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Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (Rusa) Current Higher Education Trends In Manipur

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***Abstract*: The last decade has witnessed that education sector has dominated economic planning in all over developing countries of the world. During this time, the countries transformed from developing to advanced economies due to strategic planning and a larger vision that correlated economic development to transformation in the education sector, in particular Higher Education and Research, to become globally competitive. Despite many new National Missions/Programs and reforms agenda, by both the central and state governments with private sector intervention, the higher education sector is in a state of complete flux in India. While we have tremendously enhanced capacity, we lag in quality, given inadequate autonomy to our Universities. Centralized control and a standardized approach remains at the heart of regulations (FICCI, 2013).**

This paper, newly explains about the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)/National Higher Education Mission, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for reforming the State Higher Education System in India. The end part of the title also portrays the economic impact of the scheme on the current Higher Education System of Manipur in the North-Eastern States of India.

***Keywords:* Higher Education, RUSA Preparation, RUSA Approval, RUSA Implementation, RUSA in India and Manipur, National Mission Authority, PAB, TSG, SHEC, SHEP, Higher Education System in Manipur, MSHEC, MSHEP**

1. INTRODUCTION

"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."
—FICCI[1]

Before exploring "RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (RUSA)/NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION MISSION — 2013" across the country it is enough to remember that ***"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."* —Mahatma Gandhi**[2]

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has forwarded that Asia's spectacular rise in enrolment rates in Higher Education over the past 20 years has been the subject of many reports published all over the world. It draws an attention to the result of high birth rates, increasing school participation rates, increasing demand of the society and economy for specialised human resources, and the perceived importance of advanced education in subsequent life opportunities (e.g. ADB, 2011; World Bank, 2012). Over the past four decades, global higher education enrollment increased from 32.6 million in 1970

[1]Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). 2013. Higher Education in India: Vision 2030 (New Delhi).
[2]Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). 2013. The Newsletter On Higher Education, Issue 1.

to 182.2 million students in 2011, 46% of which was in the East and South Asia region in 2011 (UIS, 2013). This phenomenal expansion was fueled by a convergence of demographic trends, public preferences, policy decisions and external economic circumstances (ADB, 2011). Among the key factors driving this growth were higher participation rates in basic education and higher progression rates in primary and secondary schools. More students were entering and graduating from Secondary School and seeking to continue their education. To accommodate these enrolment increases, Higher Education Systems have had to 'expand out' by constructing new universities, hiring new faculty members, diversifying delivery mechanisms, and allowing and encouraging the entry of private higher education providers (UIS, 2014).

Higher Education, thus, has expanded rapidly in recent ages reflecting the growing importance of the sector in promoting economic growth. The sector has introduced various reforms to align itself more closely with the market. Most of these have been influenced by the concept of 'new public management', which implies a lesser reliance on the State and a greater reliance on markets (IIEP, 2014).Reforms in higher education reflect the increasing importance and use of knowledge in production, and the role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in training for the production, transmission, and use of knowledge.Reforms in higher education in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) were intended to reposition and facilitate the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy. Higher education reforms in countries in Africa occurred mostly in response to a decline in the public financing of higher education. All these reforms centre on the idea of cost-recovery measures and indicate a clear shift in the provision and management of higher education from state to market. This implies a reduced reliance on the state for funding and control and a shift towards market processes. Thus, resulted in substantial changes in the way activities are organized and managed in institutions of higher education. Governance structures and management practices at the system and institution levels have been modified in response to these changes introduced at the national level. This has had a wide effect on the relative distribution of responsibilities for the management of higher education systems. In spite of this, the state continues to play a role, providing a framework for other non-state actors to intervene – in essence, steering from a distance (Varghese, 2009).

The transition from State to market in higher education was frequently mediated through higher education institutions. Many governments transferred part of their authority and responsibility to institutions of higher education in the form of increased institutional autonomy. This led to a shift from the state control model to a state supervision model of higher education management (OECD, 2003). In order to mediate effectively between the Ministry and higher education institutions, many countries have created established Ministries of Higher Education, National Quality Assurance Agencies and quality monitoring mechanisms, buffer institutions such as National Commissions for Higher Education, National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER), the setting up of a National Accreditation Agency, and the admittance of foreign educational institutions and so on (Varghese, 2014).

In India, all States and Union Territories across the country, this, in turn, have also required that the Higher Education Systems 'expand up'. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), therefore, is launching an umbrella scheme of RUSA as a flagship program of 12th Plan for reforming the State Higher Education System in India. Do you want to know how RUSA impacts on the current State Higher Education System of Manipur?

