

**QUEST FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT IN VIEW OF  
Rashtriya Madhyamic Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA)**

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## **Abstract**

RMSA is a project of Ministry of Human Resources Development of India for strengthening secondary education infrastructure across the country. This scheme will be implemented in a mission mode with a national mission headed by the union minister for HRD and a project approval board headed by secretary of school education and literacy to appraise and approve state plans. This project is an effort to practicalise the vision of universal education of UN millennium development goals. The vision of RMSA is to make good quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group of 14 to 18 years and to ensure universal access of secondary education by 2017 and universal retention by 2020. The goal of RMSA is to provide universal access, quality and equity in secondary education. That is RMSA's goal is to establish a common school system. Inclusive access is envisaged in RMSA by establishing enough number of secondary schools. Qualities of both instructional as well as infrastructural aspects are taken care of. Equity for socially disadvantaged groups, girls and differentially abled groups are included in the programme. Necessary strengthening of resource institutions like NCERT, NEUPA, NIOS, SCERT, SIEMAT, CTEs' etc is proposed. 75% of cost during the eleventh plan and 50% of cost in the twelfth plan will be met by the central government. In Kerala during the implementation of RMSA paramount importance will be given to quality enhancement, the question of access to resource materials also needs attention. Lack of a comprehensive policy is the main constraint for quality enhancement of school education in the state. During the implementation of RMSA, the authorities should take necessary steps to ensure the participation of training colleges and university education departments, SCERT,

SIEMAT, DIET, and other research centres in education and to research base by publishing studies conducted by DIET's, SCERT and other agencies on various aspects of SSA immediately through a website, so that lessons of those studies can be utilized for better implementation of RMSA.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Secondary education is a crucial stage in the educational hierarchy as it prepares the students for higher education and also for reaching the world of earning livelihood. The strict enforcement of the particular learning system at the secondary and higher secondary stage will enable the students to compete for higher education successfully and for jobs globally. Therefore it is a great need to strengthen this stage by providing greater access and also by improving quality in a significant way.

As a result of liberalisation and globalisation of Indian economy, tremendous changes happened in scientific and technological world and the general outcry to improve the quality of life and to reduce poverty, it is a fact that our education at elementary stage is not at all adequate to provide a proper kind of ambiance to acquire a higher level of knowledge and skill to our students.

Since universalisation of elementary education has become a constitutional mandate, it is absolutely essential to push this vision forward to move towards universalisation of secondary education which has already been achieved in a large number of developed countries and several developing countries.

Various programmes are introduced to enhance the quality of education in our country. The ongoing SSA programme to bring elementary education to millions of children has been successful to a large extent and has thus created a need for strengthening secondary education across the country. With the successful implementation of SSA, a large number of passing out from UP classes created a huge demand for secondary education. It is very well recognised that eight years of elementary education are insufficient to equip a child for the world and also to be a competent adult and citizen.

Therefore while secondary education is not constitutionally compulsory, it is necessary and desirable that access to secondary education is universalised leading to enhance participation and its quality is improved for all.

### **Status of Secondary Education**

The following statistics gives an overview of the present status of secondary and higher secondary education in the country (as on 30.09.2005).

1.	No. of Secondary Schools	1,06,084
2.	No. of higher secondary schools	53,619
3.	No. of students at secondary level	2.50 crore
4.	No. of students at higher secondary level	1.34 crore
5.	Population of 14-16 age group	4.78 crore
6.	Population of 16-18 age group	4.91 crore
7.	Pupil - Teacher ratio (IX - X)	33
8.	Pupil - Teacher ratio (XI - XII)	34

Source: Abstract of Selected Educational Statistics (2005-06), population projections are based on census data compiled by Registrar General of India.

## **Conceptualisation of RMSA**

RMSA is a project of ministry of human resources development for strengthening secondary education infrastructure across the country. The ministry has allotted Rs. 20,120 crore during the XI<sup>th</sup> five year plan for this project. The aim of RMSA is to achieve the goal of universalisation of secondary education. RMSA will have been launched by 2010 with the completion of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme. RMSA will take secondary education to every nook and corner of the country by ensuring a secondary school within a radius of 5 km for every neighbourhood. RMSA will expand and improve the standards of secondary education. This project is an effort to practicalise the vision of universal education of UN millennium development goals.

This scheme will be implemented in a mission mode with a national mission headed by the union minister for HRD and a project approval board headed by secretary of school education and literacy to appraise and approve state plans. Similarly state missions under chief minister of the state and union territories will be set up.

Honourable Prime Minister in his independent day speech, 2007 has inter-alia stated that

"we are setting out a goal of universalising secondary education. This is clearly the next step after universalising elementary education. While the goal is laudable much work needs to be done therefore we are in a position to launch the scheme for universalisation of access for secondary education. Its details need to be quickly spelt out and discussed with states so that we are ready to launch it from 2008-09. We mustn't underestimate the complexity of this task as the

principles for universalising elementary education can't be easily transferred to secondary education. The physical, financial, pedagogical and human resource needs are quite different. We also need to recognise the role currently being played by the private sector and policy design must factor this in. Detailed strategies and plans would need to be worked out rapidly for each state. Special attention would need to be paid to districts with SC/ST/OBC/minority concentration. The recommendations of the Sachar Committee need to be seriously considered while planning for the programme".

This speech of Prime Minister reminds us of the hard task the government is going to undertake through RMSA.

#### **Vision of RMSA (Vision 2020)**

- The Vision of RMSA is to make good quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group of 14 to 18 years.
- It's vision is to ensure universal access of secondary education by 2017 and universal retention by 2020.

#### **Goal of RMSA**

In order to meet the challenges of universalisation of secondary education, there is a paradigm shift in the conceptual design of secondary education. The guiding principle in this regard is universal access, quality and equity of secondary education.

Therefore the goal of RMSA is to provide universal access, quality and equity in secondary education. i.e., RMSA's goal is to establish a common school system in which all types of schools including the unaided private schools will also

contribute towards universalisation of secondary schools by ensuring adequate enrolments of the children from under privileged society and the children from BPL families.

### **Objectives of RMSA**

- To improve quality of secondary education resulting in enhanced intellectual, social and cultural learning.
- To ensure that all students pursuing secondary education receive education of good quality.
- To ensure universal access of secondary education by 2017 and universal retention by 2020.
- To achieve a general enrolment ratio of 75% for classes IX to X within five years by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of any habitation, which should be 5 km for secondary schools and 7-10 kms for higher secondary schools.
- To ensure that no child is deprived of secondary education of satisfactory quality due to gender, socio economic status, disability and other barriers.
- To ensure that all secondary schools have physical facilities, staffs and supplies atleast according to the prescribed standards through financial support in case of Government and aided schools and appropriate regularity mechanism in case of other schools.

- Achievement of the above objectives would also inter-alia, signify substantial progress in the direction of common school system.

### **Strategies for Implementation of RMSA**

In the context of universalisation of secondary education, large scale inputs in terms of additional schools, additional classrooms, teachers and other facilities need to be provided to meet the challenge of numbers, credibility and quality. It requires assