

Vol III Issue X April 2014

ISSN No :2231-5063

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

Chief Editor
Dr.Tukaram Narayan Shinde

Publisher
Mrs.Laxmi Ashok Yakkaldevi

Associate Editor
Dr.Rajani Dalvi

Honorary
Mr.Ashok Yakkaldevi

Welcome to GRT

RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2231-5063

Golden Research Thoughts Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

International Advisory Board

Flávio de São Pedro Filho Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Mohammad Hailat Dept. of Mathematical Sciences, University of South Carolina Aiken	Hasan Baktir English Language and Literature Department, Kayseri
Kamani Perera Regional Center For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka	Abdullah Sabbagh Engineering Studies, Sydney	Ghayoor Abbas Chotana Dept of Chemistry, Lahore University of Management Sciences[PK]
Janaki Sinnasamy Librarian, University of Malaya	Catalina Neculai University of Coventry, UK	Anna Maria Constantinovici AL. I. Cuza University, Romania
Romona Mihaila Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ecaterina Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest	Horia Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest,Romania
Delia Serbescu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Loredana Bosca Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ilie Pinteau, Spiru Haret University, Romania
Anurag Misra DBS College, Kanpur	Fabricio Moraes de Almeida Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Xiaohua Yang PhD, USA
Titus PopPhD, Partium Christian University, Oradea,Romania	George - Calin SERITAN Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political Sciences AL. I. Cuza University, IasiMore

Editorial Board

Pratap Vyamktrao Naikwade ASP College Devrukh,Ratnagiri,MS India	Iresh Swami Ex - VC. Solapur University, Solapur	Rajendra Shendge Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University, Solapur
R. R. Patil Head Geology Department Solapur University,Solapur	N.S. Dhaygude Ex. Prin. Dayanand College, Solapur	R. R. Yaliker Director Managment Institute, Solapur
Rama Bhosale Prin. and Jt. Director Higher Education, Panvel	Narendra Kadu Jt. Director Higher Education, Pune	Umesh Rajderkar Head Humanities & Social Science YCMOU,Nashik
Salve R. N. Department of Sociology, Shivaji University,Kolhapur	K. M. Bhandarkar Praful Patel College of Education, Gondia	S. R. Pandya Head Education Dept. Mumbai University, Mumbai
Govind P. Shinde Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance Education Center, Navi Mumbai	Sonal Singh Vikram University, Ujjain	Alka Darshan Shrivastava Shaskiya Snatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Dhar
Chakane Sanjay Dnyaneshwar Arts, Science & Commerce College, Indapur, Pune	G. P. Patankar S. D. M. Degree College, Honavar, Karnataka	Rahul Shriram Sudke Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore
Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya Secretary,Play India Play,Meerut(U.P.)	Maj. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary Director,Hyderabad AP India.	S.KANNAN Annamalai University,TN
	S.Parvathi Devi Ph.D.-University of Allahabad	Satish Kumar Kalhotra Maulana Azad National Urdu University
	Sonal Singh, Vikram University, Ujjain	

Address:-Ashok Yakkaldevi 258/34, Raviwar Peth, Solapur - 413 005 Maharashtra, India
Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.aygrt.isrj.net



TOWARDS A CULTURE OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVES : RUSA IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Shelly Parul Bhadwal

Assitant Professor (English), Siddharth Government College Nadaun,
District Hamirpur. Himachal Prsdesh (India)

Abstract:-Development of a knowledge economy is a prerequisite for the advancement of a society and a nation, at large. While access and equity in education is important, it is quality of education that should be considered paramount. Various agencies of the Government of India have been working towards providing the best education to its citizens. With relation to higher education in India, the introduction of RUSA (Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan) is one such flagship initiative. It is an endeavor towards providing better quality higher education in India. Despite being a project with a progressive vision and intent, the program suffers from certain structural, systemic and administrative impediments that need rectification. This paper is an attempt to highlight some of these impediments that lay in the way of effective implementation of RUSA in Himachal Pradesh. A special emphasis will be laid on the need for quality in higher education and RUSA, in particular, at the executional level.

Keywords:RUSA, Higher Education, Quality of Education, Himachal Pradesh

1.INTRODUCTION

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas.

-Swami Vivekananda

In order to confidently face the challenges of the 21st century any country that intends to make a mark in the globalized world of today needs to tap the enormous reservoir of knowledge and human resource. Recognizing this fact, the policy makers and educationalist in India have worked upon enhancing participation in the education sector at all levels and on developing the education sector in terms of access, equity, accountability and quality. Consequently, the policy makers have strived to make higher education from a onetime endeavor to a lifelong process, from being accessible to a few to becoming all-inclusive and most of all, developing it from being teacher-centric to learner-centric. In all these endeavors, quality and excellence, however, have somewhere been compromised.

