor's)	17,456	86%
Post-Graduate (Master's)	2,492	12%
Research (Doctoral)	161	1%
Diploma/Certificate	218	1%
	20,327	

Enrollment of Indian Students by fields of study

Field	Number ('000)	% of Total
Arts	7,539	37%
Science	3,790	19%
Commerce & Management	3,571	18%
Engineering & Technology	3,262	16%
Education	733	4%
Medicine	716	4%
Law	373	2%
Others	218	1%
Agriculture	97	0%
Veterinary Science	28	0%
	20,327	
	100%	

Source: Statistics on Higher Education, 2012-13

QUALITY MAINTENANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: REGULATORY BODIES Higher education in India is coordinated by several agencies. While most of general higher education falls within the jurisdiction of the UGC, professional institutions are coordinated by different bodies. The AICTE is responsible for coordinating technical and management education institution. The other statutory bodies are Medical Council of India (MCI), Central Council of Indian Medicine, The Homeopathy Central Council, The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Indian Nursing Council, The Dental Council, The Pharmacy Council, The Bar Council of India, and The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) etc. There are also a few such bodies at state level, such as State Council of Higher education that were established currently. There are yet another type of a coordinating agency, called AIU, which was earlier known as Inter-University Board of India. AIU has no executive powers, but plays an important role as an agency of dissemination of information and as an adviser both to the government and/or UGC and University.

SL N0:	Name Of The Body	Mandate
01	University Grants Commission	Co-ordination, determination and maintenance of standards in higher education. ; Release of grants to individual institutions
02	All India Council for Technical Education	Proper planning & coordinated development of technical education system throughout the country
03	Distance Education Bureau	Promotion of Open University in and Distance Education systems in the educational pattern of the country
04	Indian Council of Agricultural Research	Co-ordination of agricultural research and development programs and develop linkages at national and international levels
05	Bar Council of India	Co-ordination, determination and maintenance of standards in legal education and profession
06	National Council for Teachers Education	Achieving planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country
07	Rehabilitation Council of India	Standardization and regulation of training of personnel and professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education
08	Medical Council of India	Establishment of standards in medical education and to define medical qualifications in India
09	Pharmacy Council of India	Prescription, regulation and maintenance of minimum educational standards for the training of pharmacists
10	Indian Nursing Council	Regulation and maintenance of uniform standards of training
11	Dental Council of India	Regulation of the Dental education and ethics in the country
12	Central Council of Homeopathy	Maintenance of the central Register organisation of Homoeopathy
13	Central Council of Indian Medicine	Maintenance of the central Register of Indian Medicine

Evaluation Norms and standards in Indian Higher Education

The system of higher education, like any other system, requires performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation of universities and colleges in the country. In this

connection, the ugc under section 12(ccc) established National Assessment and Accreditation council (NAAC) in 1994. The main purpose of assessment and accreditation is improvement and enhancement of quality, recognizing excellence, accountability, information providing and benchmarking. The assessment is mainly based on seven major criteria such as the following;

1. Curricular Aspects
2. Teaching – learning and evaluation
3. Research, consultancy and extension
4. Infrastructure and learning resource
5. Student support and progression
6. Organization and management
7. Best and innovative practice

Grading System

A significant outcome of the Assessment is the final Institutional grading. After Assessment, the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of an Institution is computed and the institution is assigned appropriate grade on a four point scale.

RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (RUSA)- NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION MISSION

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 has not seen any concerted efforts 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. 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 favorable 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 on the grounds that what matters is not the size of the population, but its age structure. It would be a lost opportunity if this dividend in not converted into an advantage. Herein lies the significance of higher education. An educated and productive workforce is what we must strive to achieve through a concerted effort to improve quality and relevance of higher education

The XIIth 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. The higher education system in India today suffers from many shortcomings. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is only 18.8% 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. 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 quality of

institutions and enrollments between rural and urban areas and between developed states and not so developed ones.

Objective 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 create by creating new academic institutions, and expand the existing 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.

Scope of RUSA

RUSA is an umbrella scheme. RUSA will support all state universities and colleges (Both 12B and 2f and non-12B and non-2f) across the country. 316 state universities and 13, 02487 colleges will be covered under this initiative.

Funding Pattern

The funding will be provided in the (Center : State) ratio of 90:10 for North-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 private government-aided institutions also, subject to their meeting certain pre-conditions, for permitted activities based on laid down norms and parameters

SUGESSTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

By 2030, India will be amongst the youngest nations in the world. With nearly 140 million people in the college-going age group, one in every four graduates in the world will be a product of the Indian higher education system. There are some suggestions and Expectations from Government, Industry, Educational Institutions, Parents and Students for improving quality of higher education-

1. **Towards a Learning Society-** As we move towards a learning society, every human activity will require contributions from experts, and this will place the entire sector of higher education in sharp focus. Although the priorities, which are being assigned today to the task of Education for All, will continue to be preponderant, the country will have to prepare itself to invest more and more on higher education and, simultaneously, measures will have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade higher education and research programmes.

