

Minutes of the RUSA Project Approval Board - 12th March 2014

The Second meeting of RUSA Project Approval Board was held on March 12 at 4 pm under the chairmanship of Shri Ashok Thakur, Secretary, Higher Education Ministry of HRD. Prof. Ved Prakash, Chairman UGC co-chaired the meeting. The list of participants in the meeting is in **Annexure.**

Shri RP Sisodia, Joint Secretary, (HE) and Mission Director, RUSA welcomed members of the PAB and briefly explained the progress made since the launch of the scheme. He mentioned that State Higher Education Plans (SHEP) from 7 States had been received. These SHEPs had been appraised and returned to the States with initial comments and feedback for making the necessary changes before re-submission. He also shared with them the new Data Capture Formats (DCF), uploaded on the Ministry's website, which were required to be filled up by the States and would constitute the SHEP once completed. He also informed the House that the RUSA logo had recently been released by the Human Resource Minister.

Item 1 - Action taken on items of PAB meeting dated 6th November, 2013

1.1 The Mission Director updated the members of the committee on progress made so far subsequent to the decisions taken by PAB in its meeting on Nov 6, 2013. The Mission Director informed the house that preparatory grants for all States/UTs approved in the first PAB meeting have been released. The Mission Director explained that Utilization Certificates (UC) in the prescribed format had not yet been received from the States of Punjab, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Assam, to whom the first installment under the erstwhile Model Degree College scheme (11th Five Year Plan) had been released. Consequently, the second installment of funds had not yet been released to these States. The Mission Director also informed that the first installment of funds for Model Degree Colleges, had been released to Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.

1.2 The Mission Director stated that out of an amount of Rs.2.03 crores approved for TISS for capacity building and leadership development activities, Rs.1 crore has been released as the first installment. He requested Prof. B. Venkatesh Kumar of TISS to update the members on the progress made so far. Prof. Kumar spoke about the details of the conclave held so far, methodology fol-

lowed and outcomes sought to be achieved. Dr. Kumar committed to submitting the final report by May- June, 2014.

1.3 The Mission Director also updated members on the MoU with TISS for TSG, which will end in April 2014. A decision on way forward will be taken after consultation with the JS&FA and Secretary, Higher Education.

1.4 The Mission Director informed the PAB that of the Rs.17 crores approved for NAAC by the PAB for “National Quality Renaissance Initiative”, Rs.4 crores as first installment had been released to NAAC for the current year. He drew the attention of the House to status report on the progress made by NAAC in this regard. The Chair mentioned the need for better quality control and the accreditation being central to enhancing the quality of higher educational institutions. He pointed out how the affiliation system could be advantageous in this process of quality renaissance wherein the university system through its affiliate structure can define quality parameters and forge linkages with other institutions to bring about quality renaissance.

1.5 JS&FA emphasized the need to have an outcome based approach through this entire initiative. He further spoke about the need to have defined outcomes. The Chair while agreeing to the views of JS&FA also spoke about the NMEICT initiative of the ministry and how this tool can be used to spur accreditation- clearly emphasizing that the scheme is not limited to just technical education.

Decision of PAB

It was decided that a separate meeting will be organized to review the processes and outcomes of the initiative being undertaken by NAAC and TISS.

Item 2 - Preparatory Grants for Capacity Building of new States

2.1 The Mission Director gave details about the States that have joined the scheme since the launch of RUSA and also pointed out that two States of Mizoram and Chhattisgarh (out of the 5 poll-bound States of Delhi, Rajasthan, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh & Chhatisgarh) had responded to the request of the Ministry by submitting their undertaking and checklist after the polls were completed. Seven other States (Goa, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, West Ben-

gal and Tripura) submitted the checklists and undertakings after the deadline (31st October, 2013). The Mission Authority in its meeting of 8th January, 2014 gave its in-principle approval for these nine States to be eligible for consideration by the PAB. The cases of these States have been evaluated by the TSG and they have been found to be eligible to receive 50% of the preparatory activity amount due to them. Post facto approval of the PAB was accordingly sought for Rs. 23.40 crores for the nine States.

Decision of the PAB

Post facto approval accorded by the PAB to the proposals for release of Rs. 23.40 crores to the 9 States as Central share for preparatory grants.