It would not be correct to assume that prioritizing access and equity will ensure the fulfillment of the vision and aspirations regarding education in the country. While expansion and inclusion have rightly been emphasized in the discourse on higher education in India, it is quality and excellence which should be vital to the reformational agenda. It is critical to the reforms in education so that the aspirations of the country are fulfilled and it is inspired to achieve its full future potential.

2.RATIONALE

India is the second largest system of higher education in the world. Despite all the efforts of the government, the total number of students enrolling in higher education institutions in the country is far less than the average in developed countries. In the age group of 20-25 the enrolment in higher education is only 9% to 11% in India as compared to 45% to 85% in developed countries (Sharma 6). It is disheartening to observe that only a small proportion of the Indian population graduates from the secondary level. In addition, the extremely large dropout rate at the higher level of education is also a cause of concern. According to the Government of India's National Sample Survey Organization (61st Round on Employment and Unemployment, 2004-05), only 5.9 percent of the population in the age group of 15-60 years attains educational levels of

graduate and above (Sharma 6).

But what is most alarming is the deficiency of quality in higher education in our country and the inability of Indian institutions to meet the international standards of quality. While the goals of access and equity in the education have been meted to some extent, the objective of quality and excellence in education is still wanting. With the intent to meet this demand, the MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource and Development) initiated RUSA (Rastriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan). It covers nearly 316 state public universities and 13,024 colleges all across the country. The purpose of this initiative is to improve the overall quality of existing higher education institutions by ensuring academic and examination reforms — the CBCS (Choice Based Credit System) and semester examination being some of the reforms.

The present paper is an attempt to bring to light the impediments that lay in the way of effective implementation of RUSA in Himachal Pradesh. The paper will attempt to elucidate the concept of quality and emphasize its need in higher education. An attempt will be made to suggest some steps that should be taken to ensure quality education under the RUSA program.

3. CONCEPT OF QUALITY

Higher education in India is experiencing a crisis of quality in the present times. The reason for crisis in higher education is largely due to the fact that so far the system has tried to evolve primarily in a quantitative manner and has not ensured the qualitative aspect of education. While the opportunities for higher education, in terms of number, have increased, the quality of higher education requires substantial improvement.

Consequently, the gap between higher education institutions in the country and those around the world has widened. It is disappointing to note that none of the country's institutions are ranked among the best in the world. Therefore, it is paramount that quality and excellence are sustained and upgraded in all the institutions of higher education to match international levels. The definition of quality education has been a much debated concept. According to UNESCO, quality education is a prerequisite for sustainable development. In UNESCO's Ministerial Round Table on Quality Education, 2003, it was observed that:

[Q]uality education...should equip all people, women and men, to be fully participating members of their own communities and also citizens of the world.

It can be inferred that quality in higher education should be understood as a system of education that not only ensures that students achieve their individual goals but that the society and the nation, at large, moves towards progress and growth. According to Article 11 of the World Declaration on Higher Education, quality is a multidimensional concept. Quality education needs to incorporate all functions and activities that include teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, faculties, equipment, services the community and the academic environment. In order to ensure quality education, it is paramount to identify some basic prerequisites. Among the various requirements for quality in education, access to infrastructural facilities and a well qualified faculty are two major preconditions for quality assurance. However, simply limiting one's endeavors to increase in infrastructural requirements and faculty for enhancing effectiveness and quality in education is not enough.

It is important that access to education is designed in a way so as to work towards the full development of a learner's personality and encourage scientific and critical thinking. Quality in education, more importantly, needs to be understood not as an end, but as a process and a culture — a process of transformation where each stakeholder strives for excellence and acknowledges the importance of quality.

4. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TOWARDS QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

In an endeavor towards quality and excellence in higher education, the government has set up various national level bodies and agencies that are responsible for the efficient working of higher education institutions all over the country. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the prime agency among them. Ever since its establishment, access, equity and quality in higher education have been the guiding rationale of the UGC. Reiterating its commitment, the UGC recommended enhancement of the triple objectives of access and expansion, equity and inclusion, and quality and excellence in higher education sector under the 12th Five Year Plan. It recognizes that it is necessary to ensure quality enhancing measures and support.

Accordingly, the UGC has taken measures towards structural, systemic as well as academic reforms by setting up Centers for Advanced Studies and Internal Quality Assurance Cells, reforming the Academic Staff College (ASC), establishing New Faculty Development Centers, initiating evaluation of teachers by students and peer assessment, strengthening and expanding e-initiatives and reforming the Self-financed Teaching Programmes, to name a few.