2. **Industry and Academia Connection-** Industry and Academia connect necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs (keeping in view knowledge + skills+ global professional skills = good jobs).

3. **Incentives to Teachers and Researchers**- Industry and students are expecting specialized courses to be offered so that they get the latest and best in education and they are also industry ready and employable. Vocational and Diploma courses need to be made more attractive to facilitate specialized programs being offered to students.

Incentives should be provided to teachers and researchers to make these professions more attractive for the younger generation.

4. **Innovative Practices**- The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. It offers opportunities for economic growth, improved health, better service delivery, improved learning and socio-cultural advances. Though efforts are required to improve the country's innovative capacity, yet the efforts should be to build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research innovation-growth linkage.

5. **To mobilize resources-** The decline in public funding in the last two plan periods has resulted in serious effects on standards due to increasing costs on non-salary items and emoluments of staff, on the one hand, and declining resources, on the other. Effective measures will have to be adopted to mobilize resources for higher education. There is also a need to relate the fee structure to the student's capacity to pay for the cost. So that, students at lower economic levels can be given highly subsidized and fully subsidized education.

6. **Coming of Information Age-** The world is entering into an Information Age and developments in communication, information and technology will open up new and cost-effective approaches for providing the reach of higher education to the youth as well as to those who need continuing education for meeting the demands of explosion of information, fast-changing nature of occupations, and lifelong education. Knowledge, which is at the heart of higher education, is a crucial resource in the development of political democracy, the struggle for social justice and progress towards individual enlightenment.

7. **Student-Centered Education and Dynamic Methods-** Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become. Student-centered education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers new attitudes and new skills. Methods of teaching through lectures will have to subordinate to the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and pupils, and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.

8. **Public Private Partnership**- PPP is most essential to bring in quality in the higher education system. Governments can ensure PPP through an appropriate policy. University Grants Commission and Ministry of HRD should play a major role in developing a purposeful interface between the Universities, Industries and National Research Laboratories (NRLs) as a step towards PPP. Funding to NRLs by the government should ensure the involvement of institutions of higher education engaged in research activities to facilitate availability of latest sophisticated

Equipment. There has been some effort both by the government and the private education institutions to develop the teaching staff at various levels. However, this needs to be intensified with appropriate attention to all the aspects related in order to prepare quality and sufficient number of educational staff. Such efforts need a very serious structuring for the research base institutions. We have to be optimistic that private-public partnership and the Industry interface will take place in the field of education at all levels, and particularly in the backward regions, which is the needof the hour. To achieve excellence, we thus need to create a real partnership between government, educators and industry–

Partnerships that can provide our high-tech industries with skilled workers who meet the standards of their industry.

9. **To Provide Need Based Job-Oriented Courses**- All round development of personality is the purpose of education. But the present day education is neither imparting true knowledge of life and nor improving the talent of a student by which one can achieve laurels in the field one is interested. So, combination of arts subjects and computer science and science and humanities or literature should be introduced so that such courses could be useful for the students to do jobs after recruitment in some companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to higher education. The programme must be focused on graduate studies and research and developing strategies and mechanisms for the rapid and efficient transfer of knowledge and for its application to specific national and local conditions and needs. Meritorious doctoral students should be recognized through teaching assistantships with stipends over and above the research fellowships. Finally, based on knowledge only vision of the future life and work can be had; based on this vision only a broad ambition can be fixed for oneself; and based on this ambition only one can lead interesting life doing satisfying job to do remarkable achievements in some field in the world.

10. **International Cooperation-** Universities in India have been a primary conduit for the advancement and transmission of knowledge through traditional functions such as research, innovation, teaching, human resource development, and continuing education. International cooperation is gaining importance as yet another function. With the increased development of transport and communication, the global village is witnessing a growing emphasis on international cooperation and action to find satisfactory solutions to problems that have global dimensions and higher educationist one of them.

11. **Towards a New vision-** India realizes, like other nations of the world, that humanity stands today at the head of a new age of a large synthesis of knowledge, and that the East and the West have to collaborate in bringing about concerted action for upliftment, and lasting peace and unity. In this new age, great cultural achievements of the past have to be recovered and enriched in the context of the contemporary advancement so that humanity can successfully meet the evolutionary and revolutionary challenges and bring about a new type of humanity and society marked by integrated powers of physical, emotional, dynamic, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual potentialities.

12. **Cross Culture Programmes-** After education, tour to all the places in India and world as far as possible with the cooperation of government is necessary so that one can understand about people, culture, arts, literature, religions, technological developments and progress of human society in the world.

13. **Action Plan for Improving Quality**- Academic and administrative audit should be conducted once in three years in colleges by external experts for ensuring quality in all aspects of academic activities. The self-finance colleges should come forward for accreditation and fulfill the requirements of accreditation. Universities and colleges should realize the need for quality education and come forward with action plan for improving quality in higher educational institutions.