2. RUSA PREPARATION

Human resources are the top determinant of the overall development of the World. To impart education is the greatest charity and the key to knowledge of the future humanity. We all know that the main in use dies, the moment we stop learning (UGC, 2003) and also generally agrees to the moment we cease to learn and to grow, we die (Bookrags, 2014). Without doubt, education is the blood and soul of human power in the remaining 21st Century. Higher education is a key area to maintain a country's competitiveness in the global economy (UNESCO, 2011). Here, we can solve the problem and get the light that ***"The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living differ from the dead."*** **—Aristotle**[3]

No country has made the arduous journey from widespread rural poverty to post-industrial wealth without employing targeted and selective government policies to modify its economic structure and boost its economic dynamism. The

[3]Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). 2013. The Newsletter On Higher Education, Issue 12.

failure of developing countries to translate economic growth into jobs, economic development, poverty reduction and enhanced living standards has also contributed to new thinking on the relevance of policies and strategies, including industrial policies, to the proactive promotion of multiple development objectives. Overall, global unemployment increased by 5 million people in 2013 compared with the year before and, on current trends, it would rise by a further 13 million people by 2018. Almost 202 million people were unemployed in 2013 around the world. The bulk of the increase in global unemployment is in the East Asia and South Asia regions, which together represent more than 45 per cent of additional jobseekers, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. By contrast, Latin America added fewer than 50,000 additional unemployed to the global number – or around 1 per cent of the total increase in unemployment in 2013. This reflects the fact that employment is not expanding sufficiently fast to keep up with the growing labour force. (ILO, 2014).

For India, International Labour Organisation (ILO), further estimates that by 2020, it will have 116 million workers in the age group of 20-24 years as against 94 million in China. In addition to this, the average age of Indian population by 2020 will be 29 while many developed countries will be in early or late 40s (MHRD, 2013). This advantage of demographic dividend helps in creating enough sustainable job opportunities to prevent socio-economic complications arising out of a large unemployable young population within India.

Successful population policy, thus, lies on the top priority of a country and is also directly linked to its successful education policy which forms the bedrock of all fields of national development— political, economic, technical, scientific, social and environmental.Success in raising literacy rates and school enrollment rates while reducing drop-out rates, especially for women, are closely correlated with the delayed onset of marriage and child birth, improved mortality for both mothers and children, and reduction in family size. Greater coverage and better quality education at all levels from basic literacy to hi-tech science and technology is the essential prerequisite for raising agricultural productivity and industrial quality, spurring growth of India's budding IT and biotechnology sectors, stimulating growth of manufactured and service exports, improving health and nutrition, domestic stability and quality of governance (GoI, 2002). Hence, the importance of education can hardly, be overemphasized. To impart education, the best is to establish a school (UGC, 2003).

3. RUSA APPROVAL

The current policy and programs for the development of higher education in India is completely governed by the "National Policy on Education" of 1986 (as modified in 1992) and its Programme of Action adopted in 1992, based on two land mark basic framework reports namely, the "University Education Commission Report" of 1948-49 (popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission Report), and the "Education Commission Report" of 1964-66, (popularly known as the Kothari Commission Report). But, it was openly appealed that "***Our university system is, in many parts, in a state of disrepair.....In almost half the districts in the country, higher education enrollments are abysmally low, almost two-third of our universities and 90 per cent of our colleges are rated as below average on quality parameters.....I am concerned that in many states' university appointments, including that of vice-chancellors, have been politicized and have become subject to caste and communal considerations and there are complaints of favoritism and corruption.***" **—Manmohan Singh, Former PM, GoI**[4]

The National System of Qualifications in the Indian context comprises of School Education, Vocational Education and Higher Education. The School education comprises of twelve years of schooling subdivided into Primary, Elementary, Secondary and Senior Secondary levels. Such types of schools are largely governed by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and are by and large uniform across the country. The system of Vocational Education, aimed at skill development and employability, which has so far been overlapping across the school and higher education and largely seen as terminal, is now being sought to be streamlined through a National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) recently notified by the MHRD (CABE, 2013).

The 10th Plan (2002-07) provided a the basis for Higher Education System in India and the system is now accelerating itself in 12th Plan (2012-17) to face the challenges of the 21st Century. The preparation for the 11th Plan began in 2007. We all know that the Plan is also named as an "Education Plan" to usher in the "Second Wave" of development of higher

[4]Prime Minister's address at the 150th Anniversary Function of University of Mumbai.

education (UGC, 2013). Beside, many progressive steps are also taken in 12th, 13th and 14th Five Year Plans respectively. It has accelerated to the target and help to produce one-fourth of all graduates in the World by the system. India, thus, becomes the single largest benefactor of global talent and it seems to have indeed entered a golden age for higher education (Vision, 2030).

Amendment of the Constitution of India, 2002 to make elementary education a justiciable Fundamental Right emphasising on the "Universalization of Elementary Education" (UEE) guided by five parameters was the main focus of 10th Five Year Plan of India. Universal Access, Universal Enrollment, Universal Retention, Universal Achievement, and Equity are the targeted parameters. Besides, many major important schemes for elementary education sector were included, viz., Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, commonly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), Teacher Education Scheme, Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS), etc. (GoI, 2002; 2005).

Faster and inclusive growth were main objectives; and expansion, inclusion, and excellence along with equity and quality are the watchwords of the education sector in the 11th Education Plan. The share of this sector in total plan outlay increased to 19.4% from mere 6.7% of the last Plan, of which 30% was earmarked for higher education. This was a nine-fold increase over the 10th Plan, viz. Rs. 84,943 crores against Rs. 9,500 crores (GoI, 2008). This Plan, therefore, placed great emphasis on expanding access to education at all the three levels─elementary education, secondary education, and higher education─and also on improving the quality of education. The Right to Education (RTE) Act and Saakshar Bharat became operational in 2009 (GoI, 2011).There has been massive improvement both in regard to enrollment and in reduction of dropout rates. The major achievement is that most of children are now in the school. It is proof that for the age group 6-14 years in all of rural India, the percentage of children who are not enrolled in school has dropped from 6.6 per cent in 2005 to 3.5 per cent in 2010. The proportion of girls in the age group 11-14 years who were out of school has also declined from 11.2 per cent in 2005 to 5.9 per cent in 2010. However, the absolute numbers of children who are out of school remains large (ASER, 2010). In addition, six Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) were launched at the end of the Plan: (i) Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) (ii) setting up of model schools; (iii) setting up girls' hostels in secondary and senior secondary schools; (iv) National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE); (v) Inclusive Education for the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS); and (vi) National Meritcum-Means Scholarship scheme (NMMS). The ongoing scheme of ICT in Schools was also revised.

For the development of higher education, the 11th Plan also focused on many strategies ─ providing equitable access, improving quality and standards; evaluation and accreditation; expansion and strengthening of infrastructure, networking and digitization, research and development; and strengthening of the open and distance education system and of research institutions. Restructuring and reforming the higher education system to improve accessibility and quality of services offered through greater autonomy and more participative governance were also key elements of the 11th Plan's strategy. During this period, India, thus, moved from an "elite" system of higher education to a "mass" system when the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) crossed the threshold of 15%. However, the GER at 19.4% still remained below the world average of 29% (GoI, 2011). This increase in GER has, naturally, been accompanied by an increase in the number of higher education institutions serving the population (MHRD, 2013). Today, India has successfully created one of the biggest higher education systems in the world comprising 700 universities and 35,539 colleges. However, Indian education system faces problems and issues that originate from disparities and developmental models adopted (UGC, 2012).Despite higher levels of enrollment at all levels of education, and a massive increase in physical infrastructure, the value added by formal education is still weak. Poor quality of education resulting in weak learning outcomes at each stage of education is the central challenge facing by the Indian education sector today. It is proof that not even one Indian university figures in the latest list of 200 universities in the world (GoI, 2012).

The current 12th Plan commenced at a time when global second financial crisis occurred in 2011-12. Faster, more inclusive and sustainable growth are its main objectives. The Plan outlined three targets reflecting the vision of rapid, sustainable and more inclusive growth for education sector:To mean Years of Schooling to increase to seven years by the end of the Plan; To enhance access to higher education by creating two million additional seats for each age cohort aligned to the skill needs of the economy; and To eliminate gender and social gap in school enrollment (that is, between girls and boys, and between SCs, STs, Muslims and the rest of the population) by the end of the Plan.

In order to materialize a "quantum jump" in achieving the triple objectives of access and expansion, equity and inclusion, and quality and excellence, with an emphasis on consolidation and optimal use of infrastructure, the 12th Plan provides a

good foundation for future higher education system of India because it included the provision of flexi funds of 1, 10,700 crore for the development of higher education in the country. The Plan also proposed a comprehensive Plan for the development of State Higher Education System by focusing on four major areas: (i) State universities and colleges including polytechnics; (ii) Equity initiatives including student financial support; (iii) Central universities and institutions; and (iv) Research and innovation initiatives (GoI, 2012).

The success of (SSA), (DPEP), (MDMS), (KGBVS), (NSIGSE), (IEDSS) (RTE), (NMMS), Saakshar Bharat, (RMSA) and ICT in Schools and the consequent improvement in transition rates increased the number of students that would opt for higher education and thus, it made a strong case for enhancement of financial support for expansion, upgradation and quality improvement of higher education system. Such enhancement can bring about balanced growth of new institutions, based on spatial and need-based planning. This, in turn, can help absorb the ever increasing number of students completing the higher secondary level (MHRD, 2013). Quality, therefore, becomes a critical priority area for ensuring sustainability. Several initiatives (Report of the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), Report of the Nation Knowledge Commission (NKC), Report of the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education, Proposal of National Quality Renaissance Initiative (NQRI) by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council); the Conclave of Vice-Chancellors and other Forums of Educationists) are lined up to achieve excellence for increasing both the capacity and quality of higher education system. An umbrella scheme of RUSA was launched to address the needs of State institutions so as to strengthen them and enhance their quality in the 12th Plan. RUSA will also address a major challenge on regional imbalances in higher education (MHRD, 2013).

4. RUSA IMPLEMENTATION

Proper, successful and excellent education system helps achieve huge challenges in demographic advantage nations in the world. Not only makes a man a perfect gentleman, education also arms him to meet all the situations in life. It is said that it is not ease but effort, not facility but difficulty that makes a man. Education, thus, helps a man to develop a balanced personality (Shamim, 2003). It also plays a fundamental role in the development of a nation as it enables achievement of individual capabilities, which, in turn, helps a nation reach its national goals (UGC, 2013). Higher education, therefore, is critical for developing a modern economy, a just society and a vibrant polity. It equips young people with skills relevant for the labour market and the opportunity for social mobility. It provides people already in employment with skills to negotiate rapidly evolving career requirements. It prepares all to be responsible citizens who value a democratic and pluralistic society. Thus, the nation creates an intellectual repository of human capital to meet the country's needs and shapes of its future. Indeed, higher education is the principal site at which our national goals, developmental priorities and civic values can be examined and refined (GoI, 2012). Now, India is just at the situation. The Government is also taking high initiatives in coming Plans for the development of education sector to achieve bigger challenges in the remaining period of the 21st Century. All citizens, therefore, should remember that ***"Education is the manifestation of perfection already existing in man." —Swami Vivekananda***[5]

The Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), the highest advisory body of the Government of India (GoI) in education on policy matters, in its meeting held on 08.11.2012 gave in-principle approval to RUSA. Subsequently, it was included in the list of 66 schemes approved by the Cabinet on 20.06.2013, as part of the restructured CSSs for implementation in the 12th Plan. The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) appraised the Scheme on 11th September, 2013 and recommended it for approval. Finally, with the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 3rd October, 2013, the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)/National Higher Education Mission became the final tier of the CSSs of the MHRD, which began with SSA and graduated subsequently to RMSA. Reforming to improve access, equity and quality of the State Higher Education System in the country is RUSA's main objective. The primary components of RUSA includes creation of new institutions, expansion of existing institutions, infrastructural upgradation, establishing of bodies such as State Higher Education Councils (SHECs), accreditation agencies, sectoral, affiliation, academic, examination reforms etc. It will be spread over the 12th (2012-17) and 13th (2017-22) plans periods. Many authorities and experts describe about RUSA. Combining the literatures, some facts of RUSA are given below:

[5]Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). 2013. The Newsletter On Higher Education, Issue 13.

1. RUSA is an umbrella scheme operated in mission mode that would subsume other existing similar CSSs in the State Higher Education Sector. The funding to States is made on the basis of State Higher Education Plans outlining the States' strategy to address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education. All funding under RUSA are norm based and future grants would be performance based and outcome dependent. Commitment by States and institutions to certain academic, administrative and governance reforms will be a precondition for receiving funding under RUSA. Centre-State funding would be in the ratio of 90:10 for North-Eastern States, Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and 65:35 for other States and Union Territories. Support would be extended to only government and government aided institutions.
2. In order to facilitate the successful implementation of the scheme, the Government of India has set up a National Mission Authority for RUSA in the MHRD (Department of Higher Education). The Mission Authority will be an independent and autonomous wing of the MHRD (Department of Higher Education).
3. The National Mission Authority on RUSA is ordered to be constituted with the following compositions:

I	Union Human Resource Minister	Chairperson
II	Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development	Vice-Chairperson
III	Chairperson, UGC	Co Vice-Chairperson
IV	Member, Planning Commission (in charge of higher education)	Member
V	Chairperson, AICTE	Member
VI	Chairpersons of the State Higher Education Councils	Members
VII	Prof. Pankaj Chandra, former Director-IIM, Banglore	Member
VIII	Shri AjitRangnekar, Dean, Indian School of Business	Member
IX	Prof. Deepak Pental, former Vice-Chancellor – Delhi University	Member
X	Financial Advisor to MHRD	Member
XI	Chairperson, Medical Council of India or representative	Member
XII	Chairperson, Bar Council of India or representative	Member
XIII	Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Govt. of India or representative not below the rank of Joint Secretary	Member
XIV	Secretary, Department of Culture, Govt. of India or representative not below the rank of Joint Secretary	Member
XV	Secretary, Department of Health, Govt. of India or representative not below the rank of Joint Secretary	Member
XVI	Secretary, Department of S&T, Govt. of India or representative not below the rank of Joint Secretary	Member
XVII	Secretary, Department of Sports, Govt. of India or representative not below the rank of Joint Secretary	Member
XVIII	Representative of Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India	Member
XIX	Joint Secretary (HE) & National Mission Director	Member Secretary

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

4. The RUSA National Mission Authority will be empowered to fix and alter the programmatic norms within the overall framework of the scheme from time to time. It will delineate the overall policy and planning and will be empowered to make necessary changes in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation parameters so as to enable the National and State level implementing bodies to implement the Scheme efficiently and effectively so that gains from RUSA are maximised. It will review functioning of Project Approval Board (PAB) and allocate funds to the Board for release to States. It may commission policy reform, thematic and evaluation studies and review the same. The RUSA National Mission Authority shall meet once in six months at such time and place as may be fixed by the Chairperson.
5. PAB would undertake detailed evaluation of the State Higher Education Plans submitted by the States. Based on such evaluation, these plans would be approved by the PAB and funds released to States as per norms. During the course

of such evaluation the PAB may suggest certain changes to these plans in which case the States would carry out the necessary changes and resubmit the same to PAB for consideration and evaluation. The PAB and other national implementing bodies would be assisted by a Technical Support Group (TSG) established for providing professional, strategic, logistic and other support as may be required for implementing the project.

6. The PAB is hereby constituted with the following compositions:

I	Secretary, Higher Education, MHRD	Chairperson
II	Chairperson, UGC	Co-Chairman
III	Chairperson, AICTE	Member
IV	Secretary, UGC	Member
V	Chairperson, State Higher Education Council (of the concerned State whose plans are to be considered)	Member
VI	Secretary, Higher Education of the State concerned	Member
VII	Secretary, Technical Education of the State concerned	Member
VIII	Prof. Shailendra Mehta, Visiting Professor, IIM- Ahmedabad	Member
IX	Prof. B. Venkatesh Kumar, Professor & Chairperson, Centre for Governance and Public Policy, TISS	Member
X	Financial Advisor in MHRD	Member
XI	Advisor (Higher Education), Planning Commission	Member
XII	Joint Secretary (HE) & National Mission Director	Member – Convener

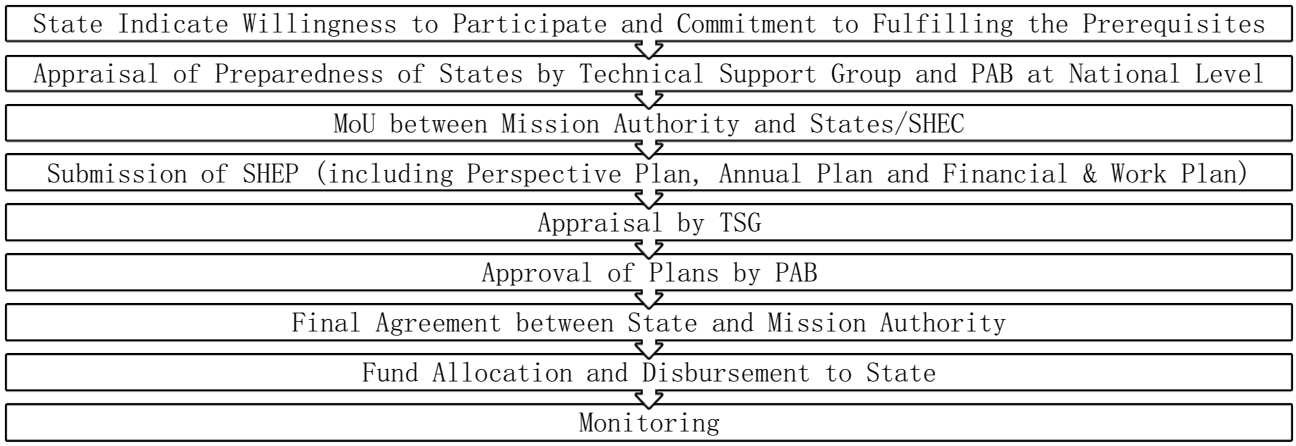
Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

7. RUSA structure is divided into three levels. The levels and their institutional structure are shown in the following table:

NATIONAL LEVEL	➢ RUSA Mission Authority ➢ Project Approval Board (PAB) ➢ Technical Support Group (TSG) ➢ Project Directorate (in MHRD)
STATE LEVEL	➢ State Higher Education Council (SHEC) ➢ Project Directorate (in State Government) ➢ Technical Support Group (State)
INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL	➢ Board of Governors ➢ Project Monitoring Unit

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

8. The PROCESS FLOW of RUSA is depicted on the following flow chart:



Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

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9. Presently, twenty-two States and six Union Territories (UTs) had joined the RUSA by agreeing to pre-requisites and expressing their willingness to be a part of the scheme except the four States and one UT, viz. Rajasthan, Delhi, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Lakshadweep. Although Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh have communicated their willingness, their requests would only be placed before the next Mission Authority meeting for approval as they had submitted their undertakings after the First Mission Authority Meeting held on 8th January, 2014. The following table shows the statistical account of RUSA footprint in the States and UTs:

Total States under RUSA	Total States not under RUSA	Total UT under RUSA	Total UT not under RUSA	Total States indicated willingness to be under RUSA
22	4	6	1	2

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

5. RUSA IN MANIPUR

Over the years Government of Manipur (GoM) have not been able to allocate enough funds to its higher education sector; these scanty funds are finely spread as a result of being shared amongst many institutions. Plan expenditure on higher education sector is almost stagnant. As a result, the quality of infrastructure and teaching in the State Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is far below the acceptable levels. Shortage of funds and procedural bottlenecks cause vacancies in faculty positions and also compel the state public institutions to look for alternate funding options (MHRD, 2013). Good faculty quality and availability comes from the quality of teaching, research output and general management but these areas have also been exceptionally neglected in the State Higher Education System of Manipur. Beside, student teacher ratio is also very low. At this time, I want to follow the landmark judgment ***"Teachers are like foster parents to the students. Can we afford to place the future of the country in hands of these hired teachers?"*—Supreme Court, GoI**[6]

The year 2013 is the landmark in the history of higher education in Manipur. GoM started reformation of higher education sector to participate in the schemes of RUSA since February, 2013 in particular. The Manipur State Higher Education Council (MSHEC), therefore, was set up by the Department of Higher & Technical Education on 28th October, 2013. The Council was created by an executive order. Its composition and roles are as required under RUSA. Process for enactment of the MSHEC through State Assembly started and will be enacted within two years as stipulated in the RUSA Guidelines. Meetings of the MSHEC held as per necessity and for due consultation in preparation of the State Higher Education Plan (SHEP) and other Plans under RUSA as well as for other important matters pertaining to Higher & Technical Education Sector in the State. After this, Department of Higher & Technical Education participated on the first meeting of the RUSA Project Approval Board (PAB) held on 6th November, 2013 under the Chairmanship of Shri. Ashok Thakur, Secretary Higher Education, MHRD and presented a report of the SHEP to the meeting. Appraisal note of the Manipur State Higher Education Plan (MSHEP) was released on the 3rd meeting of the PAB on the 13th May, 2014. Analysis and findings of the appraisal note of the SHEP and the changing trends in higher education system of Manipur are discussed below:

1. For participating the schemes of the RUSA, all necessary actions have been taken for assessment and accreditation by all 28 Govt. Colleges and 12 Aided Colleges in the State as per the UGC (Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012. The provisions for the State Share Funds for RUSA has also been duly included in the State Budget for the current year 2014-15 and the trends of expenditure for higher education sector in the State from 2011-2014 is tabulated as follows:

Expenditure	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Plan	Rs.1,762 lakhs	Rs. 1,700 lakhs	Rs. 3,148 lakhs
Non-Plan	Rs.12,181 lakhs	Rs.11,861 lakhs	Rs.13,450 lakhs
RUSA (Preparatory Grant)	Nil	Nil	Rs. 270 lakhs
Total	Rs.13,943 lakhs	Rs.13,561 lakhs	Rs. 16,868 lakhs

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

[6]MHRD (2013).Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)/National Higher Education Mission.

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2. The MSHEP consists of various proposals for reformation of the higher education sector in Manipur. Before submitting it to the PAB, the Technical Support Group (TSG) rechecked it for recommendation and finally approved by the PAB. The following table shows comparison of funds for reformation of the State Higher Education Sector asked by the GoM in the Current Annual Plan (2014-15) and its approval of the PAB of RUSA in lakhs:

Sl.No	Component	Total funds asked for by the states				Funding abstract as approved by PAB			
		XII Plan		2014-15		Total Outlay	2014-15	Physical Quantity	Remarks
		Physical	Financial	Physical	Financial				
1.	Creation of Universities by way of Upgradation of existing Autonomous Colleges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Nil
2.	Creation of Universities by conversion of colleges in a cluster	1	5,500.73	1	2,500	5,500	2,500	1	Conditional, Upon adherence to future commitments (refer RUSA guidelines) and submission of DPR
3.	Infrastructure Grants to Universities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Nil
4.	New Model Colleges (General)	4	4,800	0	0	0	0	0	Not Approved
5.	Upgradation of existing Degree Colleges to Model Degree colleges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Nil
6.	New Colleges (Professional)	3	7,569.72	3	1,000	2,500	1,300	1	Conditional, Upon submission of DPR
7.	Infrastructure Grants to Colleges	30	6,000	30	3,000	4,000	2,000	20	Approved list of Govt. Colleges
8.	Research, Innovation and quality improvement	12	12,000	12	5,760	0	0	0	Not Approved

9.	Equity Initiatives	40	500	40	80	0	0	0	Not Approved
10.	Faculty Recruitment Support	75	2,175	75	435	0	0	0	Not Approved
11.	Faculty Improvement	For the entire state	1,000	For the entire state	1,000	0	0	0	Not Approved
12.	Vocationalisation of Higher Education	40	1,500	40	80	1.500	0.80	40	Approved
13.	Leadership Development of Educational Administrators	For the entire state	934	For the entire state	00	0	0	0	Not Approved
14.	Institutional Restructuring and reforms	For the entire state	1,000	For the entire state	300	0	0	0	Not Approved
15.	Capacity Building and preparation, Data Collection and Planning	For the entire state	500	For the entire state	300	0	0	0	Not Approved
16.	Management Information System	For the entire state	200	For the entire state	100	0	0	0	Not Approved
17.	Support to Polytechnics	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	Not Approved
18.	Management Monitoring Evaluation and Research	For the entire state	1000	For the entire state	300	0	0	0	Not Approved

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

3. The MSHEP proposed the creation of university by conversion of the colleges in a cluster as Priority No. 01. The Department of Higher & Technical Education, thus, proposed the setting up of 01 university namely Dhanamanjuri University (DM University) as a new State University by clustering DM College of Science, Imphal as Lead College and 04 Cluster Colleges, namely, DM College of Arts, DM College of Commerce; LMS Law College and GP Women's College; Imphal. Currently, Manipur has no its own State University. TSG, therefore, recommended the setting up of this University. The total proposed amount for the 12th Plan Period is Rs. 5500.73 lakhs and the fund sought for the current year 2014-15 is Rs. 2500 lakhs. The TSG recommended it and finally, PAB also approved it.

