

# **IMPLEMENTATION OF RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN IN WEST BENGAL: AN ANALYSIS ON ROLE OF STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND  
ADMINISTRATION, NEW DELHI, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE DEGREE OF M.PHIL.

2020

SUMAN SAHA



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

NEW DELHI

MAY, 2020

## DECLARATION BY THE SCHOLAR

This is to certify that the M.Phil. Dissertation being submitted by me on the topic entitled “Implementation of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan in West Bengal: An Analysis on Role of State Council of Higher Education” has been completed under the guidance of Dr. Mona Sedwal. It is declared that the present study has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship or Fellowship to this or any other University.

Suman Saha

## CERTIFICATE BY THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Implementation of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan in West Bengal: An Analysis on Role of State Council of Higher Education” is undertaken by Mr. Suman Saha under my supervision as part of his M.Phil. degree in this Institute. To the best of my knowledge, this is original work conducted by him and the dissertation may be sent for evaluation.

Dr. Mona Sedwal

## **Acknowledgements**

I have incurred a lot of debts in the process of writing this dissertation and I deem it proper to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to those whose assistance has mattered a lot.

My supervisor, Dr. Mona Sedwal was unfailingly supportive since I conceived this topic and started on it. She has been an exemplary mentor and has unstintingly guided me with her advice and mental support. She made time for me despite her hectic schedule. She has been extremely generous and caring. I have been rather fortunate to have her as my research supervisor.

I am also grateful to the respected Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Administrative Officer, Prof. Veera Gupta; IC Head of the Department and all other respected teachers of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, for giving me their valuable suggestions and feed backs during this course of the research work.

I am also gratified to Librarian and all other non-teaching staff of NIEPA for their kind concern and help. They were always there beside us with their helping hands.

I am especially thankful to respected Principals and Administrators of all colleges and universities for their help during data collection from West Bengal. Among them, I would like to mention names of Basanti Devi College, Kolkata, Ramsaday College, Amta, Calcutta University and Gour Banga University, Malda for their keen interest in this research topic. Without their support this research work would not have been completed.

I thank all my friends and seniors of NIEPA and outside for their constant support and encouragement. I would like to mention the names of Dipendra Kumar Pathak, Suchita Roy, Debarati Ghosh, Naren Mondal and Trina Maitra who have helped me in various ways during the last one year and more.

Last but never the least, I would like to thank my family for always being there by my side. Had they not been this supportive, I would never have reached this stage.

## Contents

Certificate by the Scholar	i
Certificate by the Supervisor	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Contents	iv-vii
List of Tables and Figures	viii
Abbreviations	ix-xi

### Chapter I: Introduction

1.1	History of Higher Education in India	2-4
1.2	Public Funding in Higher Education	4-5
1.3	Neo-liberal Approach, Increasing Demand, and Growing Inequality of Higher Education in India	5-6
1.4	Quality, Autonomy and Accountability of Higher Education Institutions	6-8
1.5	Higher Education Policies in India	8-9
1.6	Five-year plans and Higher Education in India	9-11
1.7	Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme	11-12
1.8	Global Scenario of Higher Education Councils	12-13
1.9	Other State Higher Education Councils of India	13-16
1.10	Higher Education Scenario of West Bengal	16-20
1.11	Rationale of the Study	20
1.12	Research Questions	20-21
1.13	Research Objectives	21
1.14	Research Methodology	21
1.15	Scheme of Chapterisation	21-23

### Chapter II: Review of Literature

2.1	Massification of Higher Education	24-26
2.2	Higher Education Governance and Policies	27-28
2.3	Privatisation of Higher Education	28-30
2.4	Political Intervention in State Higher Education in the Indian Context	30-31

2.5	Funding in Higher Education	31-33
2.6	Indian Higher Education Councils and RUSA	33-36
2.7	Research Gap	36

### **Chapter III: Research Methodology**

3.1	Introduction	37
3.2	Theoretical Framework	37-39
3.3	Research Questions	39
3.4	Objectives	39
3.5	Rationale for Research Methodology	39-40
3.6	Research Approach	40
3.7	Research Design	40-41
3.8	Sampling	41-44
3.8.1	Rationale behind Choosing West Bengal as Field	41
3.8.2	Analytical Sample	41-42
3.8.3	Rationale of Sampling	42-43
3.8.4	Sampling Technique	43
3.9	Tool for Data Collection	43-45
3.9.1	Primary Data Collection	43
3.9.2	Rationale of Using Interview Schedule	43-44
3.9.3	Secondary Data Collection	44
3.10	Field Experience	44-45
3.11	Analysis of Data	45-47
3.11.1	Scheme and Document Analysis	45-47
3.11.2	Primary Field Data Analysis	47

### **Chapter IV: UGC and Implementation of RUSA in West Bengal**

4.1	UGC and Indian Higher Education	48-51
4.2	Issues and Problems of State Higher Education	52-53
4.3	Steps to Improve the Existing System	53-55
4.4	Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)	55-60
4.5	RUSA in West Bengal	60-67
4.5.1	State Higher Education Plan, 2018-2021	68-70

## **Chapter V: Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

5.1	Envisaged and Transformed Role of West Bengal State Council Higher Education	70-76
5.2	State Higher Education Funding, UGC and RUSA	76-80
5.3	RUSA and Strategic Planning	80-82
5.4	Issues of Institutional Autonomy and Accountability	82-84
5.5	Transparency and Monitoring of RUSA	84-86
5.6	GER, Access to Higher Education Institutes	86-88
5.7	Problems of RUSA Implementation	88-93
5.7.1	RUSA 1.0 Implementation Time Period	88-89
5.7.2	Issue of One-time Funding	89
5.7.3	Fund for In-house Quality Development, Not for Research and Innovation	89-90
5.7.4	Difference in Financial Rule of State and Centre	90
5.7.5	Delayed Fund Disbursement	90
5.7.8	Issue of E-tendering and E-Monitoring	91

## **Chapter VI: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

6.1	Summary	92-96
6.2	Summary of Findings	96-103
6.2.1	UGC, RUSA and Improved Funding Pattern	96-97
6.2.2	Envisaged and Transformed Role of West Bengal State Council Higher Education	97-98
6.2.3	Strategic Planning in RUSA	98
6.2.4	Autonomy and Accountability of Institution	98-99
6.2.5	Transparency and Monitoring of the Scheme	99
6.2.6	GER, Access to Higher Education Institutions	99-100
6.2.7	Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions	100
6.2.8	Problems of RUSA Implementation	100-101
6.3	Limitation of the Study	101
6.4	Conclusion	101-103
6.5	Recommendations	103
6.5.1	For RUSA Scheme	103

6.5.2	For Further Research Work	103
	Bibliography	104-112
	Annexure 1	113-115



## **List of Tables**

4.1	Approval and Release of Fund of RUSA 1.0	63
4.2	Component Wise Fund Approved and Release of Fund of RUSA 1.0	64
4.3	Status of the Sample Institutions	65
4.4	West Bengal HE GER in Comparison to National HE GER (2013-14 and 2017-18)	66
4.5	Status of Higher Education Institutions in West Bengal	67
4.6	Numbers of 2f, 12B and NAAC Accredited Institutions in West Bengal	67
4.7	West Bengal State Higher Education Plan, 2018-2021	69-70
5.1	Legal and “In Practice” Powers and Functions of State Higher Education Councils	73-74
5.2	WBSCHE’s Expected and Actual Functions (FY 2015-17)	75

## **List of Figures**

3.1	Sample Population of the Study	42
3.2	Policy Content	45
3.3	Policy Context	46
3.4	Policy Process	46
4.1	Hurdles of Fund Absorption	49
4.2	Scheme Content	56
4.3	Scheme Context	57
4.4	Scheme Implementation	58
5.1	Preparation of State Higher Education Plan	83

## Abbreviations

AISHE	All India Survey on Higher Education
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COE	Centre of Excellence
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
DOP	Design of Programme
DPI	Detailed Plan Instruction
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GOI	Government of India
GPS	Global Positioning System
GSDP	Gross State Domestic Product
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council of England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cell
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organisation
IT	Information Technology
J& K	Jammu and Kashmir
LED	Light Emitting Diode
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource and Development
MIS	Management Information System
MMER	Management, Monitoring Evaluation and Research

NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NBA	National Board for Accreditation
NCHER	National Commission for Higher Education and Research
NPE	National Policy on Education
NRSC	National Remote Sensing Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAB	Project Approval Board
PMB	Project Monitoring Body
POA	Program of Action
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PPT	PowerPoint Presentation
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RUSA	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan
SC	Schedule Caste
SHEC	State Higher Education Council
SHEP	State Higher Education Plan
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST	Schedule Tribe
TMC	Trinamool Congress
UC	Utilisation Certificate
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPSCHE	Uttar Pradesh State Council for Higher Education

UT	Union Territory
VC	Vice Chancellor
WBSCHE	West Bengal State Council for Higher Education

# **Chapter I**

## **Introduction**

Since independence, one of the main focuses of this country had been to improve the quality of higher education. This was the reason why soon after the independence, the Government had formulated the first commission named Radhakrishnan Commission, solely devoted to higher education of the country. During that time, the number of higher education institutions were few, as only 600 colleges existed all over the country and nearly 25 university-level institutions. So, there was a need for expanding Higher Education all over the country. In 1991, before Programme of Action (POA)-1992, the number of colleges increased to 7346, and the number of universities increased to 117. So, after four decades of independence, the growth of higher education was quite noticeable, though not satisfying as the demand for higher education has also increased a lot. In the meantime, several commissions (Kothari Commission, 1964-66), policies (NPE-1968, 1986) came into existence, which focused on the expansion and demand of higher education.

After 1991, with the new economic reform, liberalisation expedited the expansion of Higher Education institutes in the country. However, the quality of the institutions was never regulated, keeping in view the proportion of institution expansion took place. Initially, UGC was established in the mid-1950s, and then NAAC and other agencies evaluated the external qualities of the institutions, but the internal quality persisted to be a major question. Since 1977, when education came into the concurrent list, the center lost its control of the state institutions, building a huge gap among the states and the center. This gap became another reason for the degradation of quality in the institutions. To bridge this gap, NPE-1986 and UGC in 1988 recommended the establishment of SHECs in the respective states to be a mediator between the state and the center. As the NPE recommended, many states like West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh established SHECs, but there were states also which did not take the initiative to establish SHECs. Even then, after the establishment of SHECs, the quality of the higher education institutions of many states has not improved, and not even the unprecedented expansion of higher education has stopped. Primarily two reasons could be cited behind this stagnant condition of higher education in the states. First of all, the scarcity of funds. There is an institutional inequality of funding in India. Institutes under the Centre used to receive a lump sum amount of money from the Centre that helped them in their growth and quality

enhancement, but on the other hand, State universities and colleges had not received as much money as the Central Universities receive for their developmental purpose. Still, states like Uttar Pradesh or many states situated in the Southern part of the country that welcomed the liberalisation policy for the expansion of private institutions. However, states like West Bengal had not accepted the liberalisation policy initially, so less private funding was also another issue for the minimum expansion of higher education institutions here. Secondly, the confusing state of the SHECs. It was unaware of its duties and tasks for a longer period of time, which kept the council in many states only in pen and paper, but in reality, they did nothing to improve the quality or to expand the higher education institution in the respective states.

To resolve this problem, after almost two decades of the POA, in 2013-14, the government had launched one flagship programme named, RUSA, which had been implemented in the states through the SHECs. This Centrally Sponsored Scheme was meant to fund state universities strategically. There were certain mandates and components to fund State Institutions, but before receiving funds, the first criterion was to establish one SHEC in every state. The reason was the Centre wanted to fill the gap and initiate a dialogue between the state and center through these SHECs. So, this current research study focused on the implementation and achievement of RUSA in the state of West Bengal through the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education. The study attempted to find out how the SHECs were envisaged and what they turned out to be. It also emphasised on the fact that how the role of the SHECs had been transformed and what role SHECs were not playing. RUSA was implemented in West Bengal in 2014, so it has been six years, evaluating the current status of the state in the sector of higher education and to understand how far the State higher education council succeeded or failed in the implementation of the Centrally sponsored scheme in the state of West Bengal was one of the major objectives of the study.

### **1.1. History of Higher Education in India**

To trace the history of Indian higher education, the East India Company, after becoming ruler created a new political situation which demanded more service provider. The existing Indian education system was unable to fulfill that demand. So, the British Raj felt the need to restructure the Higher education system to produce some lower-level assistance. It set the backdrop for establishing universities in three different precedencies of India. However, once the students started to graduate from the universities, they failed to get suitable jobs which invoke the criticism of British policies of establishing universities following the model of the

University of London. This criticism led to the establishment of two new universities, Punjab and Allahabad University, keeping in mind the need for the administrative system. As literature pointed out, "...the emergence of the two universities which departed from their earlier models not only by providing for Indian studies programme but also by undertaking the teaching of postgraduate classes and thereby created a milestone in the growth and development of university education in India" (Sedwal, 2019). This onwards, the establishment of Indian universities followed the British model. After the World War the entire globe, as well as India, also felt the need for trained personnel which surged the demand for Higher Education and simultaneously the expansion of Universities.

India's post-independence academic system was also inherited from the British. The universities, to which almost all of the 700 undergraduate colleges were affiliated, were mainly examining bodies, with small post-baccalaureate programmes. These colleges, generally small with around 500 students, were affiliated to universities that determined the curriculum, set and administered examinations, guided admissions, and awarded degrees. The undergraduate colleges possessed little autonomy. This affiliating system, although much criticized, continues to the present. A few of the universities were single-campus "unitary" institutions without affiliated colleges, and these resembled academic institutions in the West with undergraduate and graduate as well as professional degree programmes. "A few research organizations in specialized fields do advanced basic research in some scientific disciplines. While much has been added to the Indian higher education establishment, little has changed in the basic structure of the universities" (Jayaram 2004).

The evolution of private higher education in the Indian scenario happened through some of the philanthropic basis were the princely states have started establishing universities like Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University or Mysore university etc. However, after the independence the growth of the private higher education institution was very slow. So, the Kothari commission of 1964-66, looked into the matter of vast establishment of private affiliated colleges. Since then, the government has decided to give greater freedom and financial assistance to good private institutions. This policy has helped to expand private institutions in the 1960s and 1970s, but after the eighties, the recognition to unaided colleges or self-financed institutions were given 'without any financial grant.' Suddenly, after the economic reforms of the 1990s, the private institutions were started growing like mushrooms

as the government gave green signal to open profit-making private institutions which became the mainstay for expanding higher education during this period.

## **1.2. Public Funding in Higher Education**

The need for restructuring higher education is not only a phenomenon that happened in India alone, but this change was experienced by institutions all over the globe. This change does not confine to the academic and non-academic activities of the universities but led to major restructuring through the ways of governance and funding of higher education institutions. Since the nineties, the higher education system witnessed the dynamics of globalisation and neo-liberal policies due to economic reforms. The higher education sector of India adopted several changes based on market demands, and all these changes resulted in 'an unprecedented expansion, leading to the massification of the system'(Varghese,2019). In the process of massification of higher education, economic reform mainly focuses on the privatisation of the sector. However, in a country like India, this privatisation cannot be done thoroughly, the reason being where the maximum number of students are first-generation learners. "The privatisation measures included a reduction in subsidies, the introduction of cost recovery measures, and income-generating activities" (Varghese, 2019). In recent times, it is seen that most of the state governments of India have started to terminate state funding to establish government-aided institutions. Instead, they are encouraging private players to increase the 'self-financed' as well as 'private unaided institutions'. In this context, as the article, "Mortgaging the Future? Indian Higher Education" points out about the state's reluctance to establish government-aided institutions, simultaneously the central's role in this massification of higher education.

In contrast to cash strapped state governments, in June 2007, the Centre announced plans to set up and fund 30 new central universities across the country. India has 20 central universities (18 funded by the UGC), spread over just 9 states, Delhi and Puducherry. The remaining 19 states of India would receive priority in getting central universities. Besides, the central government announced that it would work with the states to support the expansion of colleges to the 340 districts that have extremely low college enrolments. To increase the likelihood of enrolment from these districts, it also announced plans to set one high-quality school in every block of the country (6000), which would also establish benchmarks for excellence in public schooling. (Kapur and Mehta, 2007)



In the same article, 1997 Discussion paper, "Government Subsidies in India" (GOI, 1997) was mentioned, arguing in favor of reduction of subsidies in Indian higher education. Citing the reason behind this, the paper has claimed that "education beyond the elementary level is a 'non-merit' service because the benefits of the subsidy accrue primarily to the recipients. It has argued that the private rates of return are greater than social rates of return in higher education; hence, subsidies should be phased out" (Kapur and Mehta, 2007). The Government of India discussion paper assumed that the subsidies are benefitting the 'people of the better-off section of the society.' However, this argument is not valid in the sense that 'marginalized groups have been given much greater access to education as a result of government subsidies' (Kapur and Mehta, 2007). Government subsidy to fund higher education should never be an issue because even the so-called developed OECD countries are providing a maximum percentage of subsidies to their respective higher education sector. As the literature also argues, "Global patterns of funding clearly show that higher education remains very much a state-dominated sector. In OECD countries such as Denmark and Holland, public funding provides 98 percent of the resources for higher education; the figure is almost 90 percent for Canada. Even in the United States, the figure is as high as 78 percent. There is absolutely no doubt that the public sector has a preeminent role to play in higher education" (Kapur and Crowley, 2007). So, the argument in favor of the reduction of subsidies in a country like India in the higher education sector is never a good idea.

### **1.3. Neo-liberal Approach, Increasing Demand, and Growing Inequality of Higher Education in India**

Being the second populated country of the world, the demand for higher education is continuously increasing, and higher education is viewed "as a stepping stone to a lucrative career and as a resource contributing to economic growth and social well-being" (Varghese et. al. 2017). Another major reason for this increasing demand for higher education in India is the failure of the government in generating employment in the public sector, and the rate of unemployment is increasing simultaneously. As a result, high school graduates are more inclined towards pursuing higher education. The crux point of concern is that the policies and the provisions public sector has for higher education in India, is gradually failing to keep pace with the demand. "In the process, higher education is losing its public good character and is becoming more of a private good" (Srivastava, 2017). This very phenomenon of becoming higher education a private good has its greater 'implications for its accessibility and

affordability.' As one of the articles argues, "The recent market-friendly reforms in higher education follow from a neo-liberal approach to development in general and education in particular. The role of the state redefined in terms of facilitating the efficient functioning of the markets. The manifestation of this approach seen in terms of the promotion of the private institutions and privatisation of the public institutions. The burden of financing higher studies is increasing in the student's shoulders" (Srivastava, 2017). This is not only about the student's burden in pursuing higher studies, but simultaneously it aggravates the persisting inequality in the sector of higher education. Regional disparities in private financing and distribution of higher education institutions have grown up to another level. As an example, in the states like Andhra Pradesh, there are 51 higher education institutions per 100,000 students, whereas in the states like Bihar for the same number of students, the number of institutions existing is just seven. So, somehow or the other, the higher education policies related to privatization and public funding in the country is responsible for this growing regional disparity in the higher education sector. India has always recognised the need to improve the quality and expansion of higher education. That is the reason why, after independence, the first commission established as the Radhakrishnan Commission was on higher education. However, a significant amount of resources and funding have been allocated after the National Knowledge Commission's recommendation in 2006. Higher education needs basic stability and consistent policy orientation. In this context, the literature focuses on the fact, "India's relatively open political system may permit it more flexibility in coping with adversity, but it could fail to produce a practical solution or imaginative plans to improve higher education" (Altbach, 2009).

#### **1.4. Quality, Autonomy, and Accountability of Higher Education Institutions**

Due to rapid expansion of higher education in the 1990s, the major challenge was the issue of quality, autonomy, and accountability of the institutions. Literature suggests, "There is a strong perception that the quality of higher education and research can be assured only if institutions are granted autonomy in academics and possibly in the administrative matter as well" (Varghese, 2017). NPE-1986 proposed, "to provide universities with a structure and management with self-correcting mechanisms which will allow them simultaneously innovative, autonomous and accountable" (Varghese, 2017). However, unfortunately, after the economic reforms of the country, this very concept had not been realised and materialised. For the accountability of the institutions, the state had tried two different processes, one is the Internal Quality Assurance Cell, and the other is External quality assurance. The IQAC is

introduced at the institution level. NAAC has introduced this very concept of IQAC in every institution, and simultaneously, through the policy recommendations of the NPE-1986, the NAAC proposed to establish a State Council of Higher Education at the state level. The external quality assurance cell-like NAAC and NBA were established in the 1990s to maintain the external accountable quality of the institutions. However, even till now, only one-third of the universities and the one-fifth of the colleges have been accredited. To support the argument as researches are arguing in favor of creating more accrediting agencies, "The institutional arrangements for accreditation need to be strengthened and in recognition of this UGC is proposing to create more agencies to fast track the process of accreditation" (Varghese, 2019).

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 center on the idea of cost-recovery measures and indicate a clear shift in the provision and management of higher education from the state to the market.

This implies a reduced reliance on the state for funding and control and a shift towards market processes. Thus, it 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 significant effect on the relative distribution of responsibilities for the management of higher education systems. Despite this, the state continues to play a role, providing a framework for other nonstate 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).

### **1.5. Higher Education Policies in India**

The need for the development of higher education mentioned in the commissions of India for long since the inception. Starting from the Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948-49 to the Kothari commission of 1964-66, all focused on the reformation of higher education on several terms. However, this development policy of Higher Education is mainly governed by NPE-1986, as modified in POA-1992. The basic framework of National Policy on Education in India was prepared based on those two landmark education commission's reports, one is "University Education Commission Report" (1948-49), and the other is "Education Commission Report" (1964-66).

The NPE -1986, as discussed earlier, for the internal quality assurance of Higher Education, had recommended establishing State Council of Higher Education. This was recommended for empowering the state to play a major role in the development and growth of higher education at the state level. As the policy recommended, "State-level planning and coordination of Higher Education will be done through councils of higher education. The UGC and these councils will develop coordinative methods to keep a watch on standards" (NPE-1986) and as POA-1992 has defined the role and responsibilities of the SCHEs as –

The State Council of Higher Education will prepare coordinated programmes of development in each state for consolidation of the existing institutions and their infrastructure, programme of strengthening non-viable colleges including alternate forms of their utilisation (vocationalisation and diversification of the courses), special programmes for colleges located in the rural areas, etc. Such state-level plans will be consolidated by the UGC and progress of their implementation monitored by it." (POA-1992)

NPE has assigned the SCHEs the role of state-level planning and coordination of State Higher Education departments with UGC through these councils. "The aim was to establish them as statutory bodies under state legislatures for which the central government will formulate a model act. In states where the number of universities was too few, the guideline suggested advisory councils rather than statutory councils" (Anandakrishnan, 2016).

So, what was the rationale behind this recommendation of NPE-1986 to establish SCHEs? There were major goals behind the establishment of SCHEs. The first major goal was to improve access to higher education to the larger section of the mass. Greater access required an augmentation of the education institutional capacity of the higher education sector to provide opportunities to all those who deserve and desire higher education. The second goal was on the equity aspect of higher education. Equity comprises fair access of the poor and the socially disadvantaged groups to higher education. The third goal was to improve the quality and excellence of higher education institutions and its infrastructure. It involved the provision of education following accepted standards so that students receive available knowledge of the highest standard that helps them to enhance their human resource capabilities. Along with the improvement of access, equity, and quality of higher education at the state level through the SCHEs, another major reason for establishing these state councils was to bridge the gap of the center, and the state in the higher education sector as education came into the concurrent list since 1976-77. State higher education councils had to play a major role in the implementation of the central policies and schemes at the state level, which was the major concern in the process of building the state councils. As discussed, the State Council of Higher Education was recommended by NPE-1986 and then UGC in 1988. Few states had established SCHEs by then but even after that the issues regarding Higher Education expansion and its funding was not resolved. The country was in a confusion in terms of privatization policy and public funding as 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan argued for privatization and proposed to remove the "not for profit" tag from universities. In the midst of this conflict, the Central government announced RUSA in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, mainly since the year 2012 to 2017. This added on as more conflict situation for Planning Commission and MHRD as RUSA was completely a public funding Centrally Sponsored scheme which argued against allowing profit in Higher Education.

### **1.6. Five-Year Plans and Higher Education in India**

In this context, it is also necessary to identify and analyse how far the five-year plans have planned differently for the development of higher education in the country.

...the VI Plan onwards the focus shifted to consolidation and quality improvement. The VII Plan emphasised research and academic developments. It was from this plan onwards that the development of centers of excellence and area study programs got special attention. From the VIII Plan onward, the need for differential funding was recognized, it was envisaged that the developing departments would be provided necessary funds to bring up their facilities and activities to an optimum level for their teaching and general research programs. The IX Plan aimed at gearing the system of higher education to meet the challenges arising out of the major social, economic and technological changes. The focus of the X Plan was on the quality and relevance of higher education, research and development, management in financing and the use of new information and communication technologies. The X Plan provided the basis for higher education in the 21st century. (MHRD, 2013)

So, it is quite evident that the establishment of SCHEs was for the internal quality assessment of the state higher education institutions. The situation was that the same till 2013, as only eight states established State Councils of Higher Education, and Gujrat had one knowledge consortium for doing the same functions but without referring to UGC. In 2013, the Central Government had launched one Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), named Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) to fund the state higher education institutions strategically. This move of launching RUSA was initiated through the XI five-year plan of the planning commission and implemented in the XII five-year plan. The XI five-year plan focused and emphasised more on higher education. The commission set three major targets in this sector. The targets are broadening access, making higher education inclusive, and promoting improvements in quality. The scheme RUSA was one of those attempts to improve the access, inclusivity, and quality of higher education even in the states. "In the XI Plan, the share of education in total plan outlay increased from a mere 6.7% in the X Plan to 19.4%, of which 30% was earmarked for higher education. This was a nine-fold increase over the X Plan, viz. Rs. 84,943 crores against Rs. 9,500 crores" (Planning Commission, 2007).

The XII plan, similar to the XI, emphasised on improving the higher education access, equity, and excellence. This plan laid more importance in improving the quality of higher education. Along with increasing more higher education institutions, the plan also focused on the consolidation of existing higher education. The commission opined that this move will increase the access as well as improve the quality of the system. Learning from past

experiences, the commission admitted the conspicuous vulnerable nature of the Indian higher education system which barred the process of quality achievement of the institutions, but it also mentioned about better strategic policies. Two of the major objectives of the commission as the part of the plan were "Higher education in India to be brought in line with and at the frontiers of global trends in higher education and knowledge development" and "Undertaking governance and regulatory reforms that focus on institutional autonomy within a framework of accountability and build adaptive capacity of the system" (MHRD, 2013). To improve the access, quality, and equity of higher education, the planning commission took single-minded narrow strategies instead of a holistic development approach. Along with this, the XII plan also paid attention in "a strategic shift in thinking is needed in several critical areas ranging from issues of access and equity to the teaching-learning process, research, governance, funding and monitoring" (MHRD, 2013). Among the major changing strategic shifts in thinking, the first and foremost shift is about increasing funds in the higher education sector, and these funds should be used strategically in the states. The focus was not to improve a handful number of institutions; instead, through a strategic move, the quality of institutions all over the country should be improved. This is where RUSA came into existence which was primarily meant to provide funds to state institutions, but these funds were to be given strategically through the State Council of Higher Education.