2.2 The Mission mentioned that Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh had responded with their undertaking after the Mission Authority meeting and in view of the code of conduct in force, it would not be appropriate to consider them for any support till the poll process was completed. The Chair sought to know the number of States and UTs that have not yet participated in the Scheme to which the Mission Director responded that 6 states and UTs namely Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Sikkim, NCT, Lakshadweep and Puducherry had not yet responded with their checklist and undertaking till date. The Mission Director also argued that a spirit of competition should be an underlying feature of the Scheme and States which had come on board earlier should be appropriately incentivised. Advisor Planning Commission suggested that in the initial stages the Scheme should be open ended to allow all States/UTs an opportunity to participate. The JS&FA concurred with the views and felt that a timeframe till June, 2014 should be provided to these states for participating in the Scheme.

Decision of the PAB

A letter should be addressed to all these States/UTs to respond in two months about their participation.

Item 3 - Additional Model Degree Colleges for consideration

3.1 The Mission Director stated that four new proposals had been received for establishment of Model Degree Colleges in the educationally backward districts of North Tripura, South Tripura and Dhalai and South Andaman and sought the approval of the PAB for them.

3.2 The JS&FA pointed out that in the Cabinet had given approval to set up 60 Model Degree Colleges of which 56 have already been approved during the last PAB. He informed that with the approval of these 4 Model Degree Colleges there would not be any scope to support additional request for the establishment for any new Model Degree College without Cabinet approval to increase the number under this component.

3.3 The Mission Director was of the view that a greater number of model degree college proposals (beyond 60) can be considered, since some of the approved proposals may not finally materialize given a number of challenges that they may encounter during the implementation of this project. The JS&FA disagreed by stating that there is a need to stick to the number of colleges approved by Cabinet, and any increase to this number will require further approval from the Cabinet.

3.4 The Advisor, Planning Commission concurred with the views of JS & FA on the need for Cabinet approval for additional Model Degree Colleges beyond the stipulated number under the 12th plan. The Advisor Planning Commission re-emphasized the support of the Planning Commission in the implementation of RUSA. He was of the opinion that there still seems to be a lack of clarity on role of UGC vis a vis RUSA (under the various schemes and components respectively) and the support that they will provide to State institutions. He emphasized the need to have more comprehensive SHEPs and mainstreaming different sectors of education including agriculture and health under a single umbrella. He clarified that funding for agricultural and medical education would be separately sought and not from the resources allocated under RUSA. He also raised the issue of getting competent professional institutions to undertake support activities under RUSA mainly under the nature of capacity building, training and felt that wide range of institutions needed to be involved in this exercise. He also cautioned against giving projects to some institutions on nomination basis and advised competitive mode for selecting institutions. Prof. Shailendra Raj Mehta, member PAB emphasized that institutions like TISS need to be fully supported by MHRD for RUSA implementation.

3.5 Responding to the observations made by the Advisor Planning Commission, the Chair emphasized the need for a more holistic approach in dealing with State institutions by creating a synergetic approach between UGC and RUSA. He asked the Mission Director to undertake an exercise to clearly define their respective roles. The Mission Director gave a recent example of

synergetic arrangement between UGC and RUSA in better and effective targeting of resources for need based institutions in the North Eastern Region.

Decision of the PAB

PAB approved setting up of 4 Model Degree College and approved the release of first installment of central share to these colleges.

Item 4 - Preparation of DPR for Management Information System (MIS)

4.1 The Mission Director informed the members about the efforts under RUSA to move towards an online, real time Management Information System where physical and financial targets would be effectively monitored under the various components of RUSA. The Mission Director also shared with the members a letter from Secretary, Department of Information Technology in response to a MHRD letter. In his letter, Secretary Department of Information Technology has suggested that the services of ERNET India can be taken. PAB's decision was sought on the modalities of engaging ERNET India and cancelling the Letter of Authority issued to National Informatics Center (NIC) for preparation of a DPR for MIS at a cost of 16.85 lacs, approved in the last PAB meeting. The Mission Director informed that as of now, ERNET India had only be asked to submit a formal proposal with technical details and costing. Once received, the proposal would be examined on file.

Decision of the PAB

The PAB approved the withdrawal of LoA to NIC and consider the ERNET proposal as and when it is received.

4.2 Subsequently, officials from three agencies- AII India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), Public Finance Management System (PFMS) and Canara Bank were invited to make presentations. The Mission Director also spoke about four segments of the MIS on i) Data & Information (to be captured by AISHE portal), ii) Finances (to be captured by PFMS portal), iii) Plans (to be captured by the portal developed by CANARA Bank), iv) Physical Monitoring (under process). These four segments will be integrated at a later stage to form the complete MIS.

4.3 Ms. Ruchika Gupta, Dy. Director, MHRD while making a presentation on AISHE pointed out that states like Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Uttarakhand had not filled in the complete data while two states- Mizoram and Tripura had filled in 100% of the required details for the year 2011-12. Himachal Pradesh informed the house that private institutions of the State had not come forward to share the data. There was a suggestion by JS&FA to make sharing of this data mandatory before giving affiliation to private institutions. AISHE pointed out that the State of J&K was not very responsive in helping to fill up the data. Representatives from J&K stated that a nodal officer for the purpose has been recently appointed. They were asked to communicate this to MHRD officially. The Dy. Director also pointed out that colleges in Manipur were not responding and that Punjab was slow in filling in data to which representatives from Punjab said that the nodal officer has been changed. It was iterated by the Mission Director that filling up data in AISHE was mandatory for States to participate in RUSA.

4.4 Shri Sandeep Dash, OSD PFMS, O/o the Controller General of Accounts made a presentation on the financial management system. States requested for relevant details in order to use the PFMS at the State level. Prof. Shailendra Raj Mehta complimented the PFMS on efficiency of the system and mentioned that there should be certification process by the States for submission of information in MIS.

4.5 Shri M.S Adarsh of Canara Bank made a presentation to the house on a newly designed web portal which would cater to the management of SHEPs through online filling up and submission of data capture formats (DCF), SHEP abstracts along with detailed information on various parameters such as access, equity, excellence, governance etc.

Item 5 - Status of implementation of RUSA in the states - for information

5.1 The PAB was informed that SHEPs from Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir have been received and appraised by the TSG. Observations of the TSG on the SHEPs have been communicated to the respective States. The SHEPs of Gujarat, Manipur and Uttarakhand are under appraisal.

5.2 The PAB was also informed that the states of Manipur, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar, Goa, Mizoram, Bihar, Haryana, Tripura and Uttarakhand have recently formed the State Higher Education Councils (SHEC) by an executive order, with a commitment to establish the SHECs through an Act of the State Legis-

lature within a specified period. The States of West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh already had SHECs, established through Acts of Legislature, while Gujarat has set up the Gujarat Knowledge Consortium through an executive order.

5.3 The PAB was further informed that twelve additional proposals for Model Degree Colleges from Uttar Pradesh have been received. These proposals are under appraisal by the TSG.

Decision of the PAB

This was noted by the PAB

Item 6 - Presentation by States on SHEPs already submitted

6.1 Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Nagaland, Manipur were invited to make presentations on their SHEPs. Haryana, however, was asked to reserve their presentation for the next PAB meeting as Principal Secretary was not present.

6.2 Shri Sheikh Mushtaq Ahmad, Principal Secretary (Higher Education), J&K made the first presentation. The Chair advised the states to focus on the main vision, mission, and strategies to tackle the challenges faced by them in the state HE plan. Principal Secretary (Higher Education) J&K responded to the Chair by giving a broad overview of their SHEP which aims to provide higher educational opportunities in inaccessible areas and providing hostel facilities to students. He admitted that faculty recruitment remained a concern as it would incur huge financial liability on the state as it has to fulfill 436 faculty positions.

6.3 Mission Director re-emphasized the Chair's expectations from SHEPs by suggesting that the State should paint a larger picture and discuss critical gaps in Higher Education in the State eg: GER, Student-teacher ratio, research and innovation, faculty development etc. The components should be contextualized to support the vision, mission and challenges faced. The Chair asked the TSG to support States in preparing their SHEPs keeping in mind the expectations of PAB as stated above with the help of consultants before the next round of presentations.