In addition, the UGC provides financial assistance to teachers teaching in Universities and Colleges to promote excellence in teaching and research. In the session 2012-13, the UGC has supported as many as 987 Major Research Projects and 7501 Minor Research Projects and incurred an expenditure of 61.86 crores. In this way, capacity building and optimum utilization of land, space, and faculty have been the key concerns of the UGC.

The Commission also recommends stepping up capacity and improvement of infrastructure which can attract and facilitate the retention of students from rural and backward areas as well as differently-abled and marginalised social groups to enhance equity and inclusion in higher education.

The UGC has also initiated a program to promote excellence in teaching and research in colleges. This program provides financial support to the colleges to help them improve their academic and physical infrastructure, introduce innovative teaching methodologies and implement modern learning and evaluation methods.

Accreditation of colleges and universities is yet another measure that has been taken by the UGC to ensure and promote quality and excellence in higher education. The most recent endeavor towards this end is the introduction of the Rashtriya Uchch Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).

5.RUSA IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

5.1.Initiation of program

Part of the 12th Plan, RUSA is a centrally sponsored scheme that was made effective from the academic session 2013-14 in Himachal Pradesh. Its aim is to improve access, equity and quality in state higher education. Its objective is also to correct regional imbalance in access to higher education through high quality institutions in rural and semi urban areas. Consequently, the plan assures financial assistance to all states. According to the financial outlay of the Plan, the centre-state funding ratio for Himachal Pradesh is 90:10. The funding has been offered with a view to set up adequate infrastructure facilities and fulfillment of faculty requirements for the smooth functioning of RUSA.

5.2.Executional challenges

In an effort to improve the existing evaluation and examination system, RUSA introduced the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and shifted from the annual system of examination to the semester system of examination. The CBSS offers a wide range of core and elective subjects to the students. It is a student centric approach that enables the student to opt for subjects from their respective parent department or any other department. This interdisciplinary approach has been introduced with an intent to promote all round development of students and to widen the horizon of their learning. In addition, the semester system gives students the opportunity to improve and assess their performance in a better manner and get the necessary guidance and feedback from the faculty at regular intervals.

Despite being substantial and effective measures in attaining quality and excellence in higher education, these reforms suffer from many impediments at the executional level. Some of them have been enumerated as under:

- 1.Foremost is the lack in terms of infrastructural facilities The CBCS might offer a brilliant opportunity for the students to choose from the various subject choices available to them, but it has been observed that the lack of infrastructure and faculty inhibits the students to take up their desired combination of subjects. The lack of class rooms and laboratories to accommodate students and operate various courses simultaneously is problem that needs to be addressed urgently to ensure quality. With the computerization of all administrative procedures of RUSA, the need for computer education for students as well as teachers also becomes paramount.
- 2.Secondly, a dismal teacher-student ratio remains a major impediment in the process of attaining quality and excellence. Despite giving the students the opportunity to choose from a plethora of subjects, the lack of adequate number of teachers restricts the students to limit themselves to a handful of subject choices. It is due to the lack of faculty that many colleges have not been able to introduce all the courses offered under RUSA.
- 3.Thirdly, the eager move to promote interdisciplinarity also does not come without certain hitches. The subject combinations available to the students prove irrelevant many times. This diversity of subjects may, at times, deviate the energy of the student in endeavors that might prove unproductive in the long run. Choosing subjects that are irrelevant in enhancing the student's knowledge regarding his/her principle subject might lead to the students becoming a jack of all trades but masters of none. Therefore, there is a need to rethink the choice of elective subjects that do not promote excellence in one particular subject.
- 4.Fourthly, the CBCS seems to lack vocational utility. The mindless choices made by the students in order to fulfill the credit requirements do not give them any vocational proficiency.
- 5.Fifthly, the design of the curriculum for the various subjects also needs revision. The curriculum needs to be designed bearing in mind the academic level of the students. It has been observed that lack of proficiency in a given subject at school level impedes the students to understand high level curricula at the college level. This difficulty in understanding forces the students to mug up the syllabus mindlessly and thus degrading the quality of education received. The syllabus also needs to be limited as per the time available for its effective completion.
- 6.Sixthly, the time constraints that accompany the semester system also effect quality of education being imparted. The teachers and students do not have enough time to finish the syllabus properly due to lack time. They have to rush through the syllabus without paying heed to the quality of education being imparted. The evaluation of answer scripts and assignments is also rushed through in order to meet the semester deadlines.
- 7.Lastly, in order meet the challenge of proficiency and excellence on the academic front, the students seem to opt out of co-

curricular and sports activities. This certainly impedes the overall development of their personality and thus compromises the quality of education imparted and received.