### **1.7. Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) - A Centrally Sponsored Scheme**

The funding to states was based on critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans, which described each state's strategy to address issues of equity, access, and excellence in higher education. The scheme was launched, keeping in view a few of the critical issues that the state higher education institutions were facing. First of all, it aimed at the quality improvement of the state institutions. This was done by conforming to the state institutions to prescribed norms and standards. RUSA made it clear that in the internal quality assurance framework, accreditation will be mandatory criteria. Secondly, RUSA also targeted to bring reform in the educational, affiliation, and examination system. The third objective was to eradicate the regional imbalances in terms of access to Higher Education and to bring equity through providing adequate opportunities to SC/ST, Backward classes, women, minorities, and differently-abled persons. The last objective was also one of the predominant criteria to claim the central funding is to establish a State Council of higher education in every state. The central funding (in the ratio of 60:40 for general category States, 90:10 for special category states and

100% for union territories) would be norm based and outcome dependent. However, this funding would flow from the central Ministry through the state governments/union territories to the State Higher Education Councils before reaching the identified institutions. As M. Anandkrishnan argued that, "This move is seen in the context of the Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) which aims at strategic funding and support to the state higher education system in order to achieve the goals of equity, access, and excellence. The state would not get any of the benefits under the RUSA unless there is a higher education council in place, and this has given the push for the revival of the body" (Anandkrishnan, 2015). Due to this, after the implementation of RUSA, many of the states were in the process of establishing SCHEs. Apart from the internal quality assurance, among the states which established SCHEs through their respective state acts, there was substantial variation in its composition and function. NPE-1986 and UGC suggested different guidelines of the works that these SCHEs should do. Even it is evident that all the existing SCHEs are doing various jobs, but still, "it is generally felt that there is a large gap between the functions mandated by the legislation and the actual performance of the most SCHEs" (Anandkrishnan, 2015).

In the Indian scenario, National Policy on Education-1986 recommended the establishment of SCHEs and it was envisaged that after the economic reform of the 1990s as the mechanism to strengthen institutional autonomy and accountability at the state level. However, as it is argued and manifested that SCHEs have failed to achieve their goals. Then RUSA has been thought of to revive the condition of Higher Education.

### **1.8. Global Scenario of Higher Education Councils**

In this context, the study attempted to locate the Indian SCHEs concerning some of the international case studies of SHEC. The major points emerged was that the higher education councils of these countries are significantly different from India.

For instance, the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE), which focuses on strengthening the governance of Higher Education institutions in England. The council also aimed at strengthening the institutional autonomy and accountability. "Several other not-for-profit independent bodies in the UK link to, or are independent of, the funding bodies, fulfill a range of other quality assurance, quality enhancement and higher education Information Technology (IT) management services and development functions. All of the



functions carried out by several intermediary bodies are key to improving outcomes of teaching and research and overall institutional development" (World Bank Group, 2014).

Secondly, the role of the central government in the SCHEs were increasingly being decentralised, and the provinces, municipalities and the universities have authority and power in the process of planning and other activities. There was a significant shift from a highly centralized system to an increasingly dispersed model of higher education council in China. Chinese higher education has entered into another phase of reform where the administrative reform is mostly focused. This administrative reform looks into the aspects of funding, monitoring, and self-regulatory system.

Thirdly, due to the demand for the more systematic development of the higher education system of Higher education, the SHECs in USA had evolved at the state level. "The United States is a federal system in which both the federal government and states provide funding for the higher education system. The establishment and functions of SHECs had been influenced over the years by federal requirements that states establish planning commissions as a prerequisite for receiving federal funding" (World Bank Group, 2014). The SHECs in the US provides an interesting case study of the state-level council which interacts with the central requirements vis-à-vis the existing structures, cultures and practices of the state.

These were the major International case studies of the State Higher Education Councils and their function. In this context, it was also necessary to understand the role and functions of SCHEs in the country.

### **1.9. Other State Higher Education Councils of India**

Based on recommendation of NPE-1986 and as prescribed by UGC-1988, SHECs were established to empower states in the process of state's growth and development of higher education in a decentralized manner. It was established as a state level policy making body and as an advisory council. These councils were meant to initiate dialogue between Centre and state. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharastra and Gujarat were first few states which established SHEC. West Bengal was the third state to establish state council of higher education in the year 1994.

The oldest SCHE was established in Andhra Pradesh as Andhra Pradesh State Council for Higher Education. Simultaneously this council had the "widest possible mandate in

development of higher education in the state" (Anandakrishnan, 2015). The fourteen-member council nominated academician as its chairman and vice-chairman. The council has been conferred with planning and coordination, academic and advisory functions and these functions were carefully reviewed by the Higher education department of the state. The council has the authority to permit private unaided degree colleges. "It is also involved in preparing and implementing state plans for higher education and monitoring their progress." (Anandakrishnan, 2015). To aware and guide the private unaided colleges about the NAAC assessment, the council also organises workshops in collaboration with NAAC and to provide them logistic support.

Gujarat Knowledge Consortium is the main body in the state of Gujarat, apart from the State Higher Education department, which looks after all the matters of higher education in the state of Gujrat, though in terms of functions and mandates this does not work like any other SCHEs. The consortium performs certain tasks like pushing academic reforms, promotion of research through different programmes, helping institutions to conduct NAAC accreditation, and organising capacity building training for the administrative and academic staff.

The higher education council of Karnataka is established in the year 2009. "The State Council is constituted by the state government which consists of 14 ex-officio members, all Vice Chancellors of State Universities, 10 academicians of repute as members, besides an Executive Director as the Member Secretary and an eminent educationist as Vice Chairman and the Minister-in-charge of Higher Education as Chairman... A smaller executive committee consisting of ten members is empowered to take decisions and deal with administrative matters, subject to ratification by the Council" (World Bank Group, 2014). The council looks into the following tasks – promoting academic excellence and social justice, ensuring the autonomy and the accountability of all higher education institutions of the state, and 'guiding harmonious growth of higher education under the socio-economic requirements of the state' (World Bank Group, 2014).

Kerala State Council of Higher Education was established in 2007. It has three distinct bodies – advisory council, governing council and executive council. The council conducts "training for non-teaching staff, prepare schemes for financial assistance to colleges in conducting seminars, workshops and training" (Anandakrishnan, 2015). It provides academic input to the government and university, "review existing guidelines and furnish recommendations for regulating admissions to various courses and for appointments to the

posts of teachers and teacher administrators in Universities, colleges and other institutions of higher education" (World Bank Group, 2014) and review the Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the Universities in the state periodically.

"The Uttar Pradesh State Council for Higher Education (UPSCHE) organised seminars/workshops to improve the quality of higher education in the state universities and colleges" (Anandkrishnan, 2015). The council also promotes "co-operation of institutions of higher education amongst themselves and explore the scope for interaction with industry and other related establishments" (World Bank Group, 2014).

Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education was established in 1993 focusing on "developing higher education plans in the state, formulating norms for starting new higher education institutions, suggesting ways to augment additional resources for the sector, making suggestions to the government for determining block grants to the universities, examining statutes, ordinances and regulations of the universities etc." (World Bank Group, 2014).

"Maharashtra had an SCHE which was apparently dormant. The state government has initiated the process of revival of the Maharashtra State Council for higher education as an overreaching body for planning and development of higher and technical education in the state" (Anandkrishnan, 2015). The council 'considers and approves the developmental program of the universities', 'recommends to the state government and to the universities the steps that may be taken to remove the regional imbalance' (World Bank Group, 2014).

Indian SCHEs have not even achieved their targets but somehow "moving in this direction in the expectation that it will clarify the responsibility for defining institutional strategies and overseeing their implementation; for ensuring the effectiveness of institutional systems and for benchmarking institutional performance" (World Bank Group, 2014). After the implementation of RUSA the role of these SCHEs increased to a greater extent. The question remains even after eight years of RUSA, how far Higher Education councils have succeeded in fulfilling the task assigned on paper?

Coming to the particular case of West Bengal and its existing higher education council which is West Bengal State Council of Higher Education (WBSCHE). It was established long back even before the launch of Centrally Sponsored Scheme like RUSA. With the recommendation of NPE-1986 and established following the state act, WBSCHE was established in 1994. However, before going into the WBSCHE's power and its function, it is

very important the current scenario of Higher education of West Bengal and what kind of assistance the state is demanding from RUSA.

### **1.10. Higher Education Scenario in West Bengal**

A land of intellectual awakening, the pioneer of the Indian Renaissance and once considered to be the first modern state of the country has had a glorious past and have given birth to several modern movements, West Bengal played a significant role for spreading education at various levels throughout the country. This state produced several renowned educationists including Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Vidyasagar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the modern-day Noble laureate Amartya Sen. Even the first university of the nation was established in Calcutta along with Bombay and Chennai in 1857 and even the first-degree college of the country, Serampore College, was established in the soil of West Bengal only in 1818. There are plenty of other examples like this in support of the statement that West Bengal had a vibrant culture of education for years. From the pre-independence time to the post-independence phase, the state has cherished the status of an educated society. During the time of independence, the state was positioned number second just after Kerala. The state continued to be the frontrunner in the field of education, even after Independence. IIT Kharagpur, IIM Calcutta were among the celebrated higher education institutions that were set up during the 1950s and 1960s. Apart from these, there were almost 90 colleges in West Bengal in 1951, and Visva-Bharati also became the Central University during this time, following the model of Rabindranath Tagore.

As the nation acquired independence it focused more on higher education than the school education, West Bengal Government had done the similar and focused on establishing higher education institutions than the primary or elementary or secondary education. So, the state government established more and more higher education institutions in West Bengal during this time. From 1951 to 1977, seven higher education universities were built and simultaneously the number of colleges were also increased to 151 during this time. So, it is quite evident that the state was really concerned about the status of higher education. In 1984, the first Education Commission was established under the Chairmanship of Bhabatosh Dutta to review the status of higher education in West Bengal and renowned by the name of Bhabatosh Dutta Commission. Primarily, the report was satisfactory, and the commission gave several recommendations to follow. However, unfortunately, these recommendations were not appropriately followed and eventually another commission was established in 1992 to examine

the education sector named Ashok Mitra Commission. One of the major comments that this commission had made regarding higher education of West Bengal was, "Quality has not kept pace with quantity in higher education too. The problem that most attracts attention is the unplanned growth of colleges" (Para 2.41). Somehow a hint of the downfall of higher education in West Bengal is given by this commission through this report. The Commission has recommended many aspects to improve the quality of higher education in the state but "...this recommendation was also ignored by the teachers and the government. The Commission's Report was in line with what Rabindranath Tagore had started at Santiniketan and Sriniketan. However, unfortunately for West Bengal, no government chose to follow the example he had set" (Bagchi, 2017).

So, as Ashoke Mitra Commission suggested in 1992, the same words had been said by the most recent Education Commission in 2015. The West Bengal Education Commission, chaired by Samir Kr Brahmachari, has raised the recent challenges in the West Bengal education system, mainly in higher education. As the commission report pointed out –

Ironically, the intellectual legacy seems to have rapidly faded during the last several decades and the state was left with tales of migrating talents, collapsing standards, battered laboratories as well as the financial crisis in the educational sector. Until recently, the lack of fresh thinking to revive the sinking morale and spirit of the educational sector has suffocated the educational system in the state.

The current scenario of the West Bengal Higher Education system is very challenging. The ambiguous position of the state in higher education is that it continues to produce scholars and human resources in the national and international platform, but closer scrutiny, however, reveals a progressive erosion of the competitive strength of the state. Students of the state are comprehensively losing their competitive mindset and attitude in the national and international level. This continuous downfall of the students raises several questions on the higher education system, on the role of higher education institutes, on the education policies of the state and the role of several statutory bodies existing in the state. Samir Kr Brahmachari Education Commission (2015) of West Bengal has also noted –

While the number of institutions – be it schools, colleges or universities – has grown significantly in volume, the expansion has evaded the aspects of quality, equity and inclusiveness. It is not surprising thus that the state has slipped to the lowest slab of the

educational scenario in the country. Ironically, the same set of students who once prided in being products of the state have continued to migrate to other states and countries. There has also been a concomitant and progressive shortage of teachers in our educational institutions.

While analysing the AISHE final report of 2013-2014, before the implementation of RUSA, several data came up, which quite clearly justifies the claim of the Brahmachari Education Commission report. According to this AISHE report, West Bengal had 985 colleges existing in 2013. West Bengal was the fourth largest populated state of India at present. The state had only 9 colleges on per lakh population, in comparison to India's 26 colleges per lakh population. In this scenario, the state holds the fourth last position. It is not that there was no demand for colleges in the state. The average enrolment of students per college was 1487. Based on enrolment, it secures 3rd position in the entire nation, way ahead of Indian average enrolment. So, this visibly showcases the discrepancy between the demand and supply factor in education. The pupil-teacher ratio in the colleges of West Bengal then it stands in a much lower position even in comparison to the standard India ratio. Where the India PTR in the colleges is 21:1, in West Bengal it is 37:1, in comparison to the states like Kerala it is 14:1 and Andhra Pradesh 16:1. Another interesting data is about the number of universities and the density of colleges then the reason for the downfall of higher education in West Bengal can be addressed. The state stands at eighth position in the entire nation in terms number of universities it has. The state had 27 number of total universities, among them 20 are State Public University, 1 Central University, 4 Institute of National Importance, 1 State Open University and 1 Deemed University, Private. In terms of density of colleges, the state stands at 14th position, even below the entire Indian density of colleges. With reference to NAAC accreditation data, up to 2016, 154 colleges were assessed based on that the average grade of the colleges was 2.52 and ranked number 17, way below than all other larger states of the country.

The data provided above illustrates the dilapidated quality of higher education in the state of West Bengal. West Bengal government built West Bengal State Council of Higher Education in 1994, just after the liberalisation policies have taken place in the entire nation. The council was assigned with different tasks. Among all of the tasks, the affiliation of the new universities and new colleges, the extension of affiliation of new subjects, preparing consolidated programmes in the higher education field of the state, keeping in view the

guidelines issued by UGC and its subsidiary body RUSA and the present government in State from time to time and assist in its implementation. In the year 2014-2015, the council received 48.04 crores of funding under the scheme of RUSA, out of which Rs. 40.79 crores have been distributed to the colleges and the universities. However, the question remains, even after five years of this why the higher education of West Bengal has not been shown a sign of improvement?

In this context the West Bengal Education Commission proposed to benchmark the state against some of the more successful yet comparable population and economies (Vietnam) to set an achievable roadmap for 2020 and 2030. The Commission, after careful deliberations, agreed on Vietnam and Germany (though structurally different) to be the immediate and future benchmarks for West Bengal's education sector to achieve respectively in terms of statistical numbers. Both Germany and Vietnam have a comparable population size to West Bengal. West Bengal has around 1,311 higher education institutions. Vietnam has 366 higher education institutions and Germany has 320 higher education institutions. However, on the contrary, Vietnam has 58 Universities for 366 colleges and Germany has 108 universities for 320 colleges, whereas West Bengal has only 24 universities for 1311 colleges. The total enrolments of students in schools for West Bengal accounts to 1,83,74,798 whereas in higher education institutions 18,69,324 get enrolled. The total number of teachers in schools stands at 6,23,785 and 31,085 in the higher education institutions. As a result, West Bengal school PTR (Pupil-Teacher Ratio) averages 29.4, while for higher education 42.88 is recorded. The national average for both school and college PTR is 25. Vietnam, in 2016, had a PTR of 24.9 and Germany 7.29. So, even in the context of comparison made by the council with the other countries, the state is lagging, and there was an attempt to achieve the standard like Vietnam and Germany.

Quality of education can be defined through different perspectives and narratives. However, if we define it through two major aspects, one is the infrastructure and second availability of teachers, then West Bengal stands below par the standard it had once during and after the independence. As a result, the student's migration in higher education is a common phenomenon in West Bengal. Several reasons can be attributed to this. Even after the liberalisation policies have taken place and the neo-liberal age is in vogue, the state hardly had any private player to invest in the sector of higher education. There are very few private universities but how far these institutions are accountable in the sense of quality, that is also a

matter of introspection. Based on the state made policy, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education gave affiliation to several new universities but even if these universities are built even then these institutions will suffer on the basis of quality for a longer period of time due to lack of faculty recruitment and infrastructure. As the latest commission has pointed out –

Strengthening institutional capacity, achieving expansion with quality, repositioning the educational system to align with current trends, improving the availability of skilled teachers and developing sustainable policies are major challenges confronting the present situation (Brahmachari Commission, 2016).

So, the current study focuses on role of West Bengal State Council of Higher Education in the implementation of the National Higher Education Mission (RUSA) for the improvement of quality in the state universities and colleges.

### **1.11. Rationale of the Study**

The main rationale of the study was to understand the ground reality in implementation of the centrally sponsored scheme RUSA and to assess how WBSCHE prepares strategic plans to enhance the quality and expansion of higher education. This study also gives an insight into why the Southern state like Kerala or Andhra Pradesh higher education councils are more successful in terms of two parameters namely expansion and quality of higher education in comparison to West Bengal which has a rich history of education. So, the main rationale of the study focuses to understand the current situation of Higher Education after first State Higher Education Plan gets obsolete in 2018 in West Bengal and what steps have been taken by the WBSCHE under the flagship programme of RUSA for further improvement of higher education in the state. Another important rationale of the study is to analyse the changing role West Bengal State Council of Higher Education (WBSCHE), the way it was envisaged and what it turns out to be.

### **1.12. Research Questions**

- 1) What role a statutory body like West Bengal State Council of Higher Education play in improving the condition of Higher Education in West Bengal?
- 2) Which transitions are made by existing council like WBSCHE to meet the requirement of RUSA?
- 3) Why public funding scheme like RUSA is essential in Higher Education?



- 4) How does RUSA influenced the expansion and quality of higher education in West Bengal?
- 5) Does the funding from RUSA helped in facilitating the quality of higher education in West Bengal?
- 6) How far the current scheme of RUSA is different from the earlier funding patterns of UGC?

### **1.13. Objectives**

- 1) To analyse the role of State Council of Higher Education in supporting the Higher Education institutions in West Bengal
- 2) To examine the Implementation of RUSA through WBSCHE
- 3) To study how RUSA has impacted the Higher Education in West Bengal

### **1.14. Research Methodology**

Primarily, the research was designed in the qualitative method taking support from the basic quantitative data. For the quantitative data, it relied on the AISHE and annual report of West Bengal. The study was done in document analysis and administrative survey methods. Secondary data analysis and desk reviews were done to triangulate data collected from the field. It was conducted in two phases.

**Stage I** - In the first phase the study focused on policy analysis and the centrally Sponsored scheme, RUSA was analysed through policy content analysis method. Through analysis of the RUSA scheme document, the study critically examined the genesis of it and how it was different from the earlier UGC funding pattern. The analysis of the scheme also perceived the current implementation status and impact of RUSA in West Bengal higher education institutions, whether the scheme contributed towards expansion and quality of higher education. The research was carried out mainly through qualitative method where the policy, as well as content analysis, were the major methods for conducting the secondary data analysis.

**Stage II** – In this phase, the interview schedule was prepared for the college and university administrators, who were dealing with the implementation of RUSA in their respective institutions, to have a closer look at the ground level implementation of the RUSA scheme. These interviews were conducted purely based on random purposive sampling.

## 1.15. Scheme of Chapterisation

**Chapter I: Introduction:** The first chapter based on an extensive literature review attempts to understand through different issues related to Higher Education, the need for public funding in a country like India. It traces the history of Indian Higher Education, through different phases in Higher Education system got evolved in different timelines like in the nineties, the public institutions got replaced by the private and massification of Higher Education emerged as a trend. In such a socio-economic context, need of center-state dialogue and public funding to Higher Education became the need of the hour to reduce inequality, disparity and unprecedented growth of Higher Education due to the new-liberal policies. This was the backdrop of establishing State Council of Higher Education, initially and later on the launch of the centrally sponsored scheme RUSA. This chapter traces this in historical context and then contextualise the gap existing in the functioning of WBSCHE and the implementation of RUSA in West Bengal.

**Chapter II: Review of Literature:** The chapter locates the current scenario of higher education from different studies to identify the research gap. These studies based on the global as well as national perspective vis-a vis the existing higher education set-up of the state West Bengal. After extensive review, themes that emerged were massification of higher education; Higher Education Governance and Policies; Privatization of Higher Education; Political Intervention in State Higher Education in Indian Context; Indian Higher Education Council and RUSA and Funding in Indian Higher Education. This provides the basis for tracing research gap and justify rationale of the study.

**Chapter III: Research Methodology:** This chapter discusses the rationale of the study, the objectives, the research questions of the study which were drawn out of the literature review. This chapter elaborately discusses the methods and methodology of conducting the study. In this the population, sample, sampling technique, data collection tool, data analysis technique, all these aspects were discussed along with the theoretical framework of the study.

**Chapter IV: UGC and Implementation of RUSA in West Bengal:** This chapter majorly focused on the shift of Higher education funding from the earlier UGC fund to the current RUSA fund. The chapter analyses RUSA scheme keeping in view the reference point of UGC. Through different stages of scheme analysis, policy content, policy context and policy implementation, the study analyzed the current RUSA scheme to understand the necessity of

the new mechanism of funding. The chapter also explored different dimensions of RUSA scheme implementation in West Bengal vis-a vis the State Higher Education Plan (SHEP). It further analysed the previous SHEP (2014-2017) and also took in account the shift in the existing SHEP (2018-2021).

**Chapter V: Analysis and Interpretation of Data:** In this chapter, data collected from the administrators in Higher Education Institutions of West Bengal, collected through interview schedule, have been analysed to understand the perspective of the administrators with respect to the RUSA scheme and the role of the WBSCHE. This chapter dealt with the primary data analysis, done through thematic analysis. The chapter also triangulates field data with secondary data and policy analysis.

**Chapter VI: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations:** This chapter summarises the study and narrated the findings of the study. How the theoretical framework of the study had been critically justifying the findings of research work was one of the major concerns of this chapter. This chapter gives the concluding remark along with the limitation of the study. It also attempted to recommend further areas for research as well as the development of higher education in the West Bengal state in the arena of higher education.

The study phased out according to the establishment of the universities into three major phases, one was before 1994 which meant before the establishment of WBSCHE, the second phase was after 1994 and the establishment of WBSCHE and the third was after 2014, the year in which RUSA was launched. Through critically analyzing the expansion of higher education institutions in these phases, it implied at the influence of liberalisation, neo-liberalisation, the establishment of WBSCHE and launch of RUSA in the higher education development of West Bengal. This current study mainly focused on the implementation of centrally sponsored scheme RUSA through the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education. The study attempted to understand that if there was a gap between the legal provision of functions assigned to SHEC and the functions this statutory body is performing in the field.

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of Literature**

Present chapter would review research articles, books, papers, policies, government reports, documents available on proposed research work. Through thematic review, this chapter pointed out major findings of relevant literature. After thorough reading and analyzing literature, the study bifurcated emerged themes in global and national perspectives. Through these themes, this chapter attempted to find out research gap.

#### **2.1. Massification of Higher Education**

##### **2.1.1. Global Scenario**

This phenomenon of massification is not a phenomenon of India only, it has spread globally. Through the report titled "Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution" prepared for the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education by Philip G. Altbach, Liz Reisberg, and Laura E. Rumbley. The report reasoned the shift to post-industrial economies, the rise of the service industries, and the knowledge economy as the driving force of the higher education expansion and massification. The same argument of massification and expansion of higher education can be seen in other articles like "Massification and Diversity of Higher Education systems: Interplay of Complex Dimensions" by Sarah Guri-Rosenblit et al. As it argued, "The massive expansion of higher education across all continents has been one of the defining features of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. By 2000 the total enrolment within higher education institutions was about 100 million students, representing about 20% of the relevant age cohort worldwide, whereas at the start of the twentieth century only around 500,000 students were enrolled in higher education institutions over the globe" (Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Clancy et al., 2007). UNESCO also pointed out that "Nowadays, already several countries, notably within Europe, have achieved entry rates of more than 50% of the age cohort" (UNESCO, 2003).

So, the phenomenon of massification is not happening in India alone. Instead, it has been a scenario in the entire globe. One of the major reasons of massification of higher education in India is as N.V. Varghese puts it, "Following the economic reforms in the early 1990s, the higher education sector in India adopted market-friendly changes that included the privatisation of the public institutions and promotion of private institution" (Varghese, 2019).

However, the problem with the privatisation and massification of higher education in countries like India is what M. Muzammil in the article "Growth and Expansion of Private Higher Education," states "Private colleges are now coming up in every region of the country. However, the colleges are mainly concentrated in urban or semi-urban areas and are less flourishing in the remote villages. Top class institutions are concentrated in metros and urban agglomerations only. Government colleges are left to serve the rural population in backward and unserved populations so the country" (Muzammil, 2018). This is hinting towards the fact that there is higher education expansion or massification through privatisation, but this expansion is not unequal, which is creating inequality in society. Even this growing inequality is a major concern even in the writing of N.V. Varghese also stating "Higher Education in India: Managing the Sector's Unprecedented Expansion" that "However the market permeation and massification of the sector is accompanied by persisting inequality in access to higher education, and regional inequality in the distribution of institution has also widened" (Varghese, 2015).

So, the entire discussion brings into consideration two of the major concerns in the sector of higher education, the first one is the unprecedented growth and privatisation of the higher education sector and second one is related to the first issue, that is the growing inequality in the sector of higher education. Talking about the issue of unprecedented growth, as Beteille (2007) pointed out, in India, "the growth has been unplanned and chaotic, characterised by inadequate facilities, outmoded teaching methods and lack of quality faculty." As a result, gradually, the massification is leading to a system of higher education, which compromises the quality of that sector. UGC Report 2012 had themselves accepted the fact that "Low graduate rates serve poor employment opportunities and poor salaries after graduation." In the article, "Improving Access and Quality in the Indian Education System," S. Hill and Thomas Chalaux stated the fact, "Graduates are weak not only in knowledge and skill formation but also in soft skills such as the ability to communicate in the workplace" (Hill and Chalaux, 2011). So, the overall quality of higher education has come under stake due to many reasons, and among all the massive unplanned growth and massification of higher education is one of the major reasons.

Another issue is the growing inequality of the higher education sector as the private institutions are serving the urban and semi-urban areas, while the rural and remote areas of the country are deprived. All the top-class private universities are mainly situated in metropolitan

cities, whereas the government is setting up colleges for the rural population in the backward and remote areas of the country gradually leading to the growing inequality in society. This is one of the major reasons why the government should take more care of the government colleges established in the remote places of the country. The concern of quality in these institutions is particularly strong.

### **2.1.2. National Scenario**

N. Jayaram's article "Higher Education in India: Massification and Change," traces history of the Indian higher education system and argues, "India's post-independence academic system was inherited from the British. The universities, to which almost all of the 700 undergraduate colleges were affiliated, were mainly examining bodies, with small post-baccalaureate programmes. These colleges, generally small with around 500 students, were affiliated to universities that determined the curriculum, set and administered examinations, guided admissions, and awarded degrees. The undergraduate colleges possessed little autonomy. This affiliating system, although much criticized, continues to the present. A few of the universities were single-campus "unitary" institutions without affiliated colleges, and these resembled academic institutions in the West with undergraduate and graduate as well as professional degree programmes. A few research organizations in specialized fields do advanced fundamental research in some scientific disciplines. While much has been added to the Indian higher education establishment, little has changed in the basic structure of the universities (Jayaram 2004). However, in the current scenario "With over 900 universities, 40,000 colleges, 1.3 million teachers and 36.6 million students in 2017-18, Indian higher education is the second-largest system in the world" as N.V. Varghese contended in the article "Higher Education in India: Managing the Sector's Unprecedented Expansion" (2019) which clearly hints at the fact that the growth of higher education is too rapid in India. In the same article, Varghese has also mentioned that "In the recent past, the higher education sector in India has experienced an unprecedented expansion, leading to the massification of the system." So, what are the reasons for this massification which is faced by the Indian higher education system? The main reason can be cited as the economic reform of the 1990s.

## **2.2. Higher Education Governance and Policies**

### **2.2.1. Global Scenario**

In the European countries, the higher education sector is running through this top-down approach, but simultaneously allowing the institutional level planning and governance to develop the system. "...with many top-down regulations issued by governments, which are related to the structure of higher education systems, many bottom-up initiatives have contributed to the diversification of higher education systems in many countries, particularly in Eastern and Central European countries, and in developing countries. The most notable phenomenon relates to the flourishing of many for-profit private establishments, extensions, and virtual-type universities" (Guri-Rosenblit, 2001).

Even in case of the Centre state relationship and policy making, as education in India is in the concurrent list, there persists a huge communication gap to deal with the existing problems at the institution level. This issue of governance has also created problems in other sectors, like the quality of the institutions. After the massification and privatisation, the government institutions are still, to some extent, accountable to their affiliating agencies, but the private institutions are nowhere maintaining the issue of accountability. For them, profit-making is the one and only motive vis a vis the service they are providing to the education sector. As a result, the system and the governance of these institutions are not transparent at all. As Levy points out, "Private colleges have been more adaptable in course offerings and are typically commercially oriented" (Levy, 2006). Anandkrishnan also doubted the transparency of the private institutions as, "...only 25% private institutions have transparent policies and aspire to provide high-quality education, while the rest participate in 'deceitful practices' and do not reinvest fund" (Anandkrishnan, 2004).

### **2.2.2. National Scenario**

"Despite India's recent efforts towards eliminating and streamlining some of the regulatory requirements, India's model for Higher education governance is one of the world's most top-down and most authority is exercised by the state" (Enders, 2004 & The Economist, 2005).

Maximum higher education governance policies of India are decided and implemented from the top, and the institutions have very little chance to take part in the decision making. It

is not that this top-down approach of higher education has very little to do with the development of higher education, but at the same, the down-top approach is necessary for the diversification of the system.

Another important issue regarding the Indian higher education governance is its over-regulation and under governance. Somehow, the higher education institution governance in India failed to continue with the 'idea of the university' through its changing governance pattern. Indian universities always tried to adopt borrowed ideas of governance from the Western countries, forgetting the fact that there is always a difference in the idea of the university since the colonial period. This difference is the reason for contradiction behind private and public characteristics of universities and Higher Education system in India. Universities should be targeting to achieve quality and excellence comprehensively. As literature notes, "Universities should be accountable and performance-oriented" (Bhushan, 2019), and to achieve this, 'interdisciplinarity in pedagogy' should be one of the major tools.

### **2.3. Privatisation of Higher Education**

#### **2.3.1. Global Scenario**

Leaving aside a very few renowned universities in the USA, there are almost no private universities that are in the top 100 ranks in the world. So, western countries do not prefer privatisation, and instead, they recommend it for developing countries like India. As the literature points, 'Privatisation' is somewhat of a 'fuzzy concept' (Starr, 1988). Tilak in his article "Private Higher Education in India" pointed out the fact that "Private universities in the USA use their autonomy to attract the best students and best faculty from around the world while private institutions in India use their autonomy mostly to breach the state rules and regulations" (Tilak, 2014). In the entire globe, there are very few countries that have adopted this privatisation strategy and progressed not only education but also socially and economically, except the instances like Korea and Japan. Hans N. Weiler's article "State, Market, and University Funding: New Paradigms for the Reforms of Higher Education in Europe," vividly illustrates about the growing privatisation and its effect in Europe at the beginning of 2000s. According to Weiler, privatisation is the input control system to output control. It seems encouraging to a system where resources will be allocated based on performance. Weiler questioned the existence of a democratic governance structure in higher education institutions after the intervention of the market. The article also raised a few issues



regarding the external resources coming from the market as the external resources are of questionable longevity, with a specific hidden cost, and institutions have to compromise to its intellectual profile while receiving the external funds because the institutions need to set its priorities. It also pointed about the discrimination that can happen towards the students coming from different economic backgrounds. Tilak's article "Private Higher Education in India," also points towards question of equity. Sudhanshu Bhushan argues that in the future of higher education, efficiency overshadows the distributional benefit of higher education to the poor section of the society. However, simultaneously, Weiler has refers about some of the positive sides of private participation in higher education. Accordingly, privatisation challenges the monopoly of public forms of Higher education. It also creates a hybrid situation where both sectors can complement each other. Privatisation should not be considered as an alternative way of funding Higher education, but it is an "organisational and structural alternative" (Weiler, 2000).

### **2.3.2. National Scenario**

India adopted the 1990s neo-liberal policies associated with the World Bank and IMF, which drives the country towards accepting privatisation. Initially, the nation was not ready to accept it, which becomes the reason for a confusing approach of the state towards privatisation. State failed to define privatisation in adequate terms. They revolved around different terms and policies. Privatisation, private participation, commercialisation, and Public-Private partnership – clubbing, defining and regulating, all these factors in a politically and economically powerful setup, where the market started to control every decision making, beyond the ability of the State mechanism. Government illustrates the reason for the dearth of the fund to meet the increasing demand for Higher Education behind the intervention of the private players. Privatisation introduced as a tool of accessibility, expansion, and development of the Higher Education sector, but gradually it took a form of a 'goal' in itself. Comparing to the Western countries where the privatisation is complementary to public institutions, but in India, private sector is capitalizing state inadequacy and withdrawal from the Higher Education sector. Gradually, private sector of India is reaching 'an alarming level' (Tilak, 2014), whereas countries are not adopting privatisation model instead prescribing it for the developing countries. If this is the scenario on the one side, then on the other side, the nation-state proposed a centrally sponsored scheme like RUSA, which is a public funding initiative to support the state higher education sector. It clearly hints towards conflict of interest between the Planning

commission and MHRD, as the Twelfth five-year plan proposed to remove the 'not for profit' tag from the universities.

Talking about the issue of privatisation in the state of West Bengal, as Amiya Kumar Bagchi's article "Failure of Education Policies in West Bengal, since 1951: An Analysis" on privatisation of education reflects how it has created a serious equity issue. It explained how it affects equity as access to education, especially in its higher education is not a public good, it confines to the rich: it affects efficiency because there is little accountability, especially given the poor quality of monitoring and inspection. Privatisation of education affects all sectors of society. If a medical student has to pay a crore of rupees for getting a degree from a medical college, it is unrealistic to expect him to treat his patients in conformity with the articles of the Hippocratic oath. Similarly, a civil engineer receiving poor-quality training endangers human lives through faulty construction of houses, bridges, and roads. Sebak Kumar Jana's article, "Higher Education in West Bengal: An Overview," refers to unequal access of higher education for the privatisation policies that the governments are taking recently. The privatisation of higher education with high tuition fees has aggravated the unequal access further. The NSS data illustrates that the share of poor (first two lowest quintiles) in private institutions was about 17 percent, which was lower than non-poor, at 27 percent (top two quintiles) (Thorat, 2017). It also points at government's two policy initiatives in respect of privatisation: West Bengal Government's Policy and Guidelines for setting up the Private Universities, 2013, and West Bengal Government's Policy and Guidelines for setting up self-financing General Degree College, 2015 (Government of West Bengal 2016). So, if on the one hand for the massification of higher education government is more akin to allow the private players to play a major role in opening higher education institutions, but on the other hand, the government is not getting enough investors in the education sector for quality higher education. The issue of accessibility and the issue of accountability becomes a major concern for the government also.

#### **2.4. Political Intervention in State Higher Education in the Indian Context**

Apart from the privatisation in the state, West Bengal being a very active state in terms of politics, the political intervention is always a major issue to talk about. Amiya Kumar Bagchi's article "Failure of Education Policies in West Bengal, since 1951: An Analysis" analyses that for a longer period, the leftist government was ruling in the state, trying all possible ways to control the market to intervene in education as well as all sectors of the state. So, the leftist government has somehow opened to informal privatisation of education through

the burgeoning of private tuition and coaching centers. However, under the Trinamool regime, most decisions have been left to the market, as is partly indicated by the rapid growth of private universities. Bagchi's article figured out several other problems regarding this political intervention that is happening all throughout the state. It states, "...how admissions to educational institutions is determined by student leaders of the ruling party, often with financial side-payments into the bargain, how a college principal is beaten up because he had prevented the wife of a leader of the ruling party from adopting unfair means, and so on and so forth. If teachers' politicization was one bane of the educational system in West Bengal under the Left Front, lawlessness has become its hallmark under the TMC regime." Even the latest Education Commission of West Bengal also talked about the socialist legacy of the state. Brahmachari Commission noted, "Bengal's socialist legacy has resulted in education being a principally public-funded entity. This has made the government and its associated administrative machinery, one of the prime layers in the educational scenario."

## **2.5. Funding in Higher Education**

### **2.5.1. Global Scenario**

In comparison to India, other East Asian countries, namely Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore, these countries spent a lot more of their GDPs in the education sector. Ka Ho Mok's article "Liberalisation in the Privatensness in Higher Education," states, "The four East Asian Tigers (namely, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore) have devoted a considerable amount of public money to education. Total public expenditure on education now ranges between 3.5 and 4.5 percent of GDP. Although the GDP ratio in the four East Asian Tigers is relatively low when compared with Western countries, education is one of the most important and high spending policy areas. Public education is about 20 percent of the total budget in the four Tigers. The state is still the dominant funder of education in these societies. Despite the state's financial commitment in higher education, we have noticed that higher education funding sources have been diversified in South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Hong Kong in the last decade" (Mok, 2007).

These countries are spending more on higher education than major Asian giant countries like India and China. This scarcity of funding is gradually becoming the reason for the degradation of quality. As Lindsay Daugherty and others in the book, "Building the Links between Funding and Quality in Higher Education: India's Challenge" argued, "Inadequate

financial support from the government to meet the growing demand for higher education also been cited as a factor driving low levels of quality in the Indian higher education system" (Daugherty et al. 2011). In the same article, Daugherty and others have also argued about the funding discrepancy persisting in the Indian higher education system. The argument focused on the unequal fund allocation to the state and the central universities of the country. It was noticed, "The allocation of funding for higher education also varies substantially according to institution type" (Daugherty et al. 2011). It further argued that this kind of misappropriate support to a few of the national institutions has had two negative quality impacts. It is quite obvious that when the funding is allocated based on the institution type, then this gap of funding increases the quality differential between the institution of the state level and the central level. Another negative quality of this kind of funding is that "the incentive to increase quality is limited at all levels of institutions since funding does not follow initiative to raise quality" (Daugherty et al. 2011).

So, Indian higher education is suffering from inadequacy and discrepancy of funding. To overcome this inadequacy, the Indian government has taken certain policy initiatives, and among all the policy initiatives, one is "a new centrally sponsored scheme (CSS) – Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) – was introduced to provide funding for public HEIs. The state universities and colleges are provided resources to improve their infrastructural facilities based on the plans prepared by the institutions" (Varghese et al. 2018).

### **2.5.2. National Scenario**

"State universities are suffering from underfunding and overregulation, resulting in poor infrastructure, difficulty hiring quality faculty, unyielding affiliating system, little opportunity to innovate or improve" as stated by Daugherty et al.'s article "India's Current System of Higher Education" which focuses on the dilapidated situation of funding in state higher education. "The share of higher education in the total government expenditure is an indication of its commitment to the sector. The share of higher education in the total expenditure of the central government declined over a period of time from 2 percent in 2000-2001 to 1.38 percent in 2011-2012. In other words, priority given to higher education as a whole has been very low, and it has declined over the years" (Tilak, 2016) this is how Tilak argues in the declining importance of higher education in a country like India. However, this declination is not a phenomenon from the side of the central side only, the as per the MHRD report 2012, the states have also cut down their share of the budget from the higher education

sector, and this fall is one of the major reasons for the waning quality condition of the state higher education. As the report suggests, "As noted previously, a major share of expenditure on education is accounted for by the state. Although the states spend nearly 75 percent of the total public expenditure on education, the state's share declined to 61% in higher education (MHRD, 2012). Following the recommendation of the Kothari Commission report of 1966, "the national government was supposed to increase the allocation to education to at least 6 percent of the national income. However, in 2014-15 only 4% (4.04%) of the GDP was being spent on education" (Varghese, 2018).

## **2.6. Indian Higher Education Councils and RUSA**

M Anandkrishnan's article "State Councils of Higher Education: Expectations and Experiences," published in "India Higher Education Report 2015" edited by Varghese and Malik, extensively argued about the challenging role of State Higher Education Councils. In the article, the question is raised, 'how far these councils are in a position to carry out the role of planning and coordination of higher education in the respective states in the issue worth examining'. The article traces the establishment of SCHEs which are established based on the recommendations of the NPE-1986 as modified in 1992. Anandkrishnan clearly stated the major functions of the SCHEs. SCHEs were established to work as a coordinator between the state and the central. As education is in the concurrent list, there is a huge amount of confusion and failure of planning, which results in unplanned growth of the Higher Education institutions. SCHEs were established to eradicate this confusion between state and Centre to control the state higher education institutions. From its very genesis days, the SCHEs suffer from the problem of power distribution. The problem of autonomy and the political will to function the SCHEs remained in its core. Now the need for SCHEs becomes more imperative when the central government had taken the scheme of RUSA in 2014. RUSA aimed at 'strategic funding and support to the state higher education system in order to achieve the goals of equity, access, and excellence. The state would not get any of the benefits under the RUSA scheme unless there is a higher education council in the place.' Some of the SCHEs have made serious attempts towards the execution of state-level plans like WBSICHE has promoted academic and administrative audit system. The article raised the question, time and again, that do these SCHEs actually acting the way it was visualized under NPE or RUSA? For the proper implementation of RUSA scheme, SCHEs need to be established, but SCHEs have to be the facilitator. It should play advisory roles and not become a fund distributor.

Anandakrishnan also pointed out a discussion with the SCHEs "indicated that there is an urgent need to review the functioning of the councils under the broader canvas of their strengths and weaknesses." It discussed the following points, which had emerged in discussion with the SCHEs.

Firstly, for RUSA, SCHEs are at the center of state-level planning for higher education, but in reality, there is a clear gap in understanding how funds flow. In relation to this, the question of the positional hierarchy is also a point of argument. SCHEs are not aware of their position with the state government, department of higher education, and national-level bodies. So, the place of SCHE with relation to the department of higher education and ministry is not clear. Secondly, the SCHEs are not free to make decisions as autonomy is not given to them. They are not delegated with the necessary power functions. In a maximum number of cases, the final decision lies with the state government. So, in the regulatory power and decision making, SCHEs are finding their role very unclear.

From these views, SCHE's role in implementing RUSA come under serious question because RUSA relies on SCHEs for the planning and implementation in the state level. SCHEs were supposed to provide coordinated governance taking into account institutional autonomy and accountability, where the role of the state is minimal. Another important factor is political intervention and political compulsions in the growth of higher education institutions. These SCHEs are not free from this State political intervention that hinders their free autonomy. This is one of the major reasons that Anandakrishnan argued in favor of the fact that the SCHEs are not conforming to the objectives set by the NPE-1986 or POA 1992 or RUSA.

The article dealt with many of the future directions given to the SCHEs for the better functioning of it. These future directions are –

- Decision-making process needs to be more decentralised where the SCHEs should be delegated more powers in the process of planning and coordination so that schemes like RUSA can be appropriately implemented to enhance the quality of higher education in the respective states
- The position of SCHE in the overall governance structure of higher education in the respective states should be unambiguously defined.
- Fund flow through SCHE should be streamlined.

- The availability of data on Higher Education needs to be streamlined, and coordination between and Nodal officer RUSA is required.

As Sudhanshu Bhushan's article, "Future of Higher Education Financing and Governance" noted, "RUSA to support state universities and colleges, having a low success in terms of the gap between resource allocation during the twelfth plan and meager resource disbursement during the same period" (Bhushan, 2019).

In another report from the World Bank group published in 2014, "State Higher Education Council in India: Opportunities and Challenges," reveals the significant gap between the legal obligations and the actual current practices of existing State Higher Education Councils, and it also pointed at the expectations of RUSA. It emphasized need to strengthen the role and functions of the existing higher education councils. The establishment of effective SHECs is an essential step for accomplishing the goals of the RUSA scheme.

As it has already been discussed that one of the pre-requisites for RUSA requires that state should form a SHEC. RUSA has listed sixteen objectives. The nineteenth is "facilitate the creation of the State Council of Higher Education (SHECs)." RUSA intends that SHECs are to play a central role in the delivery of the RUSA vision "to attain higher levels of access, equity, and excellence in the state higher education system with greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness."

This report reviewed the challenges faced by the existing higher education councils in meeting the role and functions foreseen under RUSA. The report attempts to answer the following questions –

1. What are the characteristics of the existing councils?
2. To what extent the existing councils conform to the RUSA requirement?
3. What lessons can be drawn from the experience of the existing SHECs in making the transition from the existing state councils to the councils that meet the RUSA requirements or from the establishment of new state councils that meet these requirements?

After conducting case studies of the SHECs of India, it is revealed that there is a significant gap between the formal state legal provision related to SHEC's functions and the actual implementation of these functions. Several SHECs have been bestowed with certain

formal powers and responsibilities, but it had not exercised their full authority as several of the SHECs have foreseen RUSA powers and functions, but they are not applied in practice. From the case studies, it is quite evident that tasks assigned to the SHECs were not carried out properly. Strategy and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Academic Functions, Advisory Functions, and Funding Functions – these are the primary five functions of the State Higher Education Councils, but in reality, these jobs are not done adequately.

## **2.7. Research Gap**

Despite being second largest higher education sector of globe, Indian higher education sector suffered a great deal. There had been certainly a ‘conflict of interest’ between the Planning Commission and MHRD regarding the privatization policy and public funding of state institutions. Massification of higher education through the mechanism of privatisation, the crunch of the fund in the public higher education sector affected the quality of higher education directly. The top-down governance model restricted the participation of the institutional governance for the upliftment of the sector, all these issues enforced the government to launch one Centrally sponsored scheme, RUSA, as already discussed in all the states of the country with certain criteria like the establishment of SCHE. In the case of West Bengal, the state council had existed since after the recommendation of the NPE-1986. The council "undertakes inspections for the approval of the new institutions and extension of courses. It is currently acting as a nodal Centre as appointed by the Nodal Board of Accreditation. It serves as a liaison between UGC, state, and university for quality, service-related matters (teaching and non-teaching staff), interpretation and formulation of rules and statutes" (Anansakrishnan, 2015). However, as the literature clearly emphasised at the fact, "It is generally felt that there is a large gap between the functions mandated by the legislation and the actual performance of most SCHEs" (Anandakrishanan, 2015). At the same time, in another report from the World Bank Group, it was stated, "As a general observation, the case studies reveal a significant gap between the formal (de jure) state legal provisions related to SHECs' functions and the actual implementation (de facto) of these provisions. Several SHECs have been bestowed with certain formal powers and responsibilities, but in practice, they have not exercised their full authority..." (World Bank Group, 2014). So, this study attempts to look into this gap of WBSCHE's legal provisions of functions and its actual performance in the case of implementation of RUSA in the state of West Bengal. The research work also critically evaluated impact of RUSA implementation in West Bengal since the origin of RUSA in 2014.



## **Chapter III**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter narrates the research technique adopted and used for this study with the aim of attaining the research objectives and to guide the research work in purview of the theoretical framework. It also comprises description of the instruments used to conduct interview.

The main rationale of the study was to understand the ground reality in implementation of one centrally sponsored scheme and to know that how the WBSCHE prepares strategic plans to enhance the quality of higher education and also for the expansion of higher education. The study also attempts for an insight on why the Southern state like Kerala or Andhra Pradesh higher education councils were more successful in terms of the two parameters of higher education expansion and quality enhancement in comparison to West Bengal which has a rich history of education. So, the key rationale of the study was to understand the current situation of higher education in West Bengal and what steps were taken by the WBSCHE under the flagship programme of RUSA for further improvement of higher education in the state.

#### **3.2. Theoretical Framework**

The research work particularly dealt with the existing higher education policy RUSA which was implemented by the central government in the year 2014. So, why it became so necessary to bring this scheme which strategically funds the higher education sector mainly to the state institutions. The growing disparity between the centrally sponsored higher education institutions and the state sponsored higher education institutions become a major issue in the education sector of India. The issue became more concerning when schemes and policies like SSA, RMSA had helped in increasing the quality of school education, higher education among different states felt a huge backlash due to growing funding inequality between state and central sponsored colleges. The situation of the government institutions was dilapidated in those states where the public funding was the only source and the open market of private funding in education somehow does not match up to the demand of the higher education. The Centrally sponsored scheme and policy RUSA came as a financial support to state higher education.

The research work had been conducted in two stages. First stage dealt with the policy document analysis of RUSA and the second stage was more concerned with the role of

WBSCHE in the implementation of RUSA in state and also about autonomy of the state colleges as a participant in decentralised planning to receive funding from UGC under RUSA scheme. So, entire study was primarily to understand the changing role of State Higher Education council, analyzing the policy of RUSA, and understanding its deviation from the earlier reference points, which was UGC funding. While analysing a policy, it was very necessary to understand three major points regarding the policy, it was about the formulation or the origin of the policy, policy process or the implementation process of that policy and the probable outcomes of that policy. Before going into the analysis part of the policy, it was necessary to understand how the policies are formulated and how policy researches used to take place. The approach that is followed in basic social science research is different from the approach of the policy research. The general social science researches follow the top down approach where the issue and problems are decided by the researcher beforehand through proper literature review and finding gap in research. Once the research gap is found then the researcher visits the field to collect data and responses of the stakeholder. In contrary to this, the policy research follows the bottom top approach, where the ground level problem is the key to any policy. The problem is identified in field first through different surveys and stakeholder's responses and based on that problems, any policy is formulated. Now while formulating any policy what kind of a role the state as well as the policy makers play in the major platform of the theoretical framework of this research. So, how the policy is formulated and implemented in the ground in the policy analysis framework.

This research work was an attempt to analyse the implementation of RUSA from the theory of state. Theories of state has three different approaches to understand the different aspects of policy analysis. These three approaches are –

- Pluralist Approach
- Interpretative Model consists of neo-Marxist Approach and neo-Managerial approach
- Neo-corporatist approach

This study followed the first approach of policy analysis which takes into account the state's role as a service provider. As this study dealt with the problem of West Bengal, a state which in spite of having a reputed legacy of education was not doing well in comparison to the other states of the country in terms of expansion as well as quality. Among many reasons, one of the main reasons could be scarcity of funding from the state as well as dearth of private funding which provides quality education. So, when the centrally sponsored scheme RUSA

came into existence, how far the scheme was able to meet the demand of higher education in the state.

In the first approach, the study attempted to analyze the state's role as "service hatch" in the process of policy making. When the policy makers in the government formulate schemes like RUSA, do they really respond to the social demands and the demands of the subject. From this perspective, public policies are conceived as responses to social demands and their analysis is in turn located in a perspective based on the optimisation of collective choices, the rationality of the decision-making processes and the behaviour of 'bureaucrats'.

### **3.3. Research Questions**

- 7) What role a statutory body like West Bengal State Council of Higher Education play in improving the condition of Higher Education in West Bengal?
- 8) Which transitions are made by existing council like WBSCHE to meet the requirement of RUSA?
- 9) Why public funding scheme like RUSA is essential in Higher Education?
- 10) How does RUSA influenced the expansion and quality of higher education in West Bengal?
- 11) Does the funding from RUSA helped in facilitating the quality of higher education in West Bengal?
- 12) How far the current scheme of RUSA is different from the earlier funding patterns of UGC?

### **3.4. Objectives**

1. To analyse the role of State Council of Higher Education in supporting the Higher Education institutions in West Bengal
2. To examine the implementation of RUSA through WBSCHE
3. To study how RUSA has impacted the Higher Education in West Bengal.

### **3.5. Rationale for Research Methodology**

Once the literature review is done and the researchers understand theoretical and conceptual framework of the study and formulates the specific objectives on the basis of the research questions emerged from the review. It becomes necessary to decide and consolidate the research methodology of the study. Methodology is considered to be the backbone of any

study. It provides a pathway to conduct the research work. Methodology gives the lens and perspective to achieve target objectives of the study. It sets the limits, boundaries and rationale behind conducting that particular research. So, one transparent and well-conceived methodology helps the researchers to achieve their objectives in a systematic way.

### **3.6. Research Approach**

After extensive literature review, the research questions emerged and the broader objectives decided, could best be accomplished through a qualitative in-depth study, taking help of quantitative data to strengthen the critical argument and analysis. The objectives demanded detailed information regarding the scheme and its implementation. So, intensive interviews helped the researcher to gain a clear idea of the functions of council and the processes of implementation of the scheme. The primary study was also been triangulated with the help of policy analysis and desk reviews of secondary resources. At the same time, the study also needed quantitative data to uphold existing issues and problems regarding different parameters of quality like GER, PTR, number of institutions, NAAC accredited institutions etc in the state.

The research design of this particular study had been designed keeping in mind the qualitative in-depth analysis and quantitative data to make the study more systematic and scientific. It is not true that quantitative studies are only scientific. Scientific research can be qualitative or quantitative in style. In qualitative research, the procedures are much more public.

### **3.7. Research Design**

This study had been done following survey research design. Data collected through survey research; administration survey had been done to interview the administrators. This type of research is used to collect information about a particular group's notion, belief, attitude and also demographic composition. Survey data were collected through in-depth interviews and also can be administered through questionnaire. In the administration survey the researcher attempted to infer information about the population based on the representative sample drawn from the larger sample.

There are two ways of conducting this survey research, one is cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. This particular research work had been conducted on the 'cross-

sectional survey' research design where data collected from selected individual at a single point in time. This design is effective for providing a snapshot of the current scenario and understanding among a population.

### **3.8. Sampling**

The population of the study was the Higher education institutions of West Bengal. Higher Education institutions meant the general degree colleges and universities of the state. The target population of the study were administrators of the colleges and universities, who were in charge of implementing RUSA scheme in that institution. After target population, the researcher had selected sample in a random purposive way depending on the region, performance and NAAC gradation. The sample population included administrators of nine institutions, seven colleges and two universities.

#### **3.8.1. Rationale Behind Choosing West Bengal as Field**

- West Bengal was among the first two states which accepted decentralization governance in 1970s and also initiated administrative decentralization through all three major steps – de-concentration, delegation and devolution.
- West Bengal was also among first three states which established State Higher Education Council in 1994-1995
- WBSCHE was established in 1995, even after that the state failed to match up the standard of the nation in terms of expansion as well quality of Higher Education

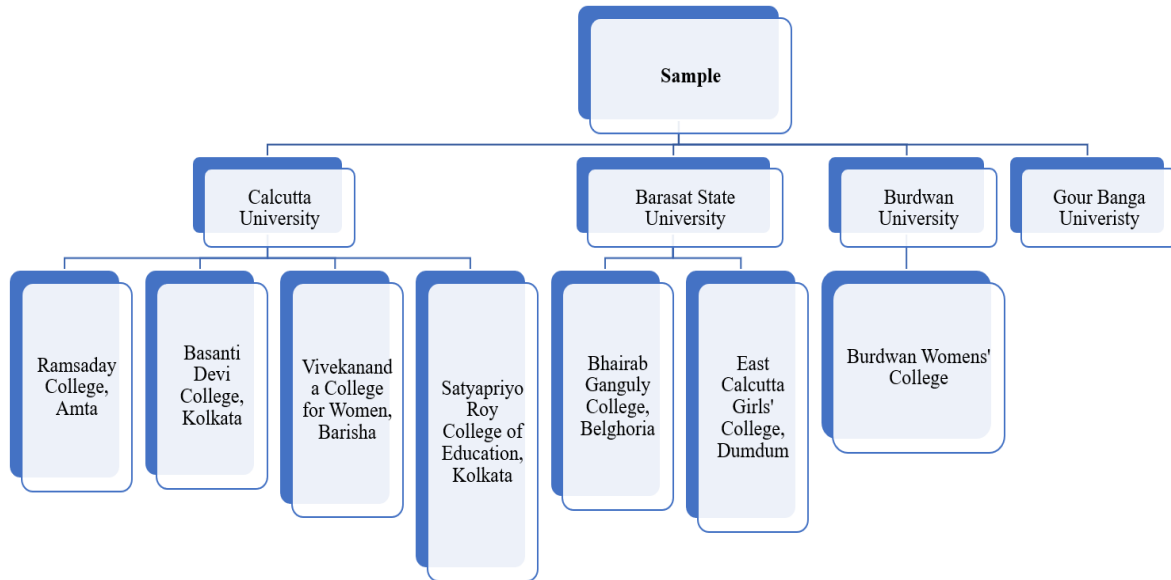
#### **3.8.2. Analytical Sample**

- Administrators dealing with RUSA from two state universities, Calcutta University and Gour Banga University were interviewed to understand the process of implementation of RUSA.
- Administrators, principals or vice-principals or concerned person dealing with RUSA, of colleges had been interviewed to understand their perspective of RUSA and its implementation. Seven college administrators under different universities were interviewed.

The following figure shows that the names of the selected universities and colleges. But researcher could only interview administrators of two universities, Calcutta University and Gour Banga University. The researcher could not interview the administrators of other two

universities, Burdwan University and Barasat State University, due to time crunch as well as issues regarding consensus of the University Authorities. All the seven college administrators were interviewed.

**Figure 3.1. - Sample Population of the Study**



### 3.8.3. Rationale of Sampling

All samples were taken purposively by the researcher. The rationale behind this kind of sample was all these universities and colleges, except two colleges, received funding under RUSA 1.0 in the 2015 under the component Infrastructure Grants to Universities and Infrastructure Grants to Colleges. Among all these universities and colleges, there were two colleges, one was Bhairab Ganguly College, Belghoria under Barasat State University and Vivekananda College for Women, Barisha under Calcutta University were funded under RUSA 2.0 in 2018.

The universities and colleges received funding in 2015 are the initial stakeholder of the scheme and they should have received and utilised the entire amount of fund in this period. So, the researcher got a clear view of the implementation process, strategic planning, issues of autonomy, monitoring and transparency issues of the scheme.

The researcher also selected two colleges which received funding in RUSA 2.0 and in the year 2018. The reason behind selecting these two colleges as sample was to understand the changing pattern of the scheme. Though these colleges might not receive all of its funding or had not utilised funding at its full but colleges might still give a perspective of funding pattern

and changing scenario of higher education of the state which was facilitated through the RUSA funding.

#### **3.8.4. Sampling Technique**

The adopted sampling technique was Random Purposive Sampling. The researcher had selected the sample in a random purposive way depending on the region, performance and NAAC gradation.

### **3.9. Tool for Data Collection**

The study had dealt with both primary as well as secondary data. In primary data, the researcher conducted field study to interview sample population to gather in-depth data. To collect secondary data, the researcher did policy analysis in the first place and at the same time to triangulate that field data researcher had also analysed certain secondary sources. Those secondary source documents were related to RUSA implementation in West Bengal. Along with this the study had also included quantitative numerical data from All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE).

#### **3.9.1. Primary Data Collection**

Data collected through interview schedule. The researcher prepared one semi structured interview schedule for principals or vice-principal or administrator concerned with RUSA of the higher education institutions, (colleges and universities) to understand their views and perspective in decentralised planning to fund the state higher education institutions.

The tool consisted of 15 questions, dealing with role of the SCHE, colleges and universities in the funding pattern of RUSA. The questionnaire also catered to critical issues like autonomy of institution in strategic planning, transparency and monitoring of scheme, quality concerns of the state higher education.

The researcher had used mobile phone as a recorder with the prior permission of the administrators to maintain research ethics.

#### **3.9.2. Rationale of Using Interview Schedule**

The research primarily dealt with the educational administrators who supervised RUSA in their respective educational institutions. So, the rationale behind conducting interviews was

majorly due to the issue of time. Administrators are always engaged in their administrative tasks. If the questionnaire was mailed to them, then administrators might not find time to fill it and send it back. But in case of face to face interviews, respondents answered within the given time frame.

Apart from these, as the researcher was not conducting a complete structured interview rather a semi-structured interview schedule had been used where the respondents could express their views going beyond the questions asked. This also helped the researcher to gather more detailed information regarding the council, RUSA scheme and its implementations.

### **3.9.3. Secondary Data Collection**

As a secondary data, researcher had analysed the RUSA scheme through content analysis model. The scheme analysis had been done keeping in view the reference point of UGC as a sole funding body before the inception of RUSA. There were other secondary sources of data. These were State Higher Education Plan (SHEP) 2014-2017, State Higher Education Plan, 2018-2021, West Bengal (RUSA 1.0 & 2.0) Snapshot of Approval and Releases of fund (Institution wise), Component Wise Funding document and also the AISHE reports of 2012-13 and 2017-18.

### **3.10. Field Experience**

The researcher had done his field work from 3<sup>rd</sup> February to 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2020. Within this period, the researcher travelled 4 different cities, Kolkata, Burdwan, Malda and Amta. In all these four cities, seven colleges and two universities had been visited. The researcher wanted to interview administrators of four universities but due to time crunch and issues regarding permission to interview, the study limited to only two universities. Among all the sample colleges and universities, Gour Banga University, Calcutta University and Basanti Devi College, Kolkata had shown special interest in the research topic. The researcher also wanted to interview administrators of the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education (WBSCHE). But after reaching to the field, it was informed that WBSCHE was not the responsible authority to implement RUSA. It was done by RUSA Directorate of Bikash Bhavan, Department of Higher Education, West Bengal. When researcher applied for permission to interview authorities in RUSA Directorate, administrators there asked the Institute (NIEPA) to write for permission of data collecting and this writing should reach the directorate in a proper channel



and not through the scholar. It was easier for researcher to get permission of the colleges to interview their authorities.

### 3.11. Analysis of Data

The research dealt with two sets of data, both secondary and primary. This study had analysed both set of data differently.

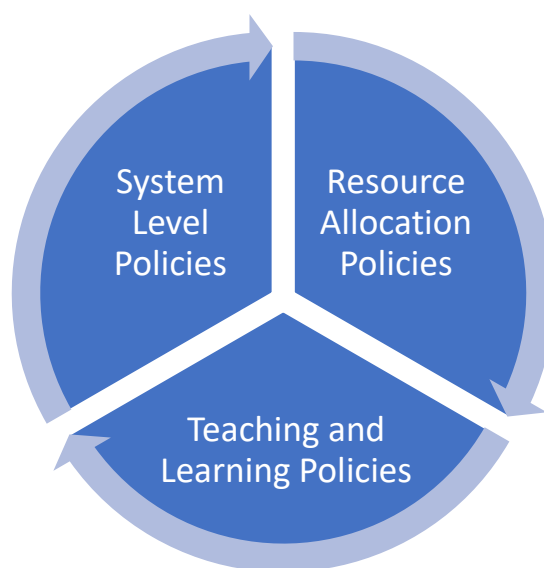
In Chapter IV, the researcher analysed the RUSA scheme comparing and contrasting it with the earlier Higher Education funding agency UGC. The scheme was analysed in three stages, policy content, policy context and policy process. This chapter had also included other desk reviews and secondary data analysis. These secondary resources include State Higher Education Plan (SHEP) 2014-2017, State Higher Education Plan, 2018-2021, West Bengal (RUSA 1.0 & 2.0) Snapshot of Approval and Releases of fund (Institution wise), Component Wise Funding document and also the AISHE reports of 2012-13 and 2017-18.

In Chapter V, the researcher analysed the primary data collected from the field. This primary data analysed in a triangulation process. The data had been analysed thematically and each theme had been triangulated with the secondary data, policy and the resources analysed in Chapter IV.

#### 3.11.1. Scheme and Document Analysis

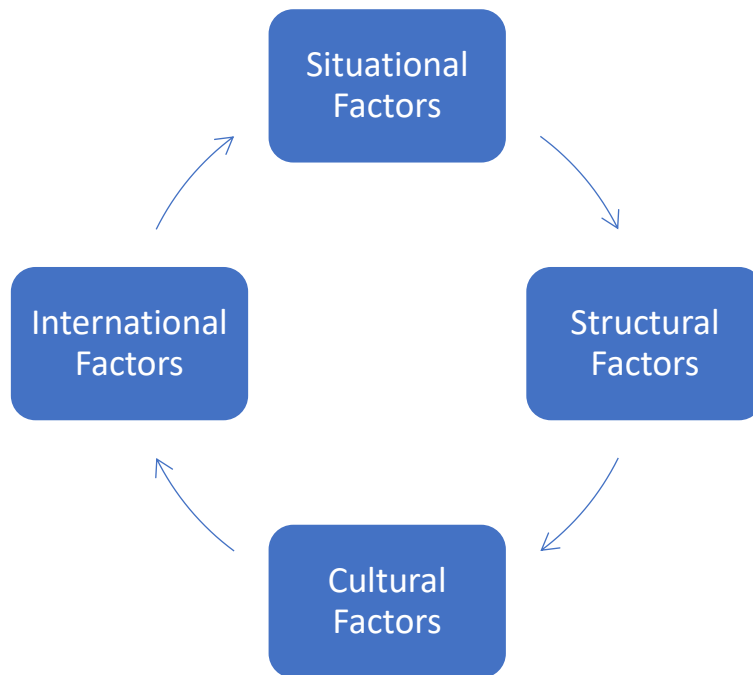
The scheme had been analysed in three stages. They were as follow –

**Figure 3.2: Policy Content**



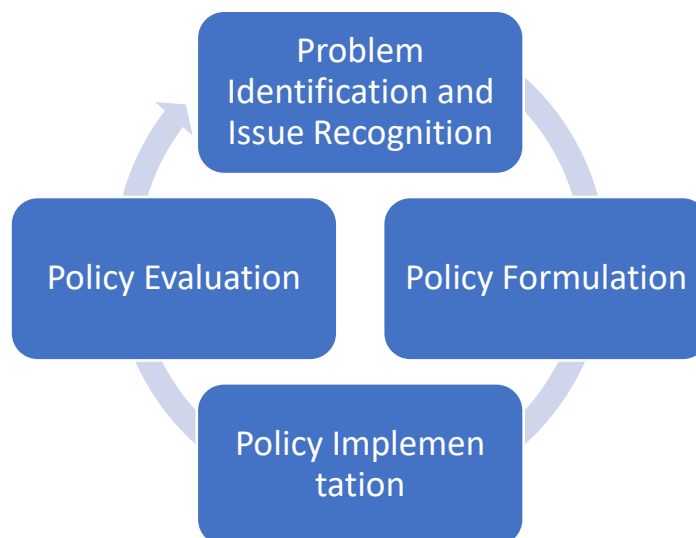
The second stage is –

**Figure 3.3: Policy Context**



And the third is –

**Figure 3.4: Policy Process**



While analysing the policy, these three stages of any policy were kept in mind. This study had kept into account four major issues, those were –

- How far the scheme is better than the previous schemes formulated by the government for the development of higher education. The research work will set certain reference point in analysing the current scheme.
- It will also take into account, on what ground this scheme will change the current scenario of higher education in Bengal

- This analysis of the scheme talks about the expectations of the RUSA and what are the outcomes of the scheme. In this the study will analyse the last five year's (2014-2019) RUSA report of the state.
- The stage of scheme analysis also deals with the 'appraisal of the impact'.

These were the major areas that this analysis of the scheme has looked into. As there was one reference point, similarly, scheme was analysed with certain theories. In this theoretical framework, all aspects of scheme like the origin, processes were examined. In the policy analysis framework, there were different approaches to analyse any scheme. The CSS RUSA had been seen through the lenses of these approaches. Policy analysis through the content analysis was another aspect of the study.

### **3.11.2. Primary Field Data Analysis**

The collected data analysed through thematic analysis method. All the interviews were recorded in the audio recorder of the mobile phone with the permission of the concerned authority. After coming from the field, the researcher had transcribed the interviews. Later transcribing, the researcher categorised the interview schedule questions and their responses on the basis of its similarities which catered one particular issue related to objective of the study. From the categorised questions and responses, the researcher attempted to construct codes in an analytic process. Codes can be constructed in two ways, one is data-driven coding and other is concept-driven coding. Coded responses will be categorised, and one or more categories will be précised to broader themes. The researcher analysed these themes on the basis of the responses and perspectives received from the administrators. After analysing the primary data, the study also triangulated it with secondary data and scheme analysis.

## **Chapter IV**

### **UGC and Implementation of RUSA in West Bengal**

As was discussed in the previous chapter, this study was conducted in two stages, and this chapter represents the first stage of the study. The major objectives of the study clearly not mentioned RUSA scheme analysis, but a scheme or a policy could not be understood in isolation. To understand existing scheme of RUSA, it was necessary to have a clear idea of prior system of funding and why RUSA came into existence. These two significant queries could only be understood by analysing the previous UGC funding and the present scheme document. It gave an understanding of the underlying assumptions of both systems of funding, and it also clarified differences in the funding patterns. This chapter also analyzed current status of RUSA in the state of West Bengal. It was necessary to critically evaluate ground-level implementation reality of the scheme.

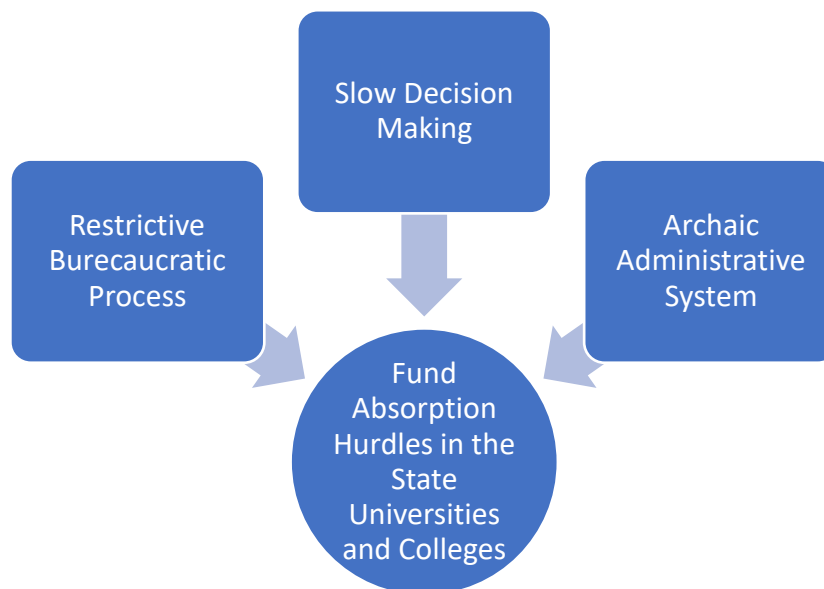
#### **4.1. UGC and Indian Higher Education**

Through an Act of Parliament in November, 1956, University Grant Commission (UGC) was established. University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission) recommended UGC to regulate growing Higher education system in post-independence India. During colonial period, a body like UGC was thought of to monitor higher education. After independence, this regulatory mechanism had evolved but it pointed towards earlier thoughts of colonial period.

Indian higher education system always agonized from challenge of management in the administrative affairs, which led to underutilization of funds, the dearth of professionals in system led to the lack of absorption capacity of institutions. Since the establishment of it, grants were given to the state and the central institutions through UGC. These grants were disbursed to Central and State universities, colleges through under section 2 (f) and 12B of UGC Act, 1956, and also through different schemes meant for higher education institutions. These funds directly flow to universities and colleges of the state, which created a miscommunication among the state government, central government, and colleges of the state, regarding the monitoring of these institutions. State government felt that they were not at all responsible in monitoring of these colleges and institutions, the reason being funds were disbursed by UGC directly to these institutions without the knowledge of the states. The universities and colleges,

on the other hand, suffered from the 'procedural bottleneck and red-tapism' (MHRD, 2013) lead to massive delay in the disbursement of funds. This also became another hurdle to optimum and timely utilisation of funds. The hurdles for the absorption of the funding received by the state institutions from UGC were as follows –

**Figure 4.1: Hurdles of Fund Absorption**



Source: MHRD, 2013

As the above diagram points out, these three issues were the significant reasons for the resultant underutilization of the resources at the college and university level. On the one hand, the state institutions received disproportionately a small amount of grant in comparison to Central institutions from UGC. However, on the other hand, state institutions, due to their lack of institution-level decentralised planning and mismanagement in administrative section, failed to utilize even that small fund. This hindered expansion, equity, and excellence of the colleges and universities at the state level. Gradually gap between the central and state universities in academic outcome increased.

Until 2012-13, the funding system of state and central universities was done solely by UGC, a statutory body established in 1956. The funding received by the state and central universities was not disbursed in a normative way; instead there were projects and schemes of the government and UGC, through which these funds flowed. The most striking factor regarding this funding was inefficiency of UGC to fund newly established institutions. Among the functions of UGC, 'The University Grant Commission Act, 1956 and Rules and

Regulations Under the Act' clearly mentioned that whom UGC can fund and whom not. The 1956 Act pointed out in section 2 (f) –

"University" means a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act or a State Act, and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognised by the Commission under regulations made in this behalf under this Act.

And the act in its section 12 (B) also clarified in power and the functions of UGC related funding:

...allocate and disburse, out of the Fund of the Commission, grants to Universities established or incorporated by or under a Central Act for the maintenance and development of such Universities or for any other general or specified purpose;

These two Acts clearly refrained UGC from funding newly established universities and colleges. Now, the fact remained that Section 12B presupposes all facilities and infrastructure to be in place before funding began by UGC. This also became a matter of great concern that when UGC was established, there were a smaller number of colleges and universities in the country, so it was easier for the commission to take care, monitor and fund these institutions. However, with the advent of time, number of higher education institutions increased, and it got harder for UGC to manage and monitor all these institutions. The outdated form of monitoring, fund disbursement was no longer helping in enhancing the quality of existing institutions and created a problem for the newly established institutions to receive fund. So, until 1990s, the government had adopted a different model of PPP or Public-Private Partnership, the number of higher education institutions in the country never increased in a significant manner. However, as mentioned earlier, when the number of institutions increased, UGC failed to control all of them. It became a complicated situation for the commission.

As mentioned earlier, the funding of institutions both at the Centre as well as state level was not done on a normative basis. Instead, UGC had created different projects and schemes for institutions, and these institutions used to apply for funds according to their need. This might sound systematic and logical at one point, but simultaneously, holistic, normative approach of achieving a target of quality education could never be achieved through these projects. Funding was always provided in bits and pieces. This process of funding could be termed as an ad hoc basis funding, which is coordinated poorly and inundated by extreme

bureaucracy. UGC had 62 schemes for the educational institutions. All these schemes were narrated thoroughly in the XI plan guidelines of UGC. All these schemes were not meant for every institution. UGC categorized these schemes in five different sections. So, there were five categories, these were –

1. For universities only
2. For colleges only
3. For both university/colleges
4. For the Department of University
5. For Individual

All these categories consisted of various schemes, and any institution required fund, for any particular purpose, could select specific scheme to receive grant. This process of fund disbursement to the colleges and universities was never taken into consideration with holistic approach of developing the higher education system.

While talking about the different schemes of the central government, there were also different schemes and projects which had similar kind of objectives. These schemes were parallel to each other, that created much confusion while disbursing funds. The planning commission had created the B.K. Chaturvedi Committee, which recommended to integrate several schemes of the central government and the UGC, which were running concurrently and parallelly to RUSA. The committee had recommended to harmonize its objectives to achieve the economies of scale. This recommendation of the B.K. Chaturvedi committee was a platform towards the origin of RUSA, which was a tool to correspond to national programs for funding state universities and colleges through a single over-arching umbrella scheme in Centrally Sponsored Scheme architecture.

On one hand, the umbrella scheme was designed to cater to problem of state universities holistically, but at the same time, it was also meant to deal with the problem of institutions through micro level planning. Every institution required different type of intervention and financial support from the state. When institutions and the states had given the authority to plan on their own and ask for funding according to that plan, then it was quite expected that issue of absorption and underutilization of funds could no longer exist at institutional level.

## **4.2. Issues and Problems of State Higher Education**

Funding was one of the major problems of state universities and colleges, but except funding, these state higher education institutions also suffer from different other issues. In broader terms, these issues had been related to the problem of governance and autonomy in academic and administrative sectors. When any educational institution is under the control of state, but simultaneously state has no control in its finance sector, it starts facing problems of monitoring. Indian higher education system contended with problems like bureaucratic system of administration and monitoring of the institution, inefficiency of the administration, lack of accountability, and significantly with the issue of political intervention in all the aspects of universities and colleges.

One of the major problems that state higher education system faced was regarding its affiliation. After neo-liberal regime, private actors started establishing new colleges taking affiliation from any particular university, but states failed to establish university keeping pace with the colleges. Gradually situation became worse for limited number of universities to monitor a large number of colleges. According to data provided by UGC in the year 2012, there were universities like Osmania University in Andhra Pradesh, which had highest number of affiliated colleges. The University had 901 affiliated colleges. This kind of scenario of any university could never focus on the improvement of quality and standard of academics. The University spent the maximum amount of its resources in the process of managing colleges and conducting student examinations. The University could pay minimal focus on academic quality and research. Without improvement in research quality, any higher education institution can never uplift its overall academic quality.

The issue was not only with quality of research but also with the scarcity of faculty in the colleges and departments. The state universities had never paid attention in fulfilling faculty positions, and instead, they compensated the position through recruiting ad hoc teachers, contractual teachers, part-time teachers, and guest teachers. So, on one hand, teachers were not recruited, on other hand, when the central universities and also the private universities and colleges started flourishing, getting funding from Centre or through private funding, then the quality teachers of the state universities and colleges moved to these central universities or the private universities and colleges. It was quite evident that funding was one of the primary reasons behind this kind of situation in the state universities. But this was also becoming reason of dilapidated higher education quality among the states. So, the situation remained same from



beginning of this decade to till date. Instead of bridging gap between state and Centre's higher education system, it was reassuring inequalities.

Another issue that perpetuates poor condition of the state higher education was its governance issue. Governance of state universities was purely dominated by bureaucratic system or by dominant political ideologies that intervene to control system of education. Any of the two situations were not amicable for flourishing quality higher education. An institution should always be politically vibrant, but this vibrancy should never intervene in administrative decision making. As an example, selection of the Vice-Chancellors should be a process, which needs to be done through the least political intervention, if not nil. However, in scenario like this, it is quite clear and also disturbing that the selection of VCs is made based on consideration made by political parties. This selection should be made purely based on merit, along with leadership quality. When VC is selected in this process, he/she lacks administrative leadership, and then this may lead to student unrest. This kind of practice not only hampers quality of the University but, at the same time, it is also impeding the identity, indigenous culture of any institution. Along with administrative leadership, state universities were also suffering from poor quality of academic leadership. The institutions did not have many groomed academic staff to lead any departmental task.

The autonomy of state higher education institution was another area of concern. The external forces widely influence the institutions, and it was delimiting the autonomy of institution. As autonomy of the institution was curbed, administrators failed to decide in favor of universities or colleges. Even though universities had little freedom to make administrative decisions but many times, they were bound to external authorities while forming curriculum and conducting examination. The higher authority majorly made decisions regarding recruitment, curriculum, and syllabus development, conducting the examination. The universities had very little to say in it, according to their need. So, state institutions were somehow controlled by external forces without being partners or participants of decision-making processes.

### **4.3. Steps to Improve the Existing System**

The issues and problems discussed so far are pointing towards higher education system that is existing among states of the country, and it is urging and asking for a reformation of state higher education sector, which was long overdue. If this inequality between Centre and

state higher education and private sector of higher education cannot be mended as soon as possible, then this growing inequality will intensify the inefficiency of the system. However, future of the nation will also be at stake as 40% of the students enrolled in state universities. This kind of serious problem demands a comprehensive university reform program. This reform program should not only be done by the central government, but state is also responsible and an important stakeholder of the reformation program. In this context, it is also necessary to mention that states are spending a very less percentage of their GSDP for the higher education sector. So, not only central government but state government should also have to change their state policies and adopt some normative policy to reform state higher education sector.

Until 2012, the institutions were never considered important in matter of planning for the development of that particular institution. External forces, be it political force or administrative hierarchy or bureaucratic structure, had always influenced the institution. However, now this needed to be changed. The government could play the role of 'service hatch' to deliver services according to need of the institution, as UGC was doing in the disbursement of funds through different schemes and policies, but these policies were not holistic. It did not accommodate to overall need of any institution. Colleges and universities had to make their own plan. Based on that, states have to prepare a comprehensive state higher education Perspective Plan, which would successfully measure requirements and needs of state universities and colleges for a better, equitable, and balanced distribution of resources.

As discussed earlier, problem was not regarding funding alone. There were other problems like affiliation. So, one of the possible ways of resolving this problem of affiliation was reducing total number of colleges from any university. In this process of reducing number of colleges, states needed to establish many more new universities. If states received funding for establishing new universities, then, they could affiliate many colleges to newly established universities. Another way of resolving this affiliation problem was elevating better performing colleges to autonomous colleges and later on convert them to universities. West Bengal's Presidency college can be an ideal example of this. It was initially affiliated to Calcutta University. Later on, it received status of the autonomous college, and finally, it was upgraded to autonomous University. St. Xavier's College of Kolkata is another example of that kind. In this process, colleges got academic as well as administrative autonomy to function better.

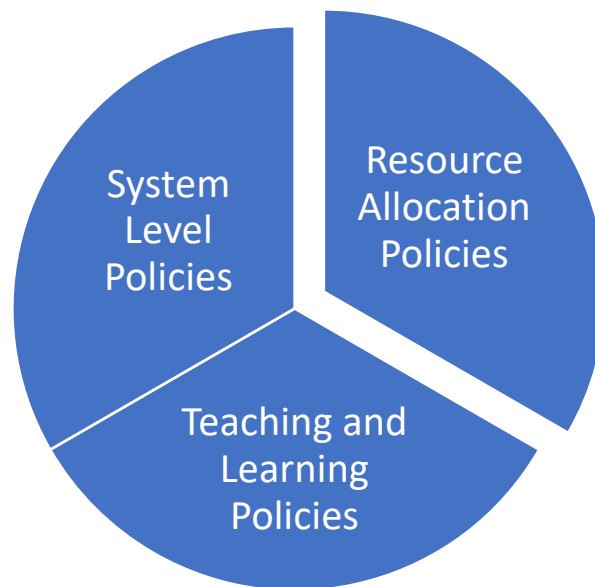
If this is a process of structural reformation for resolving the problem of affiliation, then another way is to dividing universities into several campuses to deal with many more affiliated colleges. The University of Mumbai, which had 711 colleges affiliated to the University, divided its campus to this resolve this problem. However, it was also kept in mind, simultaneously, that a substantial portion of the revenue of the universities generated from affiliated colleges. So, if the colleges were dispersed to different universities or tagged autonomous status, then this revenue generation could be hampered. So, along with structural reformation, issue of university financing should also be considered. Similarly, academic staff colleges needed to be established to train the administrators and academicians to deal with administrative and departmental tasks.

#### **4.4. Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)**

The discussion above can be considered as a backdrop or premise for RUSA scheme. In the argument, so far, the role of UGC is discussed. UGC had certain limitations in handling and controlling universities and colleges of state higher education sector. UGC had been guiding through an age-old guiding principle that failed to cater to the problems of quality education at state level. It was also very significant to notice that current scenario of Higher Education at state level and what were their problems and issues. Along with this, probable solution is also discussed. While discussing solution of problems of state institutions, an urgent need felt, and this needed 'to adopt a systematic and well-calibrated program which encourages competition amongst institutions for excellence and prestige' (MHRD, 2013). Instead of having multiple schemes for Higher Education, there should be one umbrella scheme that will holistically solve problems of the state universities, be it problem of funding, or the problem of affiliation or governance and autonomy. So, whenever a policy is designed, it follows three major steps. One of them is about content of the policy. Policy contents are derived from ground level issues that become a problem, and policy attempts to resolve that problem. Indian Higher Education has suffered a lot with the issues of funding. As the study has already discussed that UGC funded the institutions since independence, but the process of funding is somehow not sufficient enough to enhance quality of Higher Education in country and also to eradicate regional difference and disparities existing in the country. Though question may arise whether funding is the sole reason for quality enhancement, and the answer might be negative. Other factors are existing related to Higher education of India, which are responsible for the poor quality of Higher Education. However, among all of them, fund is a major issue, and

institutions across the country are suffering from scarcity of funding. So, centrally sponsored scheme RUSA, as a part of Resource allocation policy, has been formulated for the expansion of Higher education and improvement of quality of the Higher education system.

**Figure 4.2 – Scheme Content**



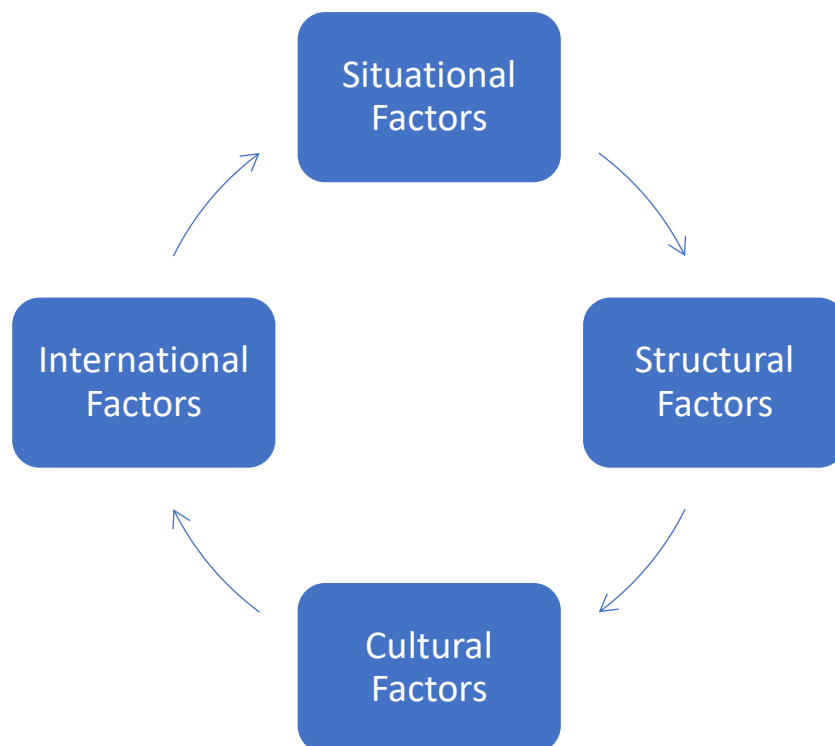
Till date, before the launch of RUSA, all these tasks were handled by UGC, so while bringing this new scheme, it needed to assure that the role of UGC should not be diluted. Instead, a decentralised institutional and state-level planning should be encouraged through the scheme, which would always be monitored by UGC. As argued,

The operationalisation of the new scheme would be in a manner that streamlines and harmonises with the activities of the UGC. The institutional framework needs to be structured in order to ensure that the UGC's role is not undermined, but rather the UGC is made an equal partner in the entire process. Therefore, UGC's role in the new CSS has been clearly defined and institutionalised. (MHRD, 2013)

So, policy or scheme RUSA had come into existence to replace the individual 62 schemes and projects of UGC existed earlier and to treat higher education holistically at the state level. After the content of the policy formulated, it was also essential to understand the context behind formulating any policy. The policy was formulated based on different contexts that exist in society. Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), RUSA, was also the product of factors

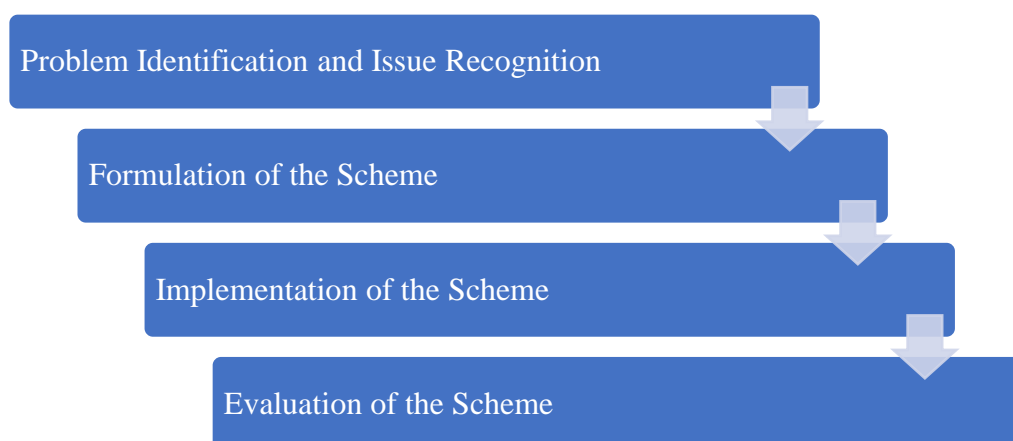
about society. It had its situational, structural, cultural, and also the international context in its backdrop. After globalisation and the economic reforms of the 1990s, education sector of India has seen the rapid change, and influence of the private sector stimulates unequal growth and expansion of Higher Education in the nation. The repercussion of economic reform, on one hand, states accepted liberal economic policies have expanded rapidly, and states like West Bengal did not accept the economic reformation, had failed to expand the sector. However, on other hand, due to UGC's non-normative funding process helped in growing regional inequalities. This gave the situational context of bringing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of RUSA to fund all regions of the country in a symmetric way to restore regional equality. The policy was also needed to change the structure of funding process.

**Figure 4.3 – Scheme Context**



After content and context of the policy, entire policy process goes through different stages. As literature puts it, "Process comprises the initiation, development, negotiation, communication, implementation, and evaluation of policies" (Buse, Mays, & Walt, 2005). So, policy process has four different stages –

**Figure 4.4 – Scheme Implementation**



RUSA is a policy that had been formulated on the basis of problems discussed earlier. However, many a times, after formulation of the policy, implementation and evaluation part are ignored. This study analysed the policy, on the basis of previous schemes existed for state higher education of India and also analysed role of West Bengal State Council of Higher Education in its implementation process.

The previous schemes and projects that existed in UGC were somewhere trying to cater to problems of state higher education in bits and pieces, and holistic approach was missing somewhere. There were fifteen schemes for Universities only, twelve schemes for colleges only, separate twelve schemes for both colleges and universities, there are three schemes/projects for departments of colleges and universities and finally separate twenty schemes/ projects for individual students. So, this much of bifurcation to receive funding from UGC for development of Higher Education is always a confusing and complex scenario for the colleges and universities at state level. In comparison to this, RUSA is a scheme that is complete in itself. It allows colleges and universities to receive funds for the development purpose, to make new universities or colleges, to upgrade existing college to model college. Even this policy not only focuses on funding, but simultaneously it has a component for leadership development of educational administrators, preparing colleges for accreditation purpose, capacity building, preparation, and planning. So, policy is more inclusive in nature.

The difference of RUSA from earlier policies and schemes is in its approach. The earlier approach of UGC and government was much more input driven. The funding was provided to institutions that did not take performance of any institution in consideration. This created a problem accountability for the institutions. They spent money on development of the college,

but due to the less need for accountability, colleges and universities had hardly utilised fund at its fullest. This was a major shift that has happened in funding after arrival of RUSA. RUSA is a policy taken by the government, which is not input based but rather it is outcome-based. It took into consideration the utilisation of funds given by the scheme for development of that college or University. So, any institution would not receive funds until and unless they had improved their results in the field access, equity, and excellence. RUSA had set specific a priori commitments and requirements and any states had to fulfill those requirements before receiving a grant. Every state would receive a certain preparatory amount to prepare state for complying with a priori needs. Until and unless these a priori needs were fulfilled, any state cannot participate in RUSA. So, from very first step of the policy, it was much more outcome-driven. If a state failed to acquire that outcome, then it would be considered as a part of the RUSA programme.

Among many prerequisites of RUSA, State Higher Education Council was one of them. It was clearly mentioned in scheme that state would not be eligible to receive funds until the state establishes full-fledged SHECs. This was a shift of RUSA from earlier schemes and policies. The earlier schemes and policies sent money directly to the colleges and universities, and as state was ignored in the process, they never considered the task of monitoring these institutions seriously. The result was these institutions never worked for their development; the way it should had been done. Now, after the implementation of RUSA, the State Higher Education councils had become a major stakeholder in the process of disbursing the funding to the respective institution. So, SHECs had also become an accountable agency to the MHRD. As the funds flow through SHECs, so state colleges and universities had also been bounded and accountable to it. As future funds would only be received by the institution based on the outcomes and achievements against targets, so for receiving funds colleges had no choice left other than showing a consolidated number of tasks been done by college to achieve the RUSA target.

Since education is in the concurrent list, so it is responsibility of both Centre as well as state should be a partner in the development of education sector in their respective state. However, in matter of financing higher education, data of state expenditure was not encouraging at all. The states themselves did not spend an adequate proportion of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) on Higher Education. Not even a single state spent more than 1.6% of their total GSDP on higher education. The average spent of states was 0.5% of GSDP, and

there are states like Maharashtra and Jharkhand, who spent 0.14% of their total GSDP on Higher Education. Even states like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal spent a tiny percentage of their GSDP on higher education, and also GER of these states is considerably low. States like Tamil Nadu, which has higher institutional density, but still they spent an average on higher education. This kind of ignorance of higher education created a discrimination among people who could afford private higher education and who could not. The earlier schemes and policies of UGC had never taken a step to indulge states also to participate equally for reformation of higher education. This new policy of RUSA had strategically involved states also to fund higher education. Among many prerequisites discussed earlier, one is the strategic funding scheme. The Centre would fund under the scheme of RUSA when state was equally funding a portion of the money for the higher education reformation grant. Centre-state funding for the scheme is in the ratio of 90:10 for the North-Eastern states, Sikkim, J & K, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand and 65:35 for the other states and UTs. The scheme of RUSA has not also excluded the private-aided institutions. There are specific criteria before funding them. The private-aided institutions also receive funding subject to their duration of existence, for permitted activities based on certain norms and parameters, in a ratio of 50:50.

#### **4.5. RUSA in West Bengal**

West Bengal, as a state, had a very strong cultural heritage, quest for intellectual pursuit, the legacy of Bengali renaissance, and education. Since independence and even after 2-3 decades of independence, state was educationally privileged, but then educational status has declined, even in comparison to the national level. Among many of reasons behind this continuous deterioration of the state education, political orientation and the welfare outlook of state of not performing role of being the service hatch to its democratic subjects can be considered as quintessential factors. Since the end of the 1970s, state's political ideology had never allowed the free-flowing liberal market strategy. Even after economic reforms of the 1990s, state had not accepted liberal and later on neo-liberal regime. The state had not also emphasized on the need of public funding in Higher Education separately as Education is in the concurrent list. This conflict of state and Centre had not only affected state's education policies adversely, but it had also intensified regional disparities. As public funding was neglected in all states, the states, which had allowed the private players to function, had developed comparatively better infrastructure and increased access to higher education. In comparison to those states, West Bengal's education policies failed to provide access and



quality to the students. At the same time, due to the liberal structure of society in West Bengal, the need for higher education was always there, but to cope up with that need, state had not done relatively enough. Even existing quality institutions, due to state's negligence and conflict with the central policies, failed to sustain their standards to pan-Indian level. In a situation like this, in the year 2012 before arrival of flagship programme RUSA, the GER of the state was 16.3 percent as compared to national average of 23 percent (AISHE Survey 2013-14). As per AISHE report, male GER of the State was 18.2 percent, and female GER was 14.4 percent in 2012, while the national average for males was 23.9 percent, and females were 22 percent. Even among the SC, ST community, the GER was low in comparison to the national average. So, along with access to higher education, the equity aspect was also missing in the state of West Bengal. Talking about the issue of accessibility of Higher education in the state, the West Bengal State Higher Education Plan (2014), failure of state to fulfill demand is articulated in this manner –

There is a great demand for postgraduate education, which is not met by the number of seats available. There are 71,561 students enrolled in postgraduate courses that exceed the intake capacity by 55,826 students. This indicates the interest of the students in pursuing postgraduate courses, creating a need for additional investments for the development of infrastructure. It draws the attention towards setting up of colleges and increasing the capacity of current colleges to meet the demand. (GoWB, 2014)

The existing regional disparity in Higher Education was not an inter-state phenomenon. It existed intra-state too. There was a non-homogenous demographic distribution of colleges among the districts in the state. In the year 2012, in West Bengal, a district like Kolkata had 220 institutions, the highest number, as compared to districts like Uttar Dinajpur had 13 higher education institutions, the lowest number. So, this disparity is huge in scale.

According to the AISHE report 2012, West Bengal had 26 universities, 865 colleges, and 76 teacher training colleges. Though regional disparities were existing in the state, despite that out of total number of colleges, 47.7% of institutions are situated in rural areas. Among all institutions, as per the data of 2012, in that present cycle, only 64 institutions were NAAC accredited. There were 271 institutions in the State which had been NAAC accredited in previous cycle. These were under the renewal process. The state government had also started to plan to make NAAC accreditation compulsory for all institutions in State.

The average pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) in higher education sector of West Bengal was 43:1 in 2012-13 as compared to national average of 24:1. Furthermore, in academic year 2012-13, West Bengal had 43,694 total teachers involved in higher education sector, of which 62.5 percent are male.

So, the weaknesses of state, as per West Bengal State Higher Education Plan (2014),

- Across the State, growth rate of number of quality education institutions was slow
- Development of districts in West Bengal was non-homogenous with respect to setting up of colleges and universities
- After Graduation employment, opportunities were inadequate in high-end industries which impacts morale of the youth
- One of the major weaknesses of the state was non-significant public investment in higher education sector in recent past
- The teacher student ratio in state was very high in comparison to national average. Recruitments were done but not on a large scale which is affecting quality perspective of State higher education.
- The state lacks educational hubs as in cities like Hyderabad, Delhi, Kota, etc. at pre-college level to prepare students for admission into the premier institutions of the country

In 2012-13, before the implementation of the RUSA scheme, status of higher education in West Bengal was discussed above. After implementation of the RUSA scheme, state had made a state higher education plan for the financial year, 2014-2018, for development of higher education system in West Bengal. The state higher education plan emphasises "on developing higher education in the state in terms of quality and its outreach. It had attempted to increase the number of colleges to provide ample opportunities to as many students as possible. Moreover, there had been steps to improvise on the quality of education, especially research and development in the premier institutes of the state" (GoWB, 2014). One of the major targets of Government of West Bengal was to increase GER to 25.2 % from existing 16.3% without compromising the quality of education. In order to achieve the target, focus would be on homogenous development of education system in all the districts. The current plan had been laid out for three years, which were remaining years of 12th five-year plan. The plan envisaged construction of new universities, up-gradation of existing university infrastructure, setting up of new colleges, the population of district and the demand for higher education needs. For five-

year perspective plan, state had mainly focused on infrastructure grants to the colleges. In the state higher educational plan, state sent a requisition of rupees 1046cr for the infrastructure grant of the existing colleges. The money would be utilised between the financial year 2014 to 2017. The state higher education plan had also planned funds for model degree colleges, infrastructure grants for existing universities, faculty improvement, Vocationalisation of higher education, and creation of universities by up-gradation of existing autonomous colleges.

In the following two tables, the study had attempted to show the status of RUSA 1.0 funding in West Bengal. The following table shows total amount approved, total central share approved for RUSA 1.0, year wise release of funds and also total share released by Centre by 2018.

**Table 4.1: Approval and Release of Fund of RUSA 1.0**

Total Amount Approved	Total Central Share Approved	Year wise Releases						Total Share Released By Centre
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
348 (Including MMER and PG)	208.8	2.62	1.14	61.19	72.23	47.99	6.9	192.07

Source: RUSA 1.0 (Snapshot of approval and releases), Government of West Bengal, 2018

The next table is about component wise approved funding, Central share approved and released and it also clarifies total UC submitted till 2018. Among many components in RUSA 1.0, funding of the state had been approved for five major components, except for the preparatory grants. The approved components of funding were MMER grants, 8 universities of the state, under different Project Approval Board. It had been approved for the infrastructure grants, 76 colleges had received approval for an infrastructural grant under the 7th and 9th Project Approval Board, one new professional college had received approval, which was for a government engineering college and under faculty improvement component, Calcutta University had received funds. Under RUSA 1.0, the total amount approved for the state of West Bengal, including both the state and central share, was 348cr, including MMER and Preparatory grants. Of this 348cr, the central share was 208.8cr, and state share was 139.2cr.

**Table 4.2: Component Wise Fund Approved and Release of Fund of RUSA 1.0**

(Rs. In Crores)						
<b>Component</b>	<b>Physical Units Approved</b>	<b>Total Amount Approved</b>	<b>Total Central Share Approved (60:40)</b>	<b>Central Share Released</b>	<b>State Share Released</b>	<b>UC Submitted of (Central Share)</b>
Preparatory Grants				4.80	7.66	4.80
MMER Grants				0.026	0.40	0.140
Infrastructure Grants to University	8	160	96	85.80	57.2	71.93
Infrastructure grants to colleges	76	152	91.2	81.04	51.09	71.04
New College (Professional)	1	26	15.6	15.6	7.80	11.70
Faculty Improvement	1	1	6	0.3	0.20	0.3
<b>Total Funds Released</b>		<b>348</b>	<b>208.8</b>	<b>124.35</b>	<b>124.35</b>	<b>159.91</b>

Source: RUSA 1.0 (Component wise funding), Government of West Bengal, 2018

The following table is to show the status of the institutions taken as sample for this current study. Among 8 universities and 76 colleges which received infrastructure grant, the study took 2 universities and 7 colleges. This tables shows in which year institutions were granted fund, Central grants approved, dates of release of central grants, total central grants released and funds utilized by colleges. This gives a clear idea of till 2018, before SHEP-2018-2021 what was the status of the colleges and universities, this study selected as sample. This

also shows gap and delayed procedure of fund disbursement as well as institution's accountability of utilizing fund.

**Table 4.3: Status of the Sample Institutions**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name of Component/Institution</b>	<b>PAB</b>	<b>Central Grants Approved</b>	<b>Dates of Release of Central Grants</b>	<b>Total Central Grants Released till Date</b>	<b>Funds Utilised by Institution (Central share)</b>
1	University of Calcutta	7 <sup>th</sup> PAB (28.03.2015)	12.00	29.09.2015 30.08.2017	9.00	9.00
2	University of Gour Banga	5 <sup>th</sup> PAB (10.12.2014)	12.00	20.03.2015 19.06.2015 22.06.2016	10.80	10.80
3	Basanti Devi College	7 <sup>th</sup> PAB (28.03.2015)	1.20	19.06.2015 22.06.2016 27.03.2018	1.08	1.08
4	Ramsaday College	7 <sup>th</sup> PAB (28.03.2015)	1.20	19.06.2015 22.06.2016 27.03.2018	1.2	0.9
5	MUC Women's College	7 <sup>th</sup> PAB (28.03.2015)	1.20	19.06.2015 22.06.2016	0.9	0.9
6	East Calcutta Girls' College	7 <sup>th</sup> PAB (28.03.2015)	1.20	19.06.2015 22.06.2016 27.03.2018	1.08	1.08
7	Vivekananda College for Women	12 <sup>th</sup> PAB (25.05.2018)	1.20	20.06.2018	0.6	0
8	Bhairab Ganguly College	12 <sup>th</sup> PAB (25.05.2018)	1.20	20.06.2018	0.6	0
9	Satyapriyo Roy College of Education	7 <sup>th</sup> PAB (28.03.2015)	1.20	19.06.2015 22.06.2016	0.9	0.9

Source: Institutions funded under RUSA 1.0, Government of West Bengal

The first State Higher Education Plan, prepared by the state of West Bengal, was up to the financial year 2017-18. Though, previous tables clearly displayed that colleges and universities were receiving funds even in the financial year of 2018-19. In process of financing and after completion of target financial year, following issues are flagged as reported by State RUSA directorate,

1. Uploading information on the fund tracker
2. Completion of all the projects funded under RUSA 1.0 and submission of UC along with the completion of reports for the same.
3. Geo-tagging: Only 16 institutions have uploaded relevant, high-quality photographs, against 87 institutions for which Central grants have been released.
4. The State needs to submit revised amended State Higher Education Plan (SHEP) for proposals not part of the original SHEP

So, in the financial year 2018, state had submitted another State Higher Education Plan for financial year 2018-2021. Currently, after completion of RUSA 1.0, state was going through second phase of RUSA, that RUSA 2.0. RUSA 2.0 focused on Expansion, Excellence, Equity, Efficacy, and Employability. RUSA 1.0 and 2.0 had set national mission of achieving 25.2 percent GER by 2017-18 and 30 percent by 2021-22. As per AISHE report 2017-2018, the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education in India is 25.8. So, it can be said that RUSA has achieved the national target of GER. However, the state's target of achieving 25.2% of GER had not been achieved even after the implementation of RUSA. As per AISHE report 2017-2018, West Bengal's Higher Education GER is 18.7% as compared to the national average of 25.8 and the target GER of 25.2. If the GER of 2013-14 of the state is compared to the GER of 2017-18, alongside the national GER, then it can be seen that West Bengal has not evolved drastically; instead, its progress is slow. (AISHE Report 2013-14 and 2017-18)

**Table 4.4: West Bengal HE GER in Comparison to National HE GER**

Year	All Categories			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2013-14	18.2	14.4	16.3	13.4	10.2	11.9	10.2	7.3	8.7
India	23.9	22.0	23.0	17.7	16.4	17.1	12.5	10.2	11.3
2017-18	19.9	17.6	18.7	14.8	12.8	13.8	11.0	8.9	9.9
India	26.3	25.4	25.8	22.2	21.4	21.8	17.0	14.9	15.9

Source: AISHE (2013-14 and 2017-18)

The GER is also dependent on the criterion of the accessibility and availability of colleges and universities in the locality. The following table shows the year wise evolving status of Higher Education Institutions of West Bengal.

**Table 4.5 - Status of Higher Education Institutions in West Bengal**

Institutional Type	FY '12	FY '13	FY '14	FY '15	FY '16	FY '17	FY '18
University	26	26	27	31	34	37	42
College	865	926	991	1064	1105	1232	1359
Teacher Training	76	75	55	95	99	118	204

FY – Financial Year

Source: State Higher Education Report, Government of West Bengal, 2018

The above table shows gradual growth rate of colleges and universities in the state. However, the increase in the number of colleges does not ensure quality of the institution. So, in the State Higher Education Plan, 2014-15, state had planned to make NAAC accreditation a mandatory criterion for all the state colleges. Since then, more than 250 colleges and 10 universities of state have been accredited by NAAC. As per the Annual Report of NAAC, in financial year of 2016-17, maximum number of colleges and universities had been accredited where almost 162 colleges and 5 universities had received NAAC accreditation.

**Table 4.6: Numbers of 2f, 12B and NAAC Accredited Institutions in West Bengal**

Institutions	Category	2f (No.)	12B (No.)	Institutions with NAAC Accreditation
<b>Universities</b>	State Universities	20	20	10
<b>Colleges</b>	Government Colleges	27	27	9
	Government Aided Colleges	433	433	259
	Private Colleges			24
<b>Total</b>				302

Source: State Higher Education Plan, Government of West Bengal, 2018

#### **4.5.1. State Higher Education Plan, 2018-2021**

The earlier State Higher Education Plan, 2014-15, for implementation of RUSA and overall development of Higher Education changed trend of Higher Education system in the state. However, development was prolonged, which did not even match the national level of expansion, accessibility, and quality of Higher Education. The objectives of State Higher Education plan of Higher Education Department would be achieved through the below-mentioned targets by Financial Year (FY) 2021.

1. To increase GER of State from 17.79 (as on 1st April 2018) to 26 by end of Financial Year (FY) 2021 and subsequently to 30 by end of FY 2025
2. Pupil-Teacher ratio needs to be improved from the present 31.29:1 to 28:1
3. To upsurge enrolment in the higher education of the State from present 20.15 lac (as per AISHE FY 2016-17) to 27 lakhs by end of FY 2021 and by end of FY 2025, subsequently to 32 lakhs.
4. To achieve equity in higher education through providing suitable prospects to economically underprivileged rural communities, women, SC/ST/OBC and differently-abled persons
5. Teacher's pedagogical knowledge needs to be enhanced in order to develop the quality of classroom interaction and environment
6. Along with conventional education, the students have to be industry ready. It will help students to get jobs once they graduate. It demands the need of establishing centres of vocational training and skill development in every institution.

After completion of the previous State Higher Education Plan (SHEP), 2014-2017, West Bengal State Higher Education department had planned another State Higher Education Plan for the financial year 2018-2021 in following ways. The State Higher Education department set specific goals to achieve. After goals were set, deficiencies were identified and strategies to overcome those deficiencies were decided. Under broader goal, some smaller targets were proposed.



**Table 4.7 – West Bengal State Higher Education Plan, 2018-2021**

<b>SL No</b>	<b>Goals Under RUSA</b>	<b>Existing Deficiencies in the State HE System</b>	<b>Strategy to Overcome Deficiency</b>	<b>Proposed Targets Under RUSA</b>
1.	Excellence (Quality)	Poor academic quality, less NAAC Institutions	Upgrade academic facilities, new institutions	Upgradation to MDC, University; Mandatory accreditation
		Limited opportunities for specialized education, such as medical, agriculture etc.	Increase intake capacity for specialized education	Setting up new Universities, Colleges, and Centres of Excellence (CoE) for specialized education
		Relatively poor teacher education quality and infrastructure	Increase intake capacity and quality of teacher education in the State	Upgradation of the existing teacher training facilities; Setting up Teacher training education institution
2.	Equity	GER of SC students lower than the average GER	Increase enrolment of SC students in the State	Encouraging SC, ST, OBC and minority communities for higher education through financial schemes and support
		Gender disparity in terms of female enrolment and female GER	Provide additional benefits and incentives among female students for higher education	Increased facilities intake capacity, and HEIs dedicated for female students
		Limited participation of women in postgraduation studies	Encourage female participation in post-graduation studies	Provision of financial support and incentives through schemes like Kanyashree K3

3.	Access	Low GER	Increase capacity intake	Additional Greenfield Institutions
		Limited intake capacity for post-graduation studies	Increase intake capacities for post-graduation studies	Upgradation of existing HEIs to provide postgraduation facilities; Setting up new postgraduation Colleges
		Non-uniform distribution of HEIs across the State	Focus on higher education in geographically disadvantaged areas	Increase infrastructure, number of HEIs, and intake capacity of existing HEIs in unserved and underserved areas of the State

Source: State Higher Education Plan, Government of West Bengal, 2018

State Higher Education plan discussed above was endeavoring to achieve the targets set under the RUSA scheme. After completion of RUSA 1.0 implementation, there were some goals achieved by the state, and many other goals were yet to be achieved. So, this latest SHEP-2018 of West Bengal had been prepared keeping in mind unachieved targets of RUSA 1.0. The time frame for implementing this new SHEP is until 2021, so outcome of RUSA 2.0 could not be evaluated in this research work. However, this SHEP 2018 of West Bengal could be seen as future of the RUSA scheme, how the state was dealing with existing scenario of Higher Education and at which direction it is heading to.