6.4 Smt. Sangeeta Singh, Principal Secretary (Higher Education), Government of Gujarat, informed the Chair that Gujarat's SHEP was not yet finalised. She also requested clarifications

on whether AISHE data can be used for providing baseline information in the SHEP. Mission Director clarified that AISHE data doesn't capture all relevant information (e.g Governance) and therefore the DCFs under RUSA should be used. Further Principal Secretary, Higher Education Gujarat sought clarification on the extent of flexibility which the States can exercise while preparing the SHEP in the light of the fresh guidelines issued for new centrally sponsored scheme. The Mission Director clarified since the entire scheme has an in-built element of flexibility where States can decide on the number of components under which they would seek RUSA resources while preparing their SHEPs. Dr. Jayanthi Ravi, Commissioner (Higher Education), while making the presentation, sought clarification on whether the Gujarat Knowledge Consortium would be treated equivalent to SHEC as required under the prerequisites of RUSA. The Mission Director responded that as long as the Consortium performs the functions as required of SHEC, the nomenclature is acceptable to PAB. The State committed that the necessary amendments will be made to the constitution of the Consortium.

6.5 In reference to the mention of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in Gujarat State Plan, the chair advised states to exercise caution on the proliferation of MOOCs. He stated that no Government or regulatory authority in the world has recognized it. In the Indian context, there is a threat of commercialization of education with no regulation on quality. Prof. Shailendra Mehta concurred with the Chair and informed that early experiences of MOOCs have been very negative. He said that if teaching is outsourced, monitoring becomes difficult. He also stated that MOOCs is relevant for self motivated students and not for college students who are in need of constant motivation.

6.6 Prof. T.A. Gonsalves, Vice Chairman SHEC, Himachal Pradesh and Additional Director, RUSA, Government of Himachal Pradesh presented the Himachal Pradesh SHEP. The Chair advised the State to put a check on the proliferation of private universities which leads to the degradation of quality in higher education in the State. The Chair also criticized blanket ban on recruitment in the State and categorically stated that access to RUSA funds would be subject to removal of the ban. Prof. B. Venkatesh Kumar informed the PAB that the State had indicated in its pre-requisites and commitments that there is no ban on recruitment. The State was requested to clarify the position.

6.7 A request was put forth by Himachal Pradesh to relax the programmatic norms on minimum distance between colleges in the formation of cluster universities due to the hilly terrain of the state, which the Chair agreed to examine favourably.

6.8 The Chair also suggested that the State should get IISER or IIT do a study for the state to understand what it is that is needed for the upliftment of university and higher education. He also added that top rated academicians and professionals should be hired to make the SHEPs.

6.9 Sh. A.P.S Virk, RUSA Project Director presented Punjab SHEP. He informed the Board on the State's commitment to RUSA implementation. During the course of discussion the Chair informed all States that new polytechnics sought to be created by States should use the infrastructure and resources available with the State Industrial Training Institutes. The Chair recommended that the State should create facilities to encourage sports in the State. The State responded by saying that it has already started working in that direction.

6.10 Dr. Norbert Noraho, Project Director RUSA, Govt. of Nagaland, made a presentation of the SHEP. He strongly argued for the establishment of a new Model Degree College in Mon district of Nagaland. The presentation highlighted the needs and requirements under various components and projected an improved in the GER over time. The Chair strongly recommended that use of ICT and NKN connectivity should be increased in states located in geographically difficult and inaccessible terrains in the form of smart classrooms etc. He added that this will be helpful in addressing the problem of faculty shortage.

6.11 Sh. P. Vaiphei, Secretary cum Commissioner (Higher Education), Govt. of Manipur presented the SHEP. He mentioned that North Eastern States like Manipur are grappling with issues of insurgency which makes the young population of the State to migrate to other States and that there was a need to develop opportunities for higher education in all districts of the State. He requested that 'Catch up grants' should be provided to universities. The Chair responded by informing that the proposals for catch up grants would be forwarded to UGC and they can avail these grants independent of RUSA. He brought to the notice of PAB that the SHEP includes creation of multi-purpose resource cells cum hostel facilities in cities of Delhi to provide camping facilities as well as counseling facilities.

6.12 The Chair in his concluding remarks stated that RUSA is a holistic scheme with a special focus on quality. He further added that prerequisites should not be seen as bureaucratic hurdles but as a means to cleanse the higher education system. He also said that States must remove bans on faculty recruitment and have faculty development programs. Other schemes such as the National Mission on Teacher Training (NMTT) should be taken advantage of by the States. He added that this will be helpful in addressing the problem of faculty shortage.