5.3 Steps towards quality enhancement:

Apart from upgrading infrastructure and improving the teacher-student ratio, the following suggestions might be considered in order to improve the implementation of these new academic reforms and the assurance of quality:

1.Relevant Subject Choices: Interdisciplinarity is the need of the hour. But it should be implemented with caution. The elective subjects offered to the students should be such so as to enhance the ambit of their knowledge in the primary subject of their choice. For instance, students in the faculties of sciences may be offered elective courses in applied sciences rather than compulsory electives in history or geography. Similarly, students in the faculty of languages may be offered courses in foreign languages or other regional languages so as to widen their understanding of language and literature.

2.Vocational Counseling: It is observed most of the time that students succumb to herd mentality while making a choice of subjects without thinking about the vocational utility of the course. Therefore, the students need to be counseled and informed regarding the various subject choices that are available to them and which might serve helpful to them in the vocational point of view.

3.Annual Calendar for Co-Curricular Activities: In order to promote the all round development of the students, an annual calendar should be designed that schedules time for participation in co-curricular and sports activities throughout the year.

4.Compulsory Computer Education: Bearing in mind the computerization of all administrative procedures under RUSA, computer education should be made mandatory for all students for all three years. Computer literacy will not only make them better competitors for jobs, but will also save them from the financial exploitation that they are subjected to by cyber café owners while filling up examination forms, in particular.

6.CONCLUSION

It is thus important to realize that a progressive qualitative improvement of the higher education landscape in the country desirable that caters to improvement at all levels. Higher education in the country needs to undergo a paradigmatic shift from viewing education as a mere national enterprise to considering it as a global one. Reforms in higher education in India need to be propelled not only to meet the requirements of a growing national economy and the need for inclusive growth, but also to survive in a competing global environment. The need of the hour is to develop a cognizant and coherent quality system to improve the academic and administrative performance of higher education institutions in the country. Redressing identifiable inconsistencies and inequalities is essential in order to move towards the idea of quality and equality in higher education.

The policy making process needs to move beyond the tokenism that it often characterizes of. It is important to widen the horizons of our vision and work towards the creation of new paradigms of learning as well as assessment in higher education. This will inspire the attainment of excellence and lead to not only individual welfare, but that of the entire humanity.

Working towards quality enhancement and excellence will also be in tandem with the global requirements of the present times as well as the future. It is important to bear in mind that “quality is a concept; it is a philosophy; it is a journey” (Prasad, vi) . Therefore, it is only by the development of the culture of quality at all levels-structural, systemic and academic — that higher education institutions in India will stand for “humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth” (Nehru) .

REFERENCES

- 1.<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teachings_and_philosophy_of_Swami_Vivekananda>
- 2.George Fr. Davis. “Excellence and Quality Driven Expansion: XII Plan Perspective”. Web. <http://hpuniv.nic.in/pdf/quality_excellence.pdf>
- 3.Sharma, Suman. Higher Education: Recent Reform Initiatives in India. Web. <<http://www.napsipag.org/pdf/suman-sharma.pdf>>
- 4.Sharma, Suman. Higher Education: Recent Reform Initiatives in India. Web. <<http://www.napsipag.org/pdf/suman-sharma.pdf>>
- 5.For more information, refer to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtriya_Uchchatar_Shiksha_Abhiyan>
- 6.For more information, refer to <http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15505&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html>
- 7.For more information refer to <http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/declaration_eng.htm>
- 8.George Fr. Davis. “Excellence and Quality Driven Expansion: XII Plan Perspective”. Web.

http://hpuniv.nic.in/pdf/quality_excellence.pdf

9. For more information refer to "Indian Higher Education-Quest For Excellence: A Compendium of Flag Ship Programmes of UGC". Web. http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7580771_Flag-ship-Programmes-of-UGC.pdf

10. Qtd. in Mishra, Sanjay. "Quality Assurance in Higher Education: An Introduction". National Printing Press. Bangalore: 2007. Web. http://www.col.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/PUB_QAHE_Intro.pdf

11. Nehru, Jawaharlal. <http://www.jnu.ac.in>

Publish Research Article International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished Research Paper, Summary of Research Project, Theses, Books and Book Review for publication, you will be pleased to know that our journals are

Associated and Indexed, India

- * International Scientific Journal Consortium
- * OPEN J-GATE

Associated and Indexed, USA

- EBSCO
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Database
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database
- Directory Of Research Journal Indexing

Golden Research Thoughts
258/34 Raviwar Peth Solapur-413005, Maharashtra
Contact-9595359435
E-Mail-ayisrj@yahoo.in/ayisrj2011@gmail.com
Website : www.aygrt.isrj.net