This chapter critically examined that after implementation of RUSA, UGC's role in supporting higher education came under severe questioning. RUSA is a comparatively much more norm-based funding system, and it involves a larger number of institutions than UGC. In this process, state was also added as a stakeholder. RUSA defined role of state and made West Bengal State Council of Higher Education, the responsible authority. In RUSA 1.0, state not only implemented the scheme in many of the colleges and universities but along with that also established many universities and built many new colleges. The state declared to make few more new universities in the state. So, state is clearly trying to fulfill demand of state subjects.

## **Chapter V**

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Indian higher education system was always funded by University Grant Commission (UGC), and to some extent, UGC is still functioning in its twelfth financial year. But somehow, after inclusion of RUSA to fund state higher education institutions, role of UGC, in funding, has been constrained partially, if not ceased altogether. So, launching of Centrally Sponsored Scheme like RUSA has outplayed the other means of funding in the higher education sector. RUSA came into existence in 2013-14, and it has travelled a journey of 6-7 years. When the scheme was planned, many components were kept in mind, as discussed in the earlier chapter, to improve quality of the State higher education. There were many issues that this scheme has attempted to cater to its implementation process. Items like inclusion and intervention of State as a stakeholder in funding State higher education to increase state accountability in enhancing quality of higher education institutions in State, developing funding pattern as compared to UGC, lacked a systematic approach. Issues like underutilisation of funds occurred due to absence of proper strategic planning, issue of transparency, and monitoring mechanism. All these dealt with in the scheme of RUSA. However, it was necessary to analyse implementation of scheme at ground level, to have a clear picture of what is there in the scheme, its purpose, and how it is dealt at the institution level.

So, this chapter deals with second stage of the research. An administrative cross-sectional survey conducted to understand perspective of beneficiaries who were responsible for the implementation of the scheme. The responses of the respondents collected through interview schedule. All these responses were transcribed, then coded and categorised. From different categories, themes had emerged. These themes were analysed based on the responses received. So, the researcher followed a thematic analysis process to analyse in-depth interviews. The researcher interviewed administrators of universities as well as colleges. All these themes and analysis of collected data attempted to justify objectives and questions emerged while doing literature review of the study.

#### **5.1. Envisaged and Transformed Role of West Bengal State Council Higher Education**

As mentioned in Chapter IV, while analysing RUSA document, among many functions of SHEC, one of the major functions was funding. Apart from that, SHEC had certain

regulatory functions too, like strategy and planning, monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance and academic functions and advisory functions, WBSCHE had no role in all these regarding the Rashtriya Uchcharat Sikhsha Abhiyan. As mentioned in the RUSA document, SHEC's one of major functions was to "disburse funds to state universities and colleges based on the State Higher Education Plan and transparent norms" (MHRD, 2013). But responses received from the field, colleges, and universities were barely aware of WBSCHE's role in entire process of implementation of the RUSA scheme. Colleges and universities have a direct connection with State Project Directorate, which is under State Higher Education Department. Among many functions of SHEC mentioned, it deals with the academic functions like providing approval of setting up new institutions/ colleges, giving permission to the universities and colleges to start a new course, making universities aware of the accreditation norms of NAAC through arranging workshops. WBSCHE also advised universities on statute and ordinance formulation.

NPE-1986 had recommended establishing State Higher Education Council to bridge the gap between State and centre in higher education sector after education was being enlisted in the concurrent list. The reason being concurrent list poses a considerable threat of gap between the Centre and the State. This became one of the major reasons of regional disparity and imbalances in the sector of higher education. The dichotomy of State and Centre's political scenario could also be cited as a reason for this. So, taking suggestions from National Policy on Education, 1986, UGC, in the year 1988, recommended formation of Higher Education Council for State-level planning and growth of Higher Education. Following this recommendation, the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education (WBSCHE) was established on July 29, 1994, under the West Bengal Act XXXVII of 1994. The Council started functioning in April 1995. In the year 2013-2014, another role that was given to WBSCHE was to facilitate National Higher Education Mission (RUSA) through its regulatory and funding functions.

The matter of fact is that, there was a huge gap between the functions envisaged for SHEC and the kind of role they play in the development of state higher education. The following table is developed by World Bank Group to clarify difference in legal and practical functions of SHECs. The researcher modified the table to understand precisely the changing role of WBSCHE

**Table 5.1: Legal and “In Practice” Powers and Functions of State Higher Education Councils**

<b>Establishment, Powers and Functions of State Higher Education Council</b>	<b>West Bengal</b>	
	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Practice</b>
<b>Strategy and Planning</b>		
1. Preparing the State Higher Education Plan (Perspective Plan, Annual Plan and Budget Plan)	Yes	Yes
2. Providing state institutions with inputs for creating their Plans and implementing them	Yes	No
3. Coordination between apex bodies, regulatory institutions and government	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>		
4. Monitoring the implementation of State Higher Education Plan	Yes	No
5. Creating and maintaining the Management Information Systems	Yes	No
6. Compiling and maintaining periodic statistics at state and institutional level	No	No
7. Evaluating state institutions on the basis of norms and KPIs developed	No	No
<b>Quality Assurance and Academic Functions</b>		
8. Faculty quality enhancement programme	Yes	Yes
9. Quality of examinations	Yes	No
10. Maintaining quality of curriculum	Yes	Yes
11. Promoting innovation in research	Yes	No
12. Protecting autonomy of state institution	No	No
13. Providing approval for setting up of new institutions/colleges	Yes	Yes
14. Promoting accreditation reforms	Yes	Yes
<b>Advisory Functions</b>		
15. Advising state government on strategic investments in higher education	No	No

16. Advising universities on statute and ordinance formulation	Yes	Yes
<b>Funding Functions</b>		
17. Disbursing funds to state universities and colleges on the basis of the State Higher Education Plan and transparent norms	Yes	No

Source: World Bank Group (2014)

As above table suggests, there was a clear discrepancy in legal functions and functions West Bengal State Council of Higher Education (WBSCHÉ) practices. The council was initially envisaged as a decentralized body at the state level which was established to initiate dialogue between state and Centre, to regulate unprecedented growth of higher education institution and to ensure quality of higher education system through state level policies and planning. All major seventeen functions assigned to them were mentioned in table above but WBSCHÉ failed to commence tasks assigned to it.

Higher Education governance of India required a reform after emergence of multiple providers in this sector. The introduction of private players facilitated growth of institutions, but that growth was unplanned and due to dwindling State of public funding. With increasing number of school graduates, demand for Higher Education increased. Simultaneously, social and economic value of Higher Education also increased. This growth of private funding and reduction of public funding affected States most. Thus, it necessitated institutionalised state-level planning to receive the fund and expand Higher Education at state level. SHECs were expected to play a role of catalyst to fulfil this job. SHECs were established under the same norms and regulations, but they vary in terms of their functions. As the previous table focused on differences of West Bengal State Higher Education council's envisaged role and actual role it played since its inception, the following table illustrates WBSCHÉ's last five year's set targets and fulfilled functions.

**Table 5.2: WBSCHE's Expected and Actual Functions (FY 2015-17)**

<b>Expected Functions of WBSCHE between 2015-2017</b>	<b>Activities of WBSCHE between 2015-2017</b>
<b>Executive and administrative functions</b>	Conducting Inspection for setting up of new Universities & Colleges and for the introduction of new Subjects at existing HEIs
<b>Strategic Planning and Coordination</b>	Introduction of CBCS method of studies at both UG & PG level in all HEIs across the State
<b>Monitoring and evaluation of the performance of higher educational institutions</b>	NIL
<b>Quality assurance and academic functions</b>	Update / Revision of Syllabi at both UG & PG levels at regular intervals.
<b>Advisory functions</b>	Extend help for Formulation of Regulation of Universities
<b>Academic Audit of Higher Educational Institutions</b>	Conducting Academic Audit of different state universities
<b>Conduct of common entrance tests such as admission to PG courses in various Universities Inspection of colleges and Universities</b>	NIL
<b>Monitoring the implementation of OBC Act and rules, etc.</b>	NIL

Among many tasks assigned to WBSCHE, the advisory functions and inspecting for establishing new universities and colleges, inspecting colleges for the introduction of new subjects or continuation of existing subjects, were the major two functions they were doing. As mentioned earlier, there were many expected tasks of WBSCHE, like monitoring and evaluating performance, quality assurance to state institutions, conducting common entrance tests, and issues of employability of graduates etc., However, WBSCHE failed to do many of these jobs in between the financial year 2015-2017.

The study found out that during its initial years, RUSA was controlled by West Bengal State Council of Higher Education, but with time being, the control of RUSA transferred to RUSA Project directorate. As mentioned earlier, colleges and universities communicate with the RUSA directorate for any issue related to RUSA. The administrators of colleges, as well as universities, see WBSCHE as only a policy-making body at state level, which provided academic support and advice. The administrator's response also drew attention to the fact that how deeply WBSCHE was involved and connected with colleges and universities and also bridging the gap between Centre and State in the matter of higher education. But simultaneously, it was seen from document analysis of the State Higher Education Plan, 2018, which was planned and prepared by WBSCHE for SHEP 2018-2021. It was prepared following the guidelines of the National Higher Education Mission of RUSA.

## **5.2. State Higher Education Funding, UGC and RUSA**

Since 1956, universities all across India were funded by UGC. This system of funding and grant disbursement remained unchanged until 2013. There were around 62 schemes and projects through which UGC supports the State higher education institutions. But as discussed earlier in the previous chapter, this age-old system of funding state higher education had enormous drawbacks, which somehow restraint the development of higher education in states and also encouraged the regional imbalances. UGC followed Section 12B to fund institutions. Section 12B has two major problems. First, UGC funded only those institutions which were under Section 12B, new institution could be a part of 12B but it was hard to get this status. Secondly, 12B had certain prerequisites which presuppose all facilities and infrastructure to be in place before UGC started funding that particular institution. Discussing the problems, the first one, when the UGC was created, then there were a very smaller number of colleges and universities. But in recent years and after the neo-liberal reforms, the number of colleges and universities had increased. Now it became practically impossible to enrol all these institutions



under Section 12B or to fund all these institutions. The second problem was more concerning. The fact that state universities and colleges who were applying for the fund to UGC did not have funds to fulfil the criteria 12B set. These institutions were ones which should be supported first based on the needs and requirements they had. UGC funding regulation was not at all normative, and it failed to fund institutions that actually need it. All these problems led to the creation of a new system of funding, which is more norm-based and not limited to schemes and projects solely. From this very idea, RUSA came into existence. RUSA had included another stakeholder in the system of funding that was State, to make State more accountable and to include a major share of 35% or 10% of financing from the State. RUSA had initiated funding through State Higher Education Planning, and it had also cleared from the beginning of how much money would be given to the institutions. This made it easier for State as well as for the institutions to plan accordingly to receive funds. This prior planning would also reduce underutilisation of funds. But involvement of State, on one hand, became boon, but it could also be seen as a bane. In the bureaucratic hierarchy of Indian administration system, another step was included where fund would flow through state machinery.

All these were the characteristic of two different modes of funding state higher education institutions in India. One was UGC, which was funding the institutions directly since its inception, and the other was RUSA, which came into existence in 2014. So, a constant comparison between these two systems went on, where administrators were sometimes favouring earlier UGC system and sometimes valorising RUSA for its more systematic approach. Many times, this question posed by the administrators, working actively for successful implementation of the scheme, that RUSA became a game-changer but in which way? The colleges and universities reacted to RUSA in a mixed way. Though this study could never be generalised, so talking about the sample population only, the administrators of colleges think that RUSA definitely helped smaller institutions. It solved problem of controlling state institutions. Before RUSA, state universities were funded directly by UGC, and State had no role in this. So, issues like state accountability to develop higher education, monitoring State higher education institution could never be forced on State. The State had never increased its GSDP to develop State higher education. States always neglected Higher education funding, as they were not the stakeholders. RUSA solved this very problem of negligence of the State. RUSA scheme was funded both by the Centre and the State. The inclusion of State also made implementation easy as colleges and universities have a local level monitoring body which is controlling the entire RUSA scheme and playing role of mediator

between State and Centre. The most important difference of RUSA from UGC, as mentioned by administrators of colleges and universities, was its strategic, systematic, and organised system of funding. The system was entirely controlled via online mode, and also local authorities were there to solve problems faced by colleges and universities. But talking about the UGC funding, it was never planned as administrators mentioned that it was always difficult to plan their necessities as institutions are ignorant of what amount of money institutions were going to receive and what it should spend. Another major problem with UGC was its record keeping. The system was never that smooth. First of all, UGC funded under a singular scheme or project which never allowed seeing quality of higher education holistically, instead it was seen in bits and pieces, which was also problematic for colleges to utilise their funds properly. Secondly, the administrators complained that UGC always misplaced their college or university UCs and would ask for the same document from the institution again. Even there were instances when colleges had receipts of accepting UCs given by UGC, but even after that, they used to mislay the documents. It became a reason for harassment for the college and university authorities.

In comparison to UGC, the RUSA funding process is much more systematic, organised, structured, and transparent. The entire funding process is monitored through an online portal, and RUSA has a local state directorate to deal with all the queries. To make it more transparent RUSA Mission Authority also introduced Bhuvan RUSA. "The National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed a mobile application for uploading geotagged photographs and associated details captured by educational institutions, on Bhuvan-RUSA portal as a part of the implementation of RUSA funded works in States. This application for geotagging of institutions under RUSA is a location-based service. The mobile geotagging App of RUSA covers the following attributes: construction work or equipment, institution name, new or upgraded work, type of work, current stage of work, percentage completed, completion date, bank name, account number, amount released and amount utilised" (Press Information Bureau, 2017). Though, according to administrators, this app is not functional anymore.

As discussed earlier, except for those, there were many other problems with UGC, as mentioned by the administrators. UGC funding always had certain restrictions. It had never allowed colleges and universities to plan according to their needs. Many a times, it happened that institutions were recommended by UGC to buy equipment that colleges did not need at all.

But still, for the sake of receiving money, the colleges had to buy all those. This also hampered the autonomy of institution and also the transparency of the system. One of the major problems of UGC and the difference with RUSA was about physical inspection. UGC had never done reviews of works done in the field. They relied on the UC submission and documents given by colleges. But RUSA conducted physical state-level inspection of works done after completion of 75% work, and then remaining amount was transferred to college account.

Another critical issue, as discussed by administrators, was about the project settlement of UGC. UGC had always worked based on Five-Year Financial planning. They always set their projects based on that. UGC's 12th five-year plan period ended in 2017, but those projects were still going on and not finished yet. During these years, RUSA was also functioning in simultaneous pathways of UGC. So, colleges applied long back for the UGC project funding were yet to receive funds from UGC, and this resulted in project incompleteness and also underutilisation of funds. So, colleges and universities were not clear about the current status and role of UGC in funding and also in incomplete projects.

The issues discussed so far, by administrators, were about problems with earlier UGC funding procedure and system and what were the positive sides and benefits institutions were getting from RUSA. At the same time, administrators of institutions were worried about many aspects of RUSA. The very first issue with institutions that received funding in RUSA 1.0 in 2015 onwards, they utilised the received money. Their inspection was done and also exhausted the fund. But these colleges were not aware that what was the next step of receiving funds, how to apply, or when RUSA would advertise for these colleges to apply for funds again. So, college's yearly expenses were tough to bear in this system. RUSA 1.0 beneficiaries were also concerned about the overall quality improvement only through inhouse infrastructural development and procuring equipment. RUSA was limited to an incentive for infrastructural grants only. But UGC had a larger spectrum. Though UGC funds though under separate projects and schemes, they had covered all the bases. UGC used to fund seminars, conferences for the quality improvements of higher education. But under RUSA 1.0, state institutions haven't received any funding for these. Another positive side of UGC was its time frame. They had set certain short-term five-year plans to fulfil their projects, but RUSA had not set any timeframe as such. The colleges applied for grants and approved under RUSA 1.0; they were still receiving their funds in the academic year 2018-19. In the year 2013-14, the total central share approved for West Bengal is 208.8cr, and since 2019, the total amount released is

192.07cr. So, almost 17cr rupees is yet to release. As a result, many colleges had not received entire amount approved, which costs the incompleteness of projects at the institution level.

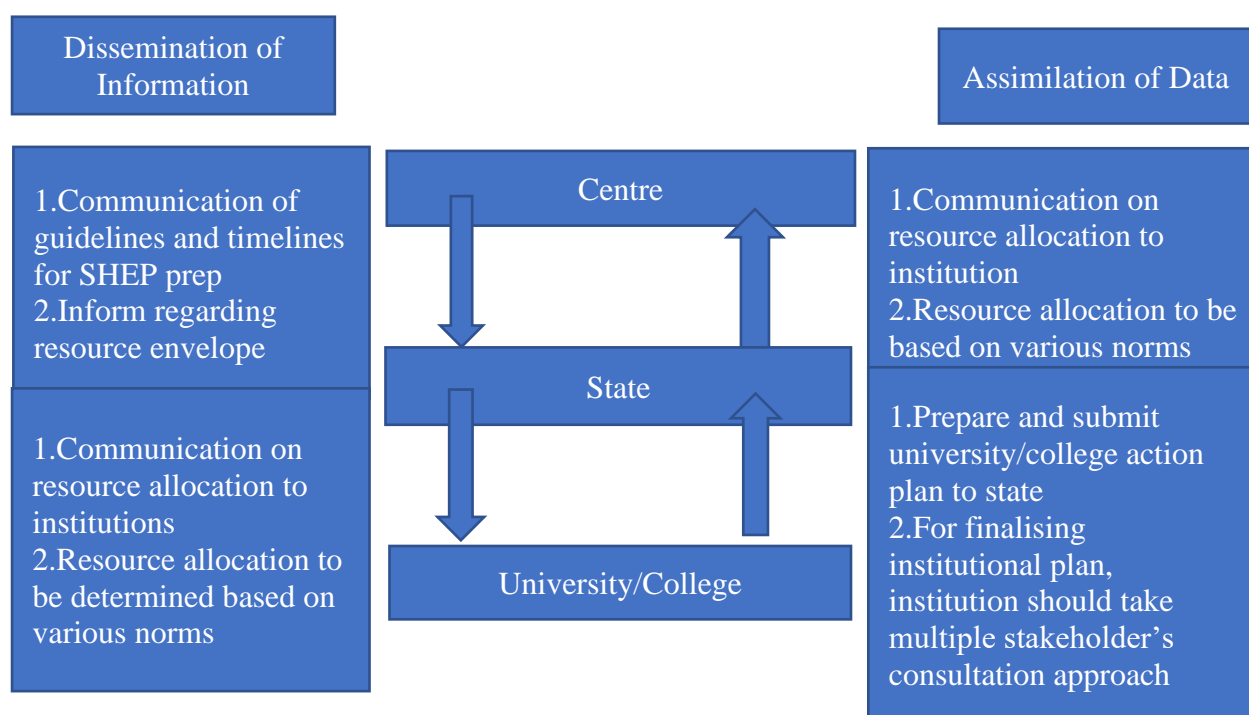
So, the questions raised by the administrators concerning changing scenario of RUSA. They were asking that in which way the funding pattern is leading to? If RUSA is a complete centrally sponsored scheme? Or is it just an initial phase and a pilot project which needs to be settled with time? RUSA had also been mentioned as a holistic normative scheme to fund state institutions, but this question was also raised by the administrators that in which way this is different? UGC financed through various projects, and RUSA is funding under different components. So, is this change of the system in funding, is the change in nomenclature only? Even after getting funds from RUSA, state universities and colleges have to depend on UGC and state governments as funding is done onetime component-wise and not yearly.

### **5.3. RUSA and Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is one of the major characteristics of RUSA funding. The basic assumption behind RUSA is to allow institutions to take part in micro level planning process of institutional development. The funding should be done more in a down-top approach instead of the bureaucratic top-down approach. In this down-top model, after institution, State is another stakeholder which would collect all institutional level plans, and State plans for entire State, keeping in mind needs of institutions. In this way, strategic plans are prepared at institutional level, which is approved by State. After compiling all institutional plans, State makes a holistic plan and submits it to Centre. This system of strategic planning had not only helped in reducing underutilisation of funds but simultaneously, to increase state's accountability to monitor the system.

The following figure shows that how through a proper dissemination of information and assimilation of data, State Higher Education plan is prepared. All three stakeholders, Centre, State and Universities and Colleges have their own role to play. Through a proper decentralised planning all these stakeholders plan to successfully implement RUSA scheme. Institutions finalise its plan by discussing to multiple stakeholder's consultation approach and then it is submitted to state. State bodies assimilate all institutional plan and submit it to central bodies. As RUSA is a norm-based resource allocation scheme, so before fund disbursement information regarding various norms are disseminated to institutions. The following figure depicts the process.

**Figure 5.1 - Preparation of State Higher Education Plan**



Source: RUSA Document, MHRD, 2013

One of the major differences of RUSA funding from earlier model of funding through is its planning part. RUSA does not fund institutions through a top-down approach; instead, it allows institutions to make their own plan, and as the figure suggests, it flows from the bottom to top. Before RUSA, in many cases, it happened, that institutions were planning it and not getting the full amount or due to delayed process institutions face the problem of underutilisation of fund. But in RUSA, all the stakeholders are aware of the money it is going to get. It helps them to plan it properly. So, strategic planning is an integral part of RUSA. In this process of preparation of plans, all three major stakeholders, institution, State and Centre, play their role. Institutions make their 'Institutional Developmental Plan' and send that to State Nodal body. Concerning and collecting all the institutional plan, WBSCHE makes state plan and forwards it to centre. Then centre administers the upcoming processes of reviewing plans, analysing it, approving and disbursing funds.

The researcher chosen samples from the institutions that received funds under RUSA 1.0 and received a funding of 2cr for colleges and 20cr for universities. Under RUSA 1.0, which was primarily for infrastructural grant, total amount of money was divided into three sections. Among the full infrastructure grant, 35% of share have to spend on a new building, 35% more

needs to spend on renovation of building and remaining 30% for procurement of instruments, buying books etc. This condition is mentioned in the advertisement asking for an application for funding. Colleges plan their Institutional Developmental plan according to this criterion. As administrators explained, while planning for the application, institutions used to form a Project Monitoring Body first, which was also a prerequisite of RUSA funding. This PMB would be represented by academic officials of colleges or universities, faculty, senior administrative officer, technical and non-technical support staff, and students also. PMB does the planning on a priority basis. This committee sends a Detailed Project Report to State RUSA Directorate of West Bengal. In the detailed planning, institution has to show where it wants to make new building; the land, where the institution is making the new building, is a college property. In the detailed planning, institution also has to declare that there is no third party involved, and if institution spends extra money in comparison to the DOP, then that expense needs to be carried out by the institution only. Through Bhuvan RUSA, administrators and PMB also have to show the latitude, longitude and also to submit measurement of that land. The planning also mentions the e-tendering, which accepts three quotations for a comparative statement. Then it also includes the Public Works Department's vetting for renovation and construction of a new building. Another important part of planning is buying material costs less than 1 lakh should be notified in college notice board, and anything more than that should be notified in 3 newspapers. All these are verified by monitoring body of RUSA when monitoring team comes to institutions.

This was the way institutions prepare their plans for receiving funds. The plans were prepared keeping in mind the changing academic structure. Slight changes and modifications were accepted when institutions receive the fund. Institutions had constructed a new building, renovated old ones, planned for the horizontal development of library, restructuring of canteen, making more smart classrooms, installing an elevator in the college, buying books, procuring instruments for laboratory etc.

#### **5.4. Issues of Institutional Autonomy and Accountability**

Commissions and committees in India, since independence, had emphasised on greater autonomy of Higher education institutions to develop quality of higher education in the country. Autonomy should be 'accompanied by accountability measures, for the creation of more dynamic, agile, and goal-oriented institutions' (MHRD, 2013). So, it was quite evident that issue of autonomy and accountability, along with that, was key to growth and development

of higher education. To define autonomy, "The principle of autonomy broadly emphasises the freedom of each institution to function to achieve academic excellence and to administer the institution through its own rules and regulations" (MHRD, 2013). The autonomy of an institution should never be delinked from its accountability. A university or college is accountable towards its students towards generation of new knowledge and establishment of truth. As MHRD's RUSA scheme document mentioned, "This scheme is unique in the sense that it does not lay down any prescriptions, and only lays down the goals and objectives. The states and institutions will have full liberty to plan specific interventions depending on their special needs and requirements" (MHRD, 2013). Later it also added, "RUSA would strive to find a balance between the two since both principles are essential to enable an institution to grow and develop and achieve excellence but in a clear and transparent manner with adequate protection of the interests of students and faculty" (MHRD, 2013).

RUSA scheme had theorised the concept of autonomy and accountability of institutions in such a manner, but it was also necessary to understand its dynamics at the ground level. In the matter of autonomy in planning, administrators accept fact that RUSA had given them full authority, and there was no third-party intervention while planning or implementing scheme. So, it could be said that RUSA had not laid down any prescription to follow. RUSA had specific guidelines to achieve goals and objectives. The institutions had freedom to make their own decision. But at the same time, administrators also argued on limitations of autonomy. It was not absolute. Few of the administrators had questioned stringent fund sharing laid down for an infrastructural grant, as mentioned in the earlier theme that there was a division of 35:35:30 for new buildings, renovation of old building, and procuring instruments. So, administrators argued in favour of flexibility of this guideline. There were many colleges which were situated in heart of Kolkata, and these colleges did not have land to make a new building. So, only thing they could do was to renovate the old buildings and could equip classrooms with modern facilities to improve the teaching-learning environment. But regulation of fund sharing was delimiting works of colleges. Eventually, colleges had to rethink and plan accordingly to receive the RUSA fund, which was putting the transparency and accountability at stake. So, it might seem, as administration argues, that there was an absolute autonomy of institution to take a decision 'in order to achieve academic excellence.' Still, in a deeper reality, it didn't allow autonomy to fullest.

Accountability is an issue, which is always there in the system, as administrator said. But after inclusion of RUSA, now it was not only institution, but State became accountable towards quality improvement of higher education. RUSA had made State a stakeholder. Along with 65% of funds of Centre, in State of West Bengal, 35% share of funds was given by the State. For this, State had to increase its GSDP for higher education. The collaborative fund of State and the Centre would be disbursed through state higher education council only. This made the State more accountable for work done by the institution. For institution, they had to be more accountable than earlier. The reason was NAAC accreditation, proper monitoring of the system, physical inspection of works done.