4. The setting up of the New Professional Colleges is the Priority No. 02 of the MSHEP. The MSHEP proposed the setting up of 02 Professional Colleges namely GEC (General Educational Category) Thoubal; GEC Churachandpur and GEC Ukhrul. The total proposed amount for the 12th Plan Period is Rs. 7569.72 lakhs and the fund sought for the annual plan 2014-15 is Rs. 1000 lakhs. All these colleges fall in the Category A (Districts having high % of SC/ST and low GER for women, SC and ST) of the RUSA Guidelines. The TSG, hence, recommended the setting up of 01 New Professional College in GEC Thoubal on the Priority Basis for the year 2014-15 and the amount to be granted to the State be Rs. 1300 lakhs out of total outlay of Rs. 2500 lakhs. Finally, the PAB approved it.

5. The MSHEP proposed Infrastructure Grants to Colleges as Priority No. 03. Twenty (20) Government Colleges have been proposed to receive a grant of one crore each for infrastructure up gradation. The PAB might note that though all the proposed 20 Colleges are receiving funding under UGC 12B, the funding is not need based especially for academic needs like building classrooms, laboratories, etc. The TSG recommends that all 20 Government Colleges in

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descending order of priority be granted infrastructure funds. The total proposed amount for the 12th Plan Period is Rs. 6000 lakhs and the fund sought for 2014-15 is Rs. 2000 lakhs. The TSG also recommends that the amount granted for this component be Rs. 2000 lakhs. The PAB, finally, recommended it. The recommended funding structure is shown in the following table:

(Infrastructure Grants to Colleges in lakhs)

Sl. No.	Name of the Government College in descending order of importance	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
1.	D M College of Science (Undergraduate)	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
2.	S. K. Womens' College, Nambol	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
3.	Manipur College, Imphal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
4.	Oriental College, Imphal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
5.	Modern College, Imphal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
6.	M. B. College, Imphal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
7.	Moirang College, Moirang	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
8.	Lamka College, Churachandpur	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
9.	Don Bosco College, Maram	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
10.	Thoubal College, Thoubal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
11.	Churachandpur College	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
12.	D. M. College of Commerce, Imphal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
13.	N. G. College, Imphal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
14.	Waikhom Mani Girls' College, Thoubal	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
15.	Kha Manipur College, Kakching	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
16.	Y. K. College, Wangjing	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
17.	LilongHaoreibi College	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
18.	L. Sanoi College, Nambol	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
19.	C. I. College, Bishnupur	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
20.	Presidency College, Motbung	100.00	50.00	50.00	200.00
	Total	2000.00	1000.00	1000.00	4000.00

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

6. Vocationalisation of Higher Education is the Priority No. 06 of the MSHEP. The State has sought a grant of Rs. 02 lakhs to each of the 40 Govt. and Govt. Aided Colleges to introduce a trade/vocation according to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) under RUSA. The total proposed amount for the 12th Plan Period is Rs. 1500 lakhs and the fund sought for 2014-15 is Rs. 80 lakhs. The TSG recommends allocation of Rs. 80 lakhs to the Department of Higher & Technical Education of Manipur. This component is also approved by the PAB. The following table shows the Vocationalisation of Higher Education Grants to the Colleges in lakhs:

Sl. No.	Name of the College in descending order of importance	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total	Trades Proposed /Justification
1.	D M College of Science	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Media Technology
2.	Imphal College , Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Construction Rennovation Technology
3.	S. K. Womens' College, Nambol	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Food Processing Technology
4.	Manipur College, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Fruits Preservation Technology
5.	Oriental College, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Life Skills and IT are proposed
6.	Modern College, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Banking and Retail