14. **Individuality-** The life of one will not be interesting but rather boring, monotonous and frustrating. This is mainly due to parental interference in the education of the children. Parental guidance is necessary but it should not interfere in the creativity or individuality of the students. Also, in spite of the obsolete type of education system, some

are achieving wonderful things in Sports, Music, Dance, Painting, Science and Technology in the world. This is only due to the encouragement of the parents and some dedicated teachers in the educational institutions. Higher education is necessary for one to achieve excellence in the line one is best. But one should be

selected for higher education on the basis of merit only. Further, fees for education in general should not be high; especially, the fees for higher studies should be within the reach of every class of people in the nation.

15. **Privatization of Higher Education-** In any nation education is the basic necessity for the socio-economic development of the individuals and the society. In reality only 20% of the population is educated in India. So, improved standard of education as first priority should be offered to the majority by the govt. authorities with sincere political will. Also, privatization of higher education is absolutely necessary in a vast country like India as government alone is helpless to do so.

16. **Quality development-** Quality depends on its all functions and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, building, facilities, equipments, services to the community and the acdemic environment. It also requires that higher education should be characterized by its international dimensions: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students and international research projects, while taking ino account the national cultural values and circumstances. The level of education and knowledge being imparted by many colleges is not up to the mark. Instead of concentrating on quantity, these institutions should concentrate on quality..

17. **World Class Education-** Indian government is not giving priority to the development of Standard in education. India should aspire for the international standard in education. Many national universities like in the USA, UK, Australia, etc. allow studies in higher education for foreign students in their countries and through correspondence courses as well. In the same way India Universities of world class education can also offer courses of studies to foreign students taking advantage of the globalization process. To achieve that goal it should adopt uniform international syllabus in its educational institutions.

18. **Personality Development-** Finally, education should be for the flowering of personality but not for the suppression of creativity or natural skill. In the globalized world opportunities for the educated people are naturally ample in scope. As a result business process outsourcing (BPO) activities have increased competition in the world trade leading towards the production of quality goods and their easy availability everywhere in the world market. That is the way the world can be developed for peace, prosperity and progress by able and skilful men.

19. **Status of Academic Research Studies-** If we see the number of researchers engaged in Research and Development activities as compared to other countries we find that we have merely 119 researchers, whereas Japan has 5287 and US has 4484 researchers per million of population. Even in absolute terms, number of researchers in India is much smaller compared to US, China,

20. **Fair Quality Assurance System**- Colleges and Private institutes should set up Internal Quality Assurance Cell and must follow a minimum standard to give degrees. The quality assurance system must be independent of political and institutional interaction and it must have a basis in the legislation. There should be operational,

financial and academic autonomy coupled with accountability. There is a need of an independent accreditation agency with a conglomerate of government, industry, academia; society etc. means all stakeholders of the education to ensure

that the stakeholders particularly the students are not taken for a ride. They should be able to know whether a particular institution delivers value or not, then things can be under control to some extent. It is also important that all institutes of higher learning must make public the acceptability of their courses and degrees. (i.e. the status, recognition and acceptability of their courses by other institutions).

21. **Examination Reforms**- Examination reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning should be implemented

22. **High-tech Libraries-** Our university libraries have a very good collection of books, but they are all in mess. A library must be online and conducive for serious study. Indian universities should concentrate more on providing quality education which is comparable to that of international standards.

23**Make the curriculum Dynamic not Dogmatic-**The curriculum or the syllabus for students in our country in higher education is outdated in most cases. It is stale, dogmatic and teaches things that the world has moved on with. To infuse dynamism, you need the curriculum to be progressive in nature.

24.**Make the Teachers feel worthy, pay them more-** The academic curriculum board, in most cases is filled with people above their 60's and 70's. With all due respect to them, I strongly feel that you need a bunch of younger professors in there to have that mix of experience and youth in the system. The younger ones would be more in sync, more in line with the technological changes and the new age needs of the students in their years to come. Very few among the young are actually in teaching for the sake of teaching. The point is very simple; they are paid pittens in comparison with the rest. A graduating student earns more in an IT company than what a Lecturer or even a Assistant Professor earns in some colleges (despite the 6th Pay commission increase which covers only on the Government colleges). Once you start paying more, you get quality faculty in, you get people who actually want to teach and people who are worth the caliber of teaching. After this, you will have a scenario where you have quality young people who can actually give the 60's and 70's in the curriculum boards a run for their money and there wouldn't be any excuses. So where would the money come in from?

All of the above are just mere suggestions to tackle system that has numerous issues. These suggestions might not break the deadlock or create a revolution by any means but it can be something that can be incorporated. These suggestions might not be relevant to some. These suggestions might also sound farfetched but if it at least one of them adds value somewhere to the education system, then it's worth it

CONCLUSION

RUSA represents a key milestone in the history of higher education in India It introduces a significant strategic shift in the approach towards developing the higher education system in the country, by focusing on state level institutions which have been neglected over the years in relation to centrally funded institutions. RUSA could well become 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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