### **5.5. Transparency and Monitoring of RUSA**

One of the major prerequisites of receiving the RUSA grant for states was to establish a State Higher Education Council (SHEC). These SCHEs were responsible for the management, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the project at the state level. These SCHEs were given several regulatory functions. Among many regulatory functions, monitoring and evaluation were one of them. They monitored implementation of State higher education plan. They created and maintained Management Information Systems. They gave task of compiling and maintaining periodic statistics at state as well as the institutional level. SCHEs were accountable for evaluating state institutions based on the norms developed under RUSA after 75% of institutional works been done, and all the UCs were submitted by colleges and universities.

All these functions were assigned to SCHEs at state and UT level. In the case of West Bengal, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education was not doing the job of RUSA. Rather the RUSA directorate at the State Higher Education Department was managing all the tasks. At the institutional level, every college and university made a project monitoring unit to monitor the RUSA work. According to administrators, this monitoring unit looked at the matter of procurement of goods, financial management of RUSA, monitoring project implementation, keeps MIS updated, and organises efficient conduct of monitoring and performance audit etc. Forming an institutional unit of Project monitoring was one of the prerequisites of RUSA funding at the institutional level. The autonomy of forming a Project Monitoring body lied with the institution only. RUSA directorate and Mission Authority had not prescribed anything for this. They had not mentioned that Project Monitoring Body needs an expert from outside. It was in the hand of the institutional governing body to decide whom to keep in monitoring team



and whom not. But it was mentioned that monitoring team should appropriately represent all sectors of institution. So generally, the institution forms monitoring team, which consisted of all insiders so they could work freely work for upliftment of the college. If monitoring team consisted of a person from outside and remain absent in many of the meetings, then that delayed the process of decision making.

Except for institutional level monitoring of the scheme, implementation of State Higher Education Plan and evaluating institutions was done by the West Bengal RUSA directorate. At the initial level, State transfers 75% of total money to the institutions to start work as per detailed project report. Once the job done more than 75% or so, all UCs were submitted to RUSA directorate through an online portal. A committee was assigned to verify and evaluate the work of institution physically. If the committee was satisfied with the work then only, they sent remaining fund to the colleges or universities. The inspection team inspects about whether labour cess was given or not. The building was appropriately represented or not. The inauguration of building was done or not, in front of the building, amount spent on making it was mentioned or not. Is there proper labelling on procured instrument, GPS tracker is installed or not, date of installation was mentioned or not, did this institution keep an asset register, DPi submitted earlier. Actual work done was similar or not; e-tendering was appropriately done through quotation comparative or not while buying material costs less than 1 lakh was notified in college notice board. More than that was announced in three newspapers or not, all these were tasks majorly done evaluating and monitoring team. If monitoring team got satisfied with the work of the college, then they would recommend the RUSA directorate to send remaining amount to college or university account.

For transparency issue, RUSA Mission Authority started monitoring through Bhuvan RUSA. "The National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed a mobile application for uploading geotagged photographs and associated details captured by the educational institutions, on Bhuvan-RUSA portal as a part of the implementation of RUSA funded works in States. This application for geotagging of institutions under RUSA is a location-based service. The mobile geotagging App of RUSA covers following attributes: construction work or equipment, institution name, new or upgraded work, type of work, current stage of work, percentage completed, completion date, bank name, account number, amount released and amount utilised" (Press Information Bureau, 2017). This

online mechanism of monitoring made the system more transparent. So, chances of compromising with monitoring mechanism was less as the administrators pointed out.

Among many positive sides of the RUSA monitoring system, administrators at institutional level focused on some of negative sides too. Many of the administrators were questioning the intervention and the role of State as a stakeholder. They thought that decisions regarding RUSA at local level were taken by syndicate and also by nodal offices. When nodal offices were doing the inspection, then certainly, transparency of the system was violated. Even many of the institutions, which had received funds during RUSA 1.0, were not satisfied with Bhuvan RUSA. As they argued, Bhuvan RUSA was introduced in midways of the implementation. During that time, institutions had completed half of its work. It was very difficult for them to do the add on work. If the monitoring mechanism was digitised then it should be done from the very beginning and not in middle. Transferring data was always a problem. RUSA generally asked for updating data on very short notice, and within that limited time, digitising was not possible.

#### **5.6. GER, Access to Higher Education Institutions**

If Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education of India as compared to many of the developed or even developing countries in the year 2013, then it was quite clear that it was lower than most of the countries. India had a very low GER of 19.4% in the year 2013. Even inside India, the progressive southern states had a higher GER, and they had higher per capita spending on higher education. Southern states also had higher institutional density. But in comparison to the southern State, states in the hilly region had lower institutional density, lower per capita spending, but still, their GER varies from high to low. Even in states like West Bengal, the GER was low. "This may occur because higher education does not completely depend on the physical availability of institutions but also on the other socio-economic factors such as the income of the parents, willingness to migrate, cultural factors etc," (MHRD, 2013).

In the year 2013, the Higher education GER of West Bengal was 12.4, which was lower than India GER, and it stood almost at the bottom in comparison to other states of India. Even talking about institutional density, it had only 10.1 institutions per thousand square km, which was also very less in comparison to many other states. The State had only 27 universities and 896 colleges in the year 2013, which was also lesser in number in comparison to other states.

So, one of the major objectives of RUSA was to improve access to higher education at national as well as state level. "The national mission has set a national average target of 25.2 percent GER by 2017-18 and 30 percent by 2021-22" (WBSsche, 2018). The major goals of RUSA were to improve excellence (quality), equity, and access to higher education. The institutions across India and in West Bengal were suffering from a poor academic quality, poor teacher education quality, and poor infrastructure. The states had a smaller number of NAAC accredited institutions. The nation, as well as the states, had very low GER and the non-uniform distribution of higher education institutions across the states. Though access and infrastructure could not be considered as the most important criteria of quality education, these were very necessary criteria. So, RUSA 1.0 attempted to improve the infrastructure and to build more universities and colleges to enhance access to higher education.

As the administrators of the colleges and the universities were pointing out that RUSA 1.0 was a long-term investment, where infrastructure was considered as the first step towards increasing GER and quality education across country as well as State. The quality was facilitated through quantitative parameters. RUSA had benefitted colleges and universities situated at remote backward locations. After implementation of RUSA, activities of teachers, as well as students, increased to some extent. Though institutions had not received any funds for seminars and workshops, so they had to maintain an inhouse quality. Many of the administrators think that the intervention of the State had helped in increasing the quality of higher education in the State.

College administrators thought that improvement of infrastructure, procurement of new instruments, and books had definitely increased quality of teaching-learning environment. From fund of RUSA, institutions bought better quality instruments, installed LED projectors in maximum classes, normal classrooms were converted to smart classrooms. Through these, study materials were supplied to the classroom. PPTs could be presented in absence of teachers. Colleges and universities made new buildings, renovates old one. They also procured instruments, restructures canteen, made more digital classrooms, acquire equipment for labs, restores of a new hall, prepare playground, furnished college, improved cafeteria, and library, purchase of laptops, computers, books, install elevator and projector.

Another significant quality parameter of higher education was teacher-student ratio. In many of the colleges, this ratio was very high, and colleges and universities did not have a sufficient number of teachers. So, RUSA made NAAC accreditation mandatory criteria for

receiving funds. The State was made accountable for this NAAC accreditation. So, whenever the colleges wanted to make their college NAAC accredited, they had to fulfil many criteria, one of them ideal teacher-student ratio. This forced colleges to recruit more teachers, and State was more prompt in recruiting teachers. So, West Bengal had seen a swift recruitment process after the implementation of RUSA.

The teacher recruitment process in this State happened through a centralised process through Public Service Commission for the government college. For the aided college, there was a College Service commission. Since 2014, College Service commission was recruiting college teachers every two years to fulfil all the remaining vacant positions in state colleges. Talking about the university recruitment, after the 100-point roster case had been resolved in the State. The universities were also enterprisingly advertising to fulfil posts since now there are many posts vacant. But after recruitment of the teachers, the State had not taken any initiative for the professional capacity building. UGC had outdated system of orientation and refresher course which were being organised by universities every year. Apart from that, colleges or universities or state council of higher education had not taken any other initiative for capacity building programme. West Bengal State Council of Higher Education organised workshops once in a while for the same.

## **5.7. Problems of RUSA Implementation**

The third major step of scheme analysis, as discussed in the previous chapter in policy process which includes implementation of scheme. Scheme which was originated to allocate resources to State Institutions, both government and private aided institutions. So, it becomes key to evaluate and analyse implementation of scheme at the ground level. Since its inception, RUSA has travelled a journey of almost 6-7 years, between these years, RUSA funded institutions in RUSA 1.0 and RUSA 2.0. Institutions who were funded under RUSA 1.0 had, in many cases, received and exhausted all fund. In the entire process of applying, receiving, and utilising fund, institutions had also faced several problems.

### **5.7.1. RUSA 1.0 Implementation Time Period**

One of the major issues that the administrators were worried about RUSA's time frame. RUSA had not set any time period to fulfil the scheme. States used to prepare their higher education plan and endeavouring to implement the scheme within that SHEP time period. West Bengal prepared plan for 3 financial year. The first SHEP was between 2014-2017 and the

second followed from 2018 to 2021. RUSA had obviously set targets of GER, access, and equity within 2021-22, but it limited its time of fulfilling RUSA 1.0 objectives. There were colleges and universities in West Bengal that had not received their full amount of money, which was sanctioned in the year 2013 till 2019. And in the midst of it, RUSA 2.0 was also functioning. So, one of the major issues regarding RUSA implementation is its lack of time constraint. Even if there was time set time frame, colleges and universities failed to receive fund within that period.

### **5.7.2. Issue of One-time funding**

Another concerning issue regarding RUSA 1.0, related to time period, is the uncertainty of receiving fund second time. The colleges, received funds from RUSA 1.0, had not been updated with any further notice vis-a vis when could they apply for the next phase of funding. Due to irregular financial support given by UGC and less state funding, colleges had to depend solely on student fees to bear yearly expenses of the institution. The conflict of private funding and public support in terms of private aided colleges do not allow institution authorities to increase tuition fees to deal with supply and demand dynamics. West Bengal State government policy do not allow them to increase in student's fee as it discriminates among students coming from diverse economic background. So, colleges and institutions had to rely on funding coming different sources like UGC, State Higher Education funding and scheme like RUSA for yearly expenses. UGC funding and state funding is irregular. RUSA is funding for ones. So, institutions should receive a transparent communication from Centre regarding next phase of RUSA funding and criteria for receiving fund again.

### **5.7.3. Fund for In-house Quality Development not for Research and Innovation**

In the first phase of RUSA, colleges and universities had received funding for infrastructural grant only. There were major three components; new building, renovation of old builds and instrument procurement. Through these the colleges could develop their infrastructural quality but not primarily academic quality. HRDC of University of Calcutta had received fund for Faculty improvement. The State received funds for new colleges. State council planned to build new colleges and universities under different schemes of State funding. But there were no colleges or universities had received fund for components like enhancing quality and excellence in State universities and research, innovation and quality development. However, in RUSA 2.0, colleges and universities had also received a grant under

the component of enhancing quality and excellence; research, innovation, and quality improvement. Under these schemes, colleges and universities could organise workshop and seminars. As a result, during this period, colleges or universities had to arrange their own funds for conducting seminar, workshop or conferences which would help them in further NAAC accreditation. As discussed earlier there is no information in institution regarding their next phase of funding and criteria of receiving fund, institutions fail to evaluate their position for applying for NAAC accreditation or RUSA grant.

#### **5.7.4. Difference in Financial Rules of State and Centre**

One of the major issues notified by the administrators was about the financial rules. State and Centre had a different financial rule. Being in concurrent list, State did not always agree to Centre's financial rule of submitting UCs. As a result, state institutions were facing problems in submitting their UCs in time. Even there was a unique case of a university in West Bengal, where universities had received a grant of 20cr in 2013. The initial 10cr was credited to university account in a short period. The universities had utilized most of the money and submitted UC, and in the meantime, they had received another 5cr rupee. Since then, due to some internal problems of the university, they could not spend remaining amount. Even after several reminders from State as well as Centre, that university failed to utilize a huge amount of money and submit UCs to RUSA directorate. The university could have only spent and sent UCs of 10.2cr rupees out of 15cr they had received. The remaining amount was left in the bank account of the university. After a certain point of time, neither State nor the Centre put any pressure on spending that money and submitting UC. The universities are unaware of the next procedure of utilizing that fund is.

#### **5.7.5. Delayed Fund Disbursement**

Some of the colleges were concerned about the delayed fund disbursement. One of the colleges notified that they received fund after two years of applying when apprehensions had been changed, and RUSA authority had asked to alter accordingly. Even there were cases like, after completion of first phase and submission of UC of fund utilized and inspection done, second phase funding was received after 1.5 years. Even in many cases, a huge amount of money was asked to exhaust within a very limited period of time, maintaining all protocols, and sometimes even, after a fair amount of time, money was exhausted. Still, RUSA had not given any money for next phase. So, there was no balance in process of funding.

#### **5.7.6. Issue of e-tendering and e-monitoring**

The issue of e-tendering and e-monitoring was another concern of administrators. Sometimes, tender is given to some distant company which failed to monitor instruments regularly or supply books timely. For instance, one of the colleges had ordered books of 6 lakhs, but the supplier had only supplied books of 4 lakhs. Now colleges had to adjust to changing scenario and had to prepare UC according to that. As the entire process monitored through digital platforms, colleges and universities had no role to control in comparing tender statements and select according to their convenience.

## **Chapter VI**

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

This chapter includes a conclusory remark to analyse findings of study and also to justify and relate findings with theoretical framework decided earlier. Finally, chapter concludes by prescribing certain recommendations for further research in this field as well as RUSA scheme in particular.

#### **6.1. Summary**

In a country like India where there are more than 1.5 million schools, 8.5 million teachers and 250 million students, the demand for Higher Education is quite obvious. As a result, the data of higher education is also huge in number. In India there are more than 900 universities, 40,000 colleges, 1.3 million teachers and 36.6 million students in 2017-18. It makes Indian higher education sector as the second largest in the world. Tracing history of Indian higher education since 1857 when three major universities were established to serve the administrative purpose of British but their policy failed. This led to establishment of another two universities in India. After second world war, the world started to feel demand of skilled labour and it became the inception of massive expansion of higher education all over the world and India was not an exception. Initially this expansion started to happen purely in philanthropic basis. After independence, nation understood need of higher education, so Radhakrishnan Commission was established in 1948. New colleges and universities had started to build. In the year 1956, University Grants Commission was established as a regulatory, monitoring and funding agency of higher education institutions. UGC started to fund higher education institution through 12b and later 2f norms. Colleges and universities applied to have 12b and 2f status. Through these norms, colleges and universities were funded directly. State was not involved in this. Before 1977, it was an issue for Centre or state but in then education came under concurrent list. Education became a responsibility of the state too. But as UGC funding never included state as a stakeholder, so states denied its accountability in enhancing quality of the state institutions and also monitoring institutional performance. This became one of the major reasons behind growing tension between state and Centre. Along with this there were other reasons, like differences in political affiliation, lack of mediator to initiate dialogue, for the gap started to exist between state and Centre. Assessing this situation of the country,



National Education Policy (NPE)- 1986, recommended to establish one State Higher Education Council (SCHE) in each and every state. UGC had also prescribed same in 1988. These SCHEs were meant to initiate dialogue between states. SCHEs were also assigned many tasks like preparing state level policy and planning for the expansion and quality of higher education in that state.

In 1990s, the country passed through a major economic reform and also accepted neo-liberal policies. This allowed private players to participate in higher education. Initially, the states were reluctant to allow private players to fund higher education but due to scarcity of public funding, held states back to raise voice against privatisation. The nation witnessed a massive privatisation in higher education sector. Most states accepted privatisation policies reluctantly as privatisation was a part of neoliberal policies associated with World Bank and IMF. The state's approach towards privatisation was confusing. Policies were formulated out of conviction. So, a large scale of market started to emerge with this in higher education. Eventually, this rapid privatisation started to displace public sector. But this privatisation which led to massification of higher education saw a kind of unprecedented growth. The dearth of proper planning while establishing higher education institutions was focused on this theme of review of the literature. The massification of Higher Education in India was outcome of privatisation policy of the government after the 1990s economic reforms. However, this massification had happened in the urban areas solely and not in rural areas. So, rural areas remained deprived. The overall quality of Higher Education came under stake due to many reasons, and among all massification through massive unplanned growth of Higher Education was one of the major reasons. As, market was involved, so, they established institutions entirely for profit making. Quality expansion was not its goal. Institutions started to grow in urban areas only where private players could make profit. Higher education lost its public good characteristics and became a private good, serving those who could afford it.

To deal with this revenue and surplus generating unprecedented massification of Higher education, SHECs were expected to play a major role in respective states. Not all states established SHECs except few but those few SHECs also failed to perform its functions accordingly, as these were not aware of its powers to execute. SHECs remained only as a lining state body, not aware of its powers and functions properly. As studies noticed, till 2013, SHECs remained disabled in many states. After the neo-liberal policies public funding in Higher education faced a serious threat. In India, institution specific funding also became a reason of

gradual degradation of qualities in state universities and colleges. This was not only increasing inequality between the state institutions and the central institutions but simultaneously it became the reason of growing regional discrepancy. One of the major problems regarding funding was the government's expenditure on Higher Education. The GDP share of expenditure clearly proved the commitment of the government to that sector, and in this scenario, Higher Education was deprived, not only in India and many other countries. This issue of funding was also pointing out to cases like Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea, which are expending near about 20% of their GDP to Education. So, there was a huge gap between countries like Korea and India. In the case of the along with GDP, the GSDP was also low in Higher Education, which became a major obstacle for the quality development of state higher education institutions. As a part of public funding, UGC was funding state institutions but it was irregular and not sufficient. Most of the times, due to lack of planning in receiving and utilising UGC fund, underutilisation became a major concern for institutions. It seems that public funding in Higher education institutions would gradually cease to exist. Even twelfth five-year plan argued for and proposed to remove "not for profit" tag from universities.

The issue of funding, rapid growth of private sector and fast declining public sector, was not the sole reason for the compromising quality of higher education. Administration, governance and lack of political will and excessive political intervention while functioning state institutions also held responsible for degrading quality of higher education in India. The top-down, authoritative model of Indian Higher Education governance was the reason of negligence faced by the state institutions. Institutions had a tiny part in making decisions. It was not that this top-down approach of Higher Education had very little to do with development of Higher Education. Still, at the same time, down-top approach was necessary for diversification of system. But after massive privatisation, issue of accountability as well as monitoring became a major headache. Apart from all these, another concerned area of Higher Education is political intervention in a state like West Bengal. The State's social communist legacy resulted in Education being a principally public-funded entity, whereas the political ideologies of the other states allowed them to accept privatisation policy. This political intervention and ideological differences also caused reason behind the regional disparity of higher educational institutions in India.

In this critical scenario, when private sector started to capitalise on public sector's withdrawal and inadequacy in Higher education sector, states like West Bengal, which rejected

the idea of massification through privatisation since inception, encountered massive set back vis-à-vis expansion as well as quality of Higher education. In this state, Ministry of Human Resource Development announced Centrally Sponsored scheme Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan to fund state institutions, making states a stakeholder. States were asked to fund a minimum share to receive RUSA grant. It included state as a stakeholder. Simultaneously, the job of RUSA implementation was given to SHECs which would help in initiating dialogue between state and Centre. This created rather more conflict between planning commission and ministry regarding privatisation policies and public funding.

So, this journey of Indian higher education raises many questions. Among all the question, the most important one is the changing role of State Council of Higher Education. It was envisaged in a different paradigm but twenty years down the line, SHEC had not done anything significant, like to initiate dialogue between state and Centre, to channelize funding among state institutions according to state higher education plan, or to control the unprecedented growth and expansion of higher education in the state. After announcement of RUSA and its implementation through SHECs, interest shifts to these Councils to examine their changing role in the sector of higher education. Another major question that revolved around is implementation of RUSA in states like West Bengal. The outcome of the implementation was another major question.

RUSA is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. It is very necessary to understand the rationality of the policy maker that worked while formulating the scheme. There is a need and demand of higher education among the subject. It is the state's responsibility to play the role of a service hatch and fulfil demands of the subject. Disparity and inequality started to increase in the society due to neo-liberal policies and unprecedented growth of Higher education. Private higher education never targeted access, quality and equity. So, it demanded normative rationality of policy makers to formulate a scheme which would be inclusive and also formulated on the basis of democratisation. State would be providing service to its subjects according to need and demand.

Depending on this kind of rationality, to find out answers to questions emerged this research work depended on qualitative framework which helps in getting in-depth understand of the issue. So, the study asked for detailed information regarding the scheme and its implementation. So, intensive interviews helped researcher to gain a clear idea of functions of council and the processes of implementation of the scheme. At the same time, qualitative data

was also needed to strengthen the argument put forward through qualitative analysis. Scheme content analysis was needed to have a clear idea about rationality of scheme formulation. So, all primary analysis was triangulated with secondary scheme analysis and quantitative data collected from different reports. The researcher had chosen sample on a random purposive basis based on the performance and NAAC accreditation. West Bengal was chosen as a field because of its decentralised administrative system even before establishment of SHEC and also West Bengal was among the three states which established State Higher Education Council in 1995. Administrators were sample population of the study as administrators have more clear notion related to SHEC and implementation of RUSA. In-depth interviews of the administrators in an administrative survey was done cross-sectionally to gather more information. Data collected from primary survey was transcribed and then analysed thematically, selected some of the common themes through codes and categories. The secondary data was analysed through desk review and scheme analysis. The scheme analysis was done in three stages, policy content, policy context and policy process. These two kinds of data are triangulated before coming to any finding and conclusion of the study.

## **6.2. Summary of Findings**

As the previous two chapters analysed secondary and primary data, on the basis of that analysis, findings of the study are summarised thematically.

### **6.2.1. UGC, RUSA and Improved Funding Pattern**

Before RUSA, there was no umbrella scheme for state universities and colleges. UGC had different projects and schemes, but those projects and schemes did not cater to institutional problems holistically. RUSA was a scheme to correspond to national programs for funding state universities and colleges through a single over-arching umbrella scheme in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme architecture. On one hand, the umbrella scheme would deal with problems of the state universities holistically. Simultaneously it would resolve issues of institutions at institutional level.

UGC grants were disbursed to Centre and State universities, colleges under section 2 (f) and 12B of UGC Act. This was an age-old system. When UGC was established, the number of colleges was very less. So, it was easier for them to handle all college, to fund them, to control and monitor them and deal with all other issues. But after 1990s, number of colleges

and universities had increased. Now it was technically impossible to look into all matters, including funding of state universities and colleges.

In the funding pattern of UGC, state universities and colleges were funded directly. The institutions received funds from UGC, and respective states had no role to play in it. It increased the gap between State and Centre, as the Education was in the concurrent list. The current scheme RUSA included State as a stakeholder. Now in funding of the state institutions, State gave their share too. It helped to increase GSDP of states in the Higher Education sector, which had started to decrease during the time of UGC funding.

The intervention of State in funding of State higher education institution also resolved many other issues like affiliation problem of colleges, faculty recruitment, higher education governance, problems of autonomy and accountability, monitoring issues of the fund utilisation.

### **6.2.2. Envisaged and Transformed Role of West Bengal State Council Higher Education**

All SHECs were established to serve similar purpose, though different SHECs took different functions and limited its power diversely. The council was initially envisaged as a decentralized body at state level which was established to initiate dialogue between state and central, to regulate the unprecedented growth of higher education institution and to ensure quality of higher education system through state level policies and planning. In five major concern areas of higher education, councils were assigned seventeen functions. West Bengal State Council of Higher Education failed to commence many these functions.

Among many tasks assigned to WBSCHE, advisory functions and inspecting for establishing new universities and colleges, inspecting colleges for introduction of new subjects or continuation of existing subjects, were major two functions they were doing. As mentioned earlier, there were many expected tasks of WBSCHE, like monitoring and evaluating performance, quality assurance to state institutions, conducting common entrance tests, and issues of employability of graduates etc., However, WBSCHE failed to do all these jobs in between the financial year 2015-2017.

As a pre-requisite of RUSA, every state was asked to establish SHEC. West Bengal established SHEC in 1995. Once WBSCHE was assigned role of implementation of RUSA, in its initial years, council was handling this role. Later RUSA directorate of West Bengal,

Department of Higher Education took over that responsibility of RUSA from hands of WBSCHE. Currently (2020), West Bengal State Council of Higher Education became a state level policy making body, preparing State Higher Education Report. Other major functions of WBSCHE is inspecting proposals for establishing new public and private institutions and bridging gap between school education and Higher Education through career guidance cell.

### **6.2.3. Strategic Planning in RUSA**

One of the major differences of RUSA than earlier funding pattern of UGC is its strategic planning. Through decentralised planning, every institution is given autonomy to plan for upliftment of that particular institution. Once the institutional level planning is done, it is sent to RUSA directorate. RUSA directorate collects all institutional level and according to that prepares a state level plan and sends it to RUSA Mission Authority through State Higher Education Plan for evaluation. The central body evaluates and sanctions fund for suitable components institutions applied for. This process of decentralisation helped in proper utilisation of fund. During UGC period, institutions were unaware of what amount of money it is going to receive. So, there used to be no prior planning of utilising it. This situation caused underutilisation of fund. RUSA, somehow, successfully reducing this underutilisation.

### **6.2.4. Autonomy and Accountability of Institution**

As discussed in previous theme, the institutions are given autonomy to plan accordingly. RUSA prescribes nothing, rather scheme has certain guidelines to follow. The institutions have full authority and autonomy to plan according to their needs. There is no third-party intervention. Though, due to some lack of flexibility in scheme's guidelines, autonomy of institutions does not remain intact. The scheme guideline says, institutions have to utilise its total funding in a ratio of 35:35:30. Thirty-five percent of total fund should be used for new building, another thirty-five needs to be used for renovation of old building and last thirty percent is for procurement of instrument. There are many colleges in the heart of Kolkata, which do not have proper space to make building. Instead of new building if these colleges could use that fund for renovation then it could have been beneficial for those colleges. But as per scheme guidelines, this is not allowed, only minor changes are permitted. This becomes a reason for many colleges for not getting fund.

The issue of accountability is catered from state level itself. Being a stakeholder of the scheme, the state is accountable to monitor implementation and utilisation of fund. It makes the institutions also more accountable to successfully implementing the scheme in the colleges.

#### **6.2.5. Transparency and Monitoring of the Scheme**

The state is a stakeholder of the scheme as a major portion of the fund is allocated by the state. State is accountable for monitoring. Though, monitoring of scheme is done both physically as well as online. A monitoring team visits colleges received fund for RUSA, once that particular college submits UCs of completion of seventy five percent of work. The team visits and if they are satisfied with the work done, then they permit for further work and also disbursement of remaining amount.

Monitoring of the scheme implementation is also done in online portal. Bhuvan RUSA is there for monitoring. "...This application for geotagging of institutions under RUSA is a location-based service. The mobile geotagging App of RUSA covers the following attributes: construction work or equipment, institution name, new or upgraded work, type of work, current stage of work, percentage completed, completion date, bank name, account number, amount released and amount utilised" (Press Information Bureau, 2017). This online mechanism of monitoring made this system more transparent. So, the chances of compromising with monitoring mechanism was less as the administrators argue.