7.	M. B. College, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Computer Hardware
8.	Moirang College, Moirang	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Tourism/ Fisheries
9.	Lamka College, Churachandpur	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Food Preservation Technology
10.	United College, Chandel	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Medicinal Plants Processing Technology
11.	Don Bosco College, Maram	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Electrical Technology
12.	D M College of Arts, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Life Skills
13.	Thoubal College, Thoubal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Media Technology
14.	Churachandpur College	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	IT and Automotives
15.	D. M. College of Commerce, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Retail Management
16.	G. P. Women's College	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Hospitality
17.	N. G. College, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Life Skills
18.	Waikhom Mani Girls' College, Thoubal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Food Processing
19.	L. M. S. Law College, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Legal Tourism
20.	Kha Manipur College, Kakching	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Tourism and Retail
21.	Y. K. College, Wangjing	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Life Skills
22.	LilongHaoreibi College	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Vegetable Preservation
23.	L. Sanoi College, Nambol	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Sports Tourism
24.	C. I. College, Bishnupur	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Fishery/Animal Husbandry
25.	Presidency College, Motbung	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Animal husbandry
26.	Pettigrew College, Ukhrul	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Sericulture and Horticulture
27.	Hill College, Tadubi	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Sericulture and Horticulture
28.	Tamenglong College, Tamenglong	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Sericulture and Horticulture
29.	Birmangol College, Sawombung	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Sports Tourism
30.	KakchingKhunou College, KakchingKhunou	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Sericulture and Horticulture
31.	D. M. College of Teacher Education, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Teacher's Training
32.	D. M. Hindi Training College, Imphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Life Skills
33.	Liberal College, Luwangsangbam	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Pre medical Hospitality
34.	ThambalMarik College, Oinam	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Fishery
35.	MayaiLambi College, MayangImphal	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Fishery
36.	Moreh College, Moreh	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Travel & Tourism / Hospitality
37.	South East Manipur College, Komlathabi	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Forestry
38.	Standard College, Kongba	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Sericulture and Horticulture
39.	Jiri College, Jiribam	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Rubber Plantation / Manufacturing Technology
40.	Ideal Girls' College, Singjamei	2 .00	25.00	10.50	37.50	Weaving
	TOTAL	80.00	1000	420	1500	

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

7. Faculty Recruitment Support is proposed as Priority No. 04 by the MSHEP to facilitate faculty recruitment for the Cluster colleges in the New State University being set up. The State has committed to take over the liability of faculty positions at end of the scheme and seeks relaxation on the student teacher ratio which is 26:1. The State has submitted a detailed plan for hiring of Assistant Professors/Equivalent cadre of candidate in different Post Graduate Departments along with their salary component. The total proposed amount for the 12th Plan Period is Rs. 2175 lakhs and the fund sought for 2014-15 is Rs. 435 lakhs. The TSG recommends allocating the total amount of Rs. 435 lakhs but the PAB did not approve the grant in view of the fact that the current student teacher ratio in this State is 45:1 which is above the programmatic norm of 20:1. The following table shows the estimation of the Faculty Recruitment Support Grant to University Post Graduate Department (Rs. Lakhs):

Name of the University Post graduate department in descending order of importance	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Physics	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Mathematics	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Chemistry	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Geology	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Computer Science	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Environmental Science	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Electronics	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Biotech	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Food Technology	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Anthropology	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Botany	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Mathematics	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Zoology	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
M.Ed.	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
L.L.M.	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Physical Education, Health & Sports	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
English	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Management Studies	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Economics	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Psychology	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Statistics	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Linguistics	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Library Science	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Education	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00
Juridical Science	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	17.40	87.00

Source: http://mhrd.gov.in/rusa

8. The MSHEP also proposed 4 New Model Degree Colleges (MDC) as a Priority No. 05 and recommended it by TSG but did not approved by the PAB. Since, no District in Manipur falls in the Educational Backward Districts (EBDs) category as notified by the UGC, funds sought under this cannot be considered. Now, further approval of Mission Authority of RUSA is waiting for it.

9. The MSHEP comprises many other proposals namely Research, Innovation and Quality Improvement for College and University; Equity Initiatives; Faculty Improvement; Leadership Development; Institutional Restructuring and Reforms; Capacity Building and Preparation, Data Collection and Planning; Management Information System (MIS); Support to Polytechnics; and Management Monitoring Evaluation and Research (MMER). All these components are recommended but did not approved by the PAB.

6. CONCLUSION

The demand for higher education has been accelerating in the worldwide since last decades. Today, higher education becomes a critical input in human resource development and is essential for the country's economic growth.India is also expanding its higher education system by launching a new CSS ─ Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)/National Higher Education Mission. This is for the first time since independence that Higher Education is being expanded in a mission mode which will particularly benefit State Universities and Colleges. This scheme is key to reformation of State Higher Education System in the country including Manipur which is one of the North-East State of India.

In Manipur, most of the Colleges are understaffed with inadequate Teaching Faculty. But the enrollment of students had increased from 12,152 in 2008-09 to 41,608 in 2012-13 and the total enrollment was 123,497 in 2012-13. However, the sanctioned posts of College Teachers have stagnated at 1264 since the last 20 years, which has vacancy of 301 posts at present. As per the mandate of the UGC/Manipur University, there is a need for 2130 posts of Govt. College Teachers which necessitates creation of 866 posts. The State Govt. has been unable to increase the no. of posts so far due to its acute financial constraints. All unemployment qualified citizens for these vacant posts in this small State are dreaming that RUSA will help the State in tackling such crucial issues.

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