The meeting ended with the thanks to the Chair.

Annexure

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Dept./Ministry/State
1.	Sh. Ashok Thakur	Secretary (HE) & Chairman - PAB	MHRD
2.	Prof. Ved Prakash	Chairman (UGC) & Vice Chairman - PAB	UGC
3.	Sh. R P Sisodia	JS (HE) & Mission Director (RUSA)	MHRD
4.	Dr. Joram Begi	Director (H&TE)	Arunachal Pradesh
5.	Sh. P. Vaiphei	Commissioner & Secy (Hr. & Tech. Edn.)	Manipur
6.	Smt. Sangeeta Singh	Principal Secretary (HE & TE)	Gujarat
7.	Dr. Jayanti S. Ravi	Commissioner (Hr. & Tech. Edn)	Gujarat
8.	Dr. Jiban Ch. Chakraborty	Addl. Secretary (Hr. Edn)	West Bengal
9.	Dr. Malayendu Saha	Vice Chairman –SHEC	West Bengal
10.	Smt. Manisha Panwar	Secretary- Higher Education	Uttarakhand
11.	Sh. A.P.S Virk	PD-RUSA	Punjab
12.	Dr. Roshan Sunkaria	CEO- RUSA	Punjab
13.	Prof. T.A. Gonsalves	Vice Chairman –SHEC	Himachal Pradesh
14.	Sh. Hemant Verma	Dy. Director (Hr. Education)	Haryana
15.	Sh. A. Wopen Linhi	Secretary (Hr.& Tech. Edn)	Nagaland
16.	Sh. Sheikh Musthaq Ahmad	Secretary Hr. Education	J&K
17.	Sh. K. Lalnginglova	Commissioner & Secretary – HTE	Mizoram
18.	Dr. R. B. Subramanian	Add. Director	Chhattisgarh
19.	Dr. Vijay K. Goyal	OSD	Chhattisgarh
20.	Dr. K.L.Pradhan	Jt. Director	Mizoram
21.	Dr. Zanzoliana	OSD (RUSA)	Mizoram
22.	Dr. Norbert Noraho	Project Director (RUSA)	Nagaland
23.	Sh. Anil Salgotra	Dy. Secretary (HE)	J&K
24.	Sh. J.K. Sinha	Resident Commissioner Tripura	Tripura
25.	Prof. PB Ullagaddi	Advisor (AB), AICTE	AICTE, New Delhi
26.	Sh. Bhaskar G. Nayak	Director (Higher Education)	Goa
27.	B. Venkatesh Kumar	Prof. TISS	Mumbai
28.	Prof. Shailendra Raj Mehta	Prof. IIM- Ahmedabad	Ahmedabad
29.	Sh. Pawan Agarwal	Adviser (HE)	Planning Commission
30.	Sh. Yogendra Tripathi	JS &FA, HRD	M/o HRD
31.	Sh. Oliver	Nodal Officer – Hr. Edn	Manipur

32.	Dr. Satpal Singh Sahni	Nodal Officer – RUSA	Uttarakhand
33.	Sh. S.B Sekhri	Director, Hr. Edu-cum- MS(SHEC)	Himachal Pradesh
34.	Dr. Vedant Pandya	Jr. CEO & Director, KCG	Gujarat
35.	Sh. Pravin R Patel	OSD, KCG	Gujarat
36.	Sh. Adarsh M.S.	Chief Mgr- Canara Bank	Canara Bank
37.	Sh. Dharampal Naik	DGM,	Canara Bank
38.	Sh. Sanjay	Director	MHRD
39.	Sh. Harpreet Singh	Director	MHRD
40.	Dr. Gopal Sanghi	Coordinator RUSA	Himachal Pradesh
41.	Sh. Krishna K R Tiwari	Assistant Director	Statistic Division, MHRD
42.	Sh. Shahid Bukhavi	SA,	J&K
43.	Sh. Masood Simnani	Statistical Officer	J&K
44.	Sh. Fayaz Ahmed	Assistant Director	J&K
45.	Sh. Sandeep Dash	OSD, PFMS	M/o Finance