#### **6.2.6. GER, Access to Higher Education Institutions**

After implementation of RUSA, the number of universities had increased from 26 to 42 from 2012-13 to 2018. The number of colleges had increased, both general degree college and teacher training college. In the financial year 2012, number of general degree colleges were 865 and teacher training colleges were 76. Substantially numbers had increased. In the year 2018, the general degree colleges have increased to 1359 and teacher training colleges to 204. All these new establishments of colleges and universities were not sanctioned or part of RUSA funding. All these were state initiatives to match the current need for higher education in the State.

West Bengal had set the target to increase its existing Higher Education GER of 16.3 to 25.2 by the financial year 2017-2018. But this study revealed that by 2017-2018, West Bengal had only achieved up to 18.7. Even in the equity perspective, the State was lagging

behind than national SC, ST GER. In 2017-18, the West Bengal SC student GER was 13.8 in comparison to national SC student GER of 21.8. Similarly, in the same year the ST GER in India is 15.9, in comparison to that the West Bengal GER is 9.9. So, one of the major targets of West Bengal State Higher Education Plan 2014 was to work on the equity initiative. But State had not achieved a significant success even after four year's implementations of RUSA.

### **6.2.7. Accreditation of Higher Education institutions**

One of the major pre-requisites of receiving RUSA funding was NAAC accreditation. The State had decided in 2013-2014 to make NAAC accreditation compulsory for all colleges and universities. Since then 302 institutions had been accredited, including state universities, government colleges, aided colleges and private colleges. Though a detailed study had disclosed that maximum colleges in the State had secured an average of 'B' or 'B+' grades and the most of the universities had secured 'A' grade in NAAC. It was asking questions about the quality of the colleges in the State.

### **6.2.8. Problems of RUSA Implementation**

There are also certain drawbacks of the scheme in terms of its components and structure as well as its implementation.

There was no provision of funding for academic seminars, workshops. RUSA 1.0 had focused only on in-house quality enhancement. Financial support was given to institutions which were lagging behind to develop their infrastructure and procure equipment.

As discussed earlier regarding the autonomy of the institution, this is also the drawback of the scheme. RUSA did not prescribe anything; rather, they had certain guidelines to follow. Despite that, in some situations, the institutions found RUSA to be too inflexible. The ratio of funding, 35:35:30, forced to question many of the institution's transparency in utilising the fund.

RUSA is a one-time funding. The colleges received fund under RUSA 1.0, the study found out that these beneficiary institutions were not aware of their future in receiving funds again. Many institutions had utilised the RUSA fund at length but unaware of their process of applying and getting funds again.



For RUSA 1.0, the State received 348cr for 76 colleges and eight state universities, of which 208.8cr was the central share. Till 2018-2019, the State received 192.07cr. Till the last report of 2018, the colleges and universities submitted UC to RUSA of 159.91cr. It was clearly hinting at the fact that though the maximum Centre's share was released, the colleges and universities had failed to utilise the fund properly. One of the major reasons behind RUSA was to monitoring funding properly and resolved the problem of underutilisation of funds, but somehow the issue was still persisting.

One of the major issues notified by the administrators was about the financial rules. State and the Centre had a different financial rule. Being in concurrent list, State did not always agree to the Centre's financial rule of submitting UCs. As a result, state institutions were facing problems in submitting their UCs in time. Even the study also revealed that many of the colleges were yet to receive RUSA 1.0 fund, and also, there were state universities which had failed to submit UC in due course of time, but they were not even given proper guidance or pressure from the state monitoring team to utilise that fund.

### **6.3. Limitation of the Study**

- Due to the West Bengal State Higher Educational Plan 2014-2018, the study was only limited to the implementation of RUSA 1.0.
- The research work had taken into account the in-depth interviews of the administrators. Owing to time constraints, the sample size was small. It included only nine samples, seven colleges, and two universities.

### **6.4. Conclusion**

As discussed earlier, study had come up with certain findings. Those findings had clearly questioned the functioning of a statutory body, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education. SHECs were established or proposed to ensure a co-ordinated state-level institutional governance, taking into account the institutional autonomy and accountability. It had been thought to allow the State to withdraw from their roles of directly intervening in policy planning and supervision at the higher education level. Instead, this role had been assigned to a buffer body like SHEC. Even after the implementation of RUSA, the SHECs became mediator between the State and Centre in the implementation of the scheme. SHECs were thought of as the main body in the implementation of the scheme. The study revealed that WBSCHE had not only failed to perform all the planning and policy tasks assigned to them,

but simultaneously it was not directly associated in the implementation of the RUSA scheme. Rather than a lining body, RUSA directorate, situated at the Department of Higher Education, was managing the implementation RUSA in the State. WBSCHE had limited its function primarily to an inspecting body and a body conducting audits of state institutions.

To conclude the findings from other two objectives regarding implementation of scheme RUSA and its impact in State, it was understood through analysing scheme document that State's approach was normative while formulating scheme. The scheme encouraged inclusion of state universities which was initially excluded in UGC funding pattern. The scheme was also formulated on the basis of democratisation. The intervention of scheme was somehow endeavouring to eliminate deprivation of opportunity of the subject and higher education institutes. There was a demand for Higher Education among subjects of State. After privatisation policies, it became tough for students of states like West Bengal as State had outrightly rejected idea of privatisation. The students had less opportunities and options to choose their institutes while pursuing Higher Education. It became responsibility of State to play role of a service provider. The nature of bureaucrats sitting in planning commission as well as in ministries extensively affected by the 'conflict of interest' regarding the private and public funding of Higher education system. In the middle of this conflict, State came up with this higher education scheme to revive system, primarily in whole country, but particularly in those states where the Higher education system was lagging behind in comparison to the national average. So, inclusion was always a nature of the scheme as injustices to these states and to these institutes was happening since the inception, at least in terms of funding and monitoring of that fund. So, focusing on the informational basis and strategic planning, states and institutes had been given the autonomy to resolve issues of institutions at individual institute level. This very characteristic of scheme of minimising vulnerabilities and disparities at the individual level helped many colleges to enhance their inhouse qualities through that received fund.

So, funding pattern to fund state universities eventually improved. The scheme also included states as a stakeholder, which helped in increasing State's share in Higher Education. This decentralised funding pattern and local level monitoring of scheme implementation has increased accountability factor. It also increased availability of fund for colleges which are lagging behind. RUSA funding might seem input-oriented funding targeting the outcome, but it was performance-based funding, where the performance of the colleges and universities and

NAAC accreditation was set as a criterion to receive fund. This benchmark of performance and accreditation was increased for the institutions to receive the fund in RUSA 2.0.

## **6.5. Recommendations**

### **6.5.1. For RUSA Scheme**

- The component of infrastructure grants to colleges and universities has to be flexible. It will help institutions to utilise fund properly.
- The institutions which had received funding under RUSA 1.0, should be given a clear instruction regarding their further plan of action to receive RUSA fund again.
- Along with infrastructural grants, RUSA should focus more on promoting academic activities like seminar, workshops. Research and capacity building of teachers should remain as the focal point of funding.

### **6.5.2. For Further Research Work**

- This particular research work conducted, keeping in mind qualitative understanding of RUSA implementation in West Bengal. Due to limitation of time, detailed quantitative aspect, of how the fund is used at institutional level, has not been taken into account. Financial provision of RUSA needs to be looked at.
- This study is limited to RUSA 1.0 where funding components are also very limited. Further studies can be done, including RUSA 2.0 and added components it has. This can give a better perspective regarding research, innovation, and quality improvement of Higher Education, going beyond in-house quality improvement through infrastructural development.
- The study is limited to West Bengal only. Further studies can be done comparing state higher education councils of two or more states. It will give clear idea about good practices and achievements of well performing States and its higher education councils.

## Bibliography

- Albrecht, D., & Ziderman, A. (1992). *Funding Mechanisms for Higher Education: Financing for Stability, Efficiency, And Responsiveness. World Bank Discussion Papers*. World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433.
- All Indian Survey on Higher Education 2013-2014 (2014). New Delhi. Department of Higher Education. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Government of India.
- All Indian Survey on Higher Education 2017-2018 (2018). New Delhi. Department of Higher Education. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Government of India.
- Altbach, P.G. (2009) One-Third of the Globe: The Future of Higher Education in China and India. *Prospects* 39, 11. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-009-9106-1>
- Altbach, P.G., Reisberg, L. and Rumbley, L.E. (2009). Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution. UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education, Paris, 5-8 July 2009.
- Anandakrishnan, M. (2004, August). Internationalization of Higher Education: Policy Concerns. In *National Conference On "Internationalization of Higher Education-Issues and Concerns"*, NIEPA, New Delhi (Pp. 26-27).
- Anandakrishnan, M. (2011). Promises and Perils of Globalized Higher Education1. *Quality, Access and Social Justice in Higher Education*, 1.
- Anandakrishnan, M. (2016). State Councils of Higher Education: Expectations and Experiences. In N. Varghese G. Malik *India Higher Education Report 2015* (pp.399-411). Routledge India.
- Angom, S. (2015). Private Higher Education in India. *Higher Education for The Future*, 2(1), 92–111. Doi:10.1177/2347631114558192
- Ashok Mitra Commission (1992). *Report of the Education Commission*. Calcutta. Government of West Bengal.
- Bagchi, A. K. (2017). Failure of education policies in West Bengal, since 1951: An analysis. *Studies in People's History*. doi: 10.1177/2348448917725859
- Barr, N. (2004). Higher Education Funding. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 20(2), 264-283.
- Béteille, A. (2007). Universities at the crossroads. *Current Science*, 441-449.
- Bhushan, S. (2013). Higher Education In 12th Plan: Paradigm Shift in Favour of 'for Profit'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 17-19.

- Bhushan, S. (2019). Contesting the Present in The Evolution of Public Higher Education. *In the Future of Higher Education in India* (Pp. 1-20). Springer, Singapore.
- Bhushan, S. (2019). Future of Higher Education Financing and Governance. *In the Future of Higher Education in India* (Pp. 133-146). Springer, Singapore.
- Brahmachari, S. K. (2013). *West Bengal Education Commission Supplementary Annexure Ii to Final Report. West Bengal Education Commission Supplementary Annexure II to Final Report*. West Bengal Education Commission.
- Brahmachari, S. K. (2015). *West Bengal Education Commission Roadmap & Vision Document 2020... 2030. West Bengal Education Commission Roadmap & Vision Document 2020... 2030*(pp. 01–86). Government of West Bengal.
- Broucker, B., & De Wit, K. (2013). *Liberalisation and Privatisation of Higher Education in Flanders: Passing the Point of No Return? A Case Study. European Educational Research Journal, 12(4), 513–524*. Doi:10.2304/Eerj.2013.12.4.513
- Bryman, A., Becker, S., & Sempik, J. (2008). *Quality Criteria for Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research: A View from Social Policy. International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 11(4), 261–276*. doi:10.1080/13645570701401644
- Buse, K., Mays, N., and Walt, G. (2005). *Making Health Policy*. Open University Press.
- Calvin Wan (2011) Reforming Higher Education in Hong Kong Towards Post-massification: The First Decade and Challenges Ahead, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 33:2, 115-129*, DOI: 10.1080/1360080X.2011.550034
- Clancy, P., & Goastellec, G. (2007). Exploring Access and Equity in Higher Education: Policy and Performance in a Comparative Perspective. *Higher Education Quarterly, 61(2), 136-154*.
- Daniel, S. J. (2003). Higher Education: Past, Present, And Future--A View From UNESCO. *Higher Education in Europe, 28(1), 21-26*.
- Daugherty, L., Miller, T., Dossani, R., & Clifford, M. (2013). *Building the Links Between Funding and Quality in Higher Education: India's Challenge*. Rand Corporation.
- David Eberhardt (2016). College (Un)Bound: The Future of Higher Education and What It Means for Students, *Journal of College and Character, 17:2, 144-146*, DOI: 10.1080/2194587X.2016.1159230
- Dill, D. D. (1997). Higher Education Markets and Public Policy. *Higher Education Policy, 10(3-4), 167-185*.

- Enders, J. (2004). Higher Education, Internationalisation, and the Nation-State: Recent Developments and Challenges to Governance Theory. *Higher Education*, 47(3), 361-382. February 2020.
- Gable, G.G. (1994). "Integrating Case Study and Survey Research Methods: An Example in Information Systems," *European Journal of Information Systems*, Vol 3, No 2. Pp.112-126.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. W. (1976). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*. Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Gibbs, G. R. (2007). Thematic coding and categorizing. *Analyzing qualitative data*. London: Sage, 38-56.
- Government of Andhra Pradesh 1988 The Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) Act (20 May 1988), Act 16 of 1988 (G.O. Ms. No. 199, Education Department, dated 17 May 1988)
- Government of India, (1992b), National Policy on Education- Programme of Action-1992.
- Government of India. (1992a). National Policy on Education (as modified in 1992)
- Government of Karnataka. (2010). Karnataka State Council of Higher Education Act, Act 16 of 2010 (G.O., dated 26 July 2010), Government of Kerala. 2007. The Kerala State Higher Education Council Ordinance 2006 replaced by The Kerala State Higher Education Council Act, 2007, ACT 22 of 2007 (G.O. (P)No./2007/H.Edn, dated 15 October 2007).
- Government of Tamil Nadu. (1992). The Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education (TANSCHE), Act 40 of 1992 (as modified upto 30 June 1994) (G.O., dated 10 July 1992).
- Government of Uttar Pradesh. (1995). Uttar Pradesh State Council of Higher Education Act 1995, Act 22 of 1995.
- Government of West Bengal. (1994). The West Bengal State Council of higher Education Act 1994, West Bengal Act 37 of 1994, The Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary, 27 July 1994.
- Government of west Bengal. (2018). State Higher Education Plan. West Bengal State Council of Higher Education.
- Government of West Bengal. (2014). State Higher Education Plan. West Bengal State Council of Higher Education.
- Govt. of India (1990). Towards an Enlightened and Human Society Report of the Committee for Review of National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. New Delhi: India Government.

- Govt. of India. (1997). Government Subsidies in India, Report published by Ministry of Finance, Government of India
- Govt. of India. (2013). Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan. Ministry of Human Resource Development. New Delhi.
- Govt. of India. Planning Commission (1981). *Sixth Five-Year Plan, 1980-1985*. New Delhi.
- Govt. of India. Planning Commission (1986). *Seventh Five-Year Plan, 1985-1990*. New Delhi.
- Govt. of India. Planning Commission (1998). *Ninth Five-Year Plan, 1997-2002*. New Delhi.
- Govt. of India. Planning Commission (2003). *Tenth Five-Year Plan, 2002-2007*. New Delhi.
- Govt. of India. Planning Commission (2008). *Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2007-2012*. New Delhi.
- Govt. of India. Planning Commission (2013). *Twelfth Five-Year Plan, 2012-2017*. New Delhi.
- Gupta, D., & Gupta, N. (2012). Higher Education in India: Structure, Statistics and Challenges. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(2).
- Guri-Rosenblit, S., Šebková, H., & Teichler, U. (2007). Massification and Diversity of Higher Education Systems: Interplay of Complex Dimensions. *Higher Education Policy*, 20(4), 373-389.
- Hazelkorn, E. (2015). *Rankings and The Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World-Class Excellence*. Springer.
- Hill, S., & Chalaux, T. (2011). Improving access and quality in the Indian education system.
- Jana, S. K. (2017). Higher Education in West Bengal—An Overview. *Artha Beekshan*, 26(1-2), 21-55.
- Jansen, H. (2010). The Logic of Qualitative Survey Research and Its Position in The Field of Social Research Methods. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 11, No. 2).
- Jayaram, N. (2004). Higher Education in India. *Asian Universities: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges*, 85.
- Jayaram, N. (2018). Research on Higher Education in India. In N. Varghese A. Pachauri & S. Mandal *India Higher Education Report 2017* (pp. 88-105). 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9789353280338.n4
- Jie, N. D. (2016). Towards a Framework of Education Policy Analysis. *THF Literature Review*.

- Jobert, B. and Muller, P. (1987). L'État en action: politiques publiques et corporatismes [The state in action. Public policies and corporatism]. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, coll.'Recherches politiques'
- Jongbloed, B., Enders, J., & Salerno, C. (2008). Higher Education and Its Communities: Interconnections, Interdependencies and A Research Agenda. *Higher Education*, 56(3), 303-324.
- Kachari, N., & Dutta, J. A Study of The Prospects of Higher Education in The Context of Rastriyo Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).
- Kapur, Devesh, and Megan Crowley. (2008). "Beyond the ABCs: Higher Education and Developing Countries." Washington D.C.: Center for Global Development, Working Paper Number 139, February.
- King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton university press.
- Knoepfel, P., Larrue, C., Varone, F., & Hill, M. (2011). *Public policy analysis*. Policy Press.
- Komow, B., Khanna, R., & Sharma, R. K. (2012). Journey of Higher Education in India: An Analysis of Post-Independence ERA. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research (AJMR)*, 1(1), 96-115.
- Koner, S., & Mishra, S. (2018). Rusa In Higher Education in West Bengal-A Study. *International Journal of Research*, 5(19), 221-235.
- Kothari, D. S. (1966). *Report of The Education Commission, 1964-66: Education and National Development*.
- Kothari, D. S., & Chairman, A. R. (1967). *Report of The Education Commission 1964-66*. New Delhi, National Council of Educational Research and Training.
- Kumar, L. (2014). Quality Higher Education And RUSA. *Journal of Research in Education*, 2(02), 40-55.
- Kumar, R. (2015). State Higher Education Councils in India Under Purview Of RUSA: Opportunities and Challenges.
- Kumar, Rahul V. (2015). Understanding Status of Higher Education in India: Challenges and Scepticism towards Serious Investments in the Sector. *Nitte Management Review*, 82–91.
- Kumar, V. (2016). *Expanding Horizons: Higher Education in West Bengal. Expanding Horizons: Higher Education in West Bengal*. Department of Higher Education.
- Levy, D. C. (2006). The Unanticipated Explosion: Private Higher Education's Global Surge. *Comparative Education Review*, 50(2), 217-240.



- Majumdar, Tapas (1993). *An Education Commission Reports*. Economic and Political Weekly. 28(19), pp. 919–20.
- Mark Olssen & Michael A. Peters (2005): Neoliberalism, Higher Education and The Knowledge Economy: From the Free Market to Knowledge Capitalism, *Journal of Education Policy*, 20:3, 313-345
- Mény, Y. and Thoenig, J.C. (1989) *Politiques publiques*, coll Thémis Science Politique, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Merton, R. K. (1949). *On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range*. *Classical Sociological Theory*. Pp 448-459. Retrieved on 14 May, 2020.
- Michael K. McLendon, James C. Hearn & Christine G. Mokher (2009) Partisans, Professionals, and Power: The Role of Political Factors in State Higher Education Funding, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80:6, 686-713v
- Mok, K. H., & Neubauer, D. (2015). *Higher Education Governance in Crisis: A Critical Reflection on The Massification Of Higher Education, Graduate Employment and Social Mobility*. *Journal of Education and Work*, 29(1), 1–12. Doi:10.1080/13639080.2015.1049023
- Muzammil, M. (2019). Growth and Expansion of Private Higher Education. In N. Varghese & J. Panigrahi (Eds.), *India Higher Education Report: India Higher Education Report 2018* (Pp. 338-362). Mathura Road, New Delhi: SAGE Publications Pvt Ltd Doi: 10.4135/9789353287887.N12
- Nigavekar, A. (2003). Higher Education in India: Issues, Concerns and New Directions. *Higher Education in India: Issues, Concerns and New Directions* (pp. 01–44). University Grants Commission.
- NUEPA. (2014). "Report of the Consultative Meeting on State Higher Education Council (SHEC)", Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE), July
- OECD (2004). *On the Edge – Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education*, Paris.
- Ojo, O. (2003). *Fundamentals of Research Methods*. Ibadan. Nelson Clemmy Press.
- Pang, D. (2005). *Asian Universities: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges*. *Teachers College Record*, 107(11), 2479–2483. Doi:10.1111/J.1467-9620.2005.00612.X
- Patil, J., & Rai, A. N. (2013). Need for A National Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education in Light of RUSA And Mandatory Accreditation Regime. *University News*, 51(39), 30.

- Patra, J. N., & Mete, J. (2016). RUSA: The Roadmap and Future of Higher Education in India. *International Journal of Human Potential Development*, 2, 21-26.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (1951). *The Report of the University Education Commission, December 1948 - August 1949*. Delhi: Govt. Pr.
- Rai, D. (2018). Regulation, Higher Education and Transformation. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 64(4), 543-564.
- Schofer, E., & Meyer, J. W. (2005). The Worldwide Expansion of Higher Education in the Twentieth Century. *American Sociological Review*, 70(6), 898-920.
- Sedwal, M. (2019). The Emergence and Expansion of Indian Universities Before Independence: A Historical Perspective. In *the Future of Higher Education in India* (Pp. 23-40). Springer, Singapore.
- Sharma, K. A. (2013). Sixty Years of The University Grants Commission Establishment, Growth and Evolution. UGC: New Delhi. Retrieved on 13 March, 2020.
- Smolicz, J. J. (2000). *Globalisation and Higher Education: A Comparison of Educational "Privatisation" In Poland, Iran, Australia and the Philippines*. *World Studies in Education*, 1(1), 99–124. Doi:10.7459/Wse/01.1.07
- Sörlin, S. (2007). Funding Diversity: Performance-Based Funding Regimes as Drivers of Differentiation in Higher Education Systems. *Higher Education Policy*, 20(4), 413-440.
- Srivastava, A. (2018). Finance and Quality: The Reshaping of Higher Education. In N. Varghese A. Pachauri & S. Mandal *India Higher Education Report 2017* (pp. 332-350). 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9789353280338.n14
- Srivastava, A., & Koshal, N. (2018). What About Provincial Institutions in Higher Education Policy in India? *International Higher Education*, (95), 26-28
- Starr, P. (1987) The Limits of Privatization, *Proceedings of The Academy of Political Science*, 36(3), 124-137. [Http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.2307/1174103](http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.2307/1174103)
- Teichler, U. (2004). The Changing Debate on Internationalisation of Higher Education. *Higher Education*, 48(1), 5-26.
- Teixeira, P. N., & Dill, D. D. (Eds.). (2011). *Public Vices, Private Virtues?: Assessing The Effects Of Marketization In Higher Education* (Vol. 2). Springer Science & Business Media.
- Thorat S. (2017). *Higher Education Policy in India: Emerging Issues and Approaches in Varghese N.V. and G. Mallik, Eds. (2017)*.

- Thorat, S. (2006). Higher Education in India: Emerging Issues Related to Access, Inclusiveness and Quality. *Nehru Memorial Lecture, University Grants*.
- Tilak, J. B. (2016). A Decade of Ups and Downs in Public Expenditure on Higher Education. *India: Higher Education Report*, 307-332.
- Tilak, J. B. (2016). Global Rankings, World-Class Universities and Dilemma in Higher Education Policy in India. *Higher Education for The Future*, 3(2), 126-143.
- Tilak, J. B. (2017). Union-State Relations in India's Higher Education. *NUEPA Occasional Paper*, 50.
- Tilak, J. B. G. (2018). *Private Higher Education in India. Education and Development in India*, 535–551. Doi:10.1007/978-981-13-0250-3\_18
- Torres, C. A., & Schugurensky, D. (2002). The Political Economy of Higher Education in The Era of Neoliberal Globalization: Latin America in Comparative Perspective. *Higher Education*, 43(4), 429-455.
- UGC. (1988). Report of the Committee on Setting Up State Council of Higher Education, approved by the Commission on 21 January 1988.
- UGC (1956). *mhrd.gov.in/*. Secretary, University Grants Commission. PDF. Retrieved 1
- Varghese N. (2009). Cross-Border Higher Education and National Systems of Education. In: Fegan J., Field M.H. (eds) *Education Across Borders*. Springer, Dordrecht
- Varghese N. (2015). Challenges of Massification of Higher Education in India. CPRHE Research Paper. NUEPA: New Delhi.
- Varghese N. (2019). Challenges for Indian Higher Education: Expansion, Quality and Internationalisation. SANNAM S4 Practitioner Series 2019-20. Vol 1.
- Varghese N. (2019). Higher Education in India: Managing the Sector's Unprecedented Expansion. Commonwealth Education Report 2019.
- Varghese, M. (2018). Quality and Accountability in Higher Education. In N. Varghese A. Pachauri & S. Mandal *India Higher Education Report 2017* (Pp. 255-275). 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications, Inc. Doi: 10.4135/9789353280338.N11
- Varghese, N. & Panigrahi, J. (2019). Financing of Higher Education: An Introduction. In N. Varghese & J. Panigrahi (Eds.), *India Higher Education Report: India Higher Education Report 2018* (Pp. 1-22). Mathura Road, New Delhi: SAGE Publications Pvt Ltd Doi: 10.4135/9789353287887.N1
- Varghese, N. (Ed.), Malik, G. (Ed.). (2016). *India Higher Education Report 2015*. London: Routledge India, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315651163>

- Varghese, N. V., Pachauri, A., & Mandal, S. (2018). *India Higher Education Report 2017: Teaching, Learning and Quality in Higher Education*. New Delhi, India: Sage.
- Varghese, N., Pachauri, A. & Mandal, S. (2018). Teaching, Learning and Quality in Higher Education in India: An Introduction. In N. Varghese A. Pachauri & S. Mandal *India Higher Education Report 2017* (pp. 1-20). 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9789353280338.n1
- Weiler, H. N. (2000). *States, Markets and University Funding: New Paradigms for The Reform of Higher Education in Europe. Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 30(3), 333–339. Doi:10.1080/713657469
- World Bank Group (2014). *State Higher Education Council in India: Opportunities and Challenges*. South Asia Human Development Department – Education. Washington DC.

## Annexure 1

### Interview Schedule

#### Brief Profile of the College Administrator

Name of the Interviewee –

Gender –

Age –

Designation –

Affiliation –

Experience as an Administrator –

**Question no 1:** What is the role of WBSCHE as a regulatory body?

**Question no 2:** What kind of academic and financial support is given by WBSCHE for the quality enhancement of Higher Education?

**Question no 3:** In your opinion, do you think RUSA has been a game changer as a policy to revive the state Higher Education?

**Question no 4:** Does your institution fulfil all the pre-requisites of RUSA scheme?

Pre-requisites	Current Status/How is this fulfilled?
Application of governance (administrative) reforms at Institute level	
Academic reforms and facilitating inter-disciplinary learning	
Affiliation reforms	
Separate project management teams	
Examination reforms	
Perspective strategic planning	

Equity commitment (especially in aided sector)	
Commitments on research and innovation efforts	
Mandatory faculty recruitment and improvement	
Establishment of Management Information System	
Regulatory compliance	

**Question 5:** Considering the fact that preparing strategic planning is a pre-requisite, what is the mechanism of receiving RUSA fund from WBSCHE?

**Question 6:** In this process of planning, how far the autonomy of your institution remains intact?

**Question 7:** Do the pre-requisites set by RUSA ensure higher accountability in the institution? If yes how? If not why?

**Question 8:** What kind of monitoring and transparency mechanisms are adopted for the success of the scheme?

**Question 9:** In your view, how RUSA is different from the earlier plans and schemes? If yes how? If no why?

**Question 10:** Do you think the overall quality of this college as well as State Higher Education has improved after the implementation of RUSA?

**Question 11:** What is the status of the sanctioned positions of faculty in the colleges under this university?

**Question 12:** How do you manage the professional capacity of the teachers of the college?

**Question 13:** What kind of infrastructural changes the college has done after receiving fund from RUSA?

**Question 14:** Have you faced any difficulty in the process of receiving and utilising RUSA fund?

**Question 15:** Any other relevant information regarding RUSA funding you want to share that can help in enhancing the quality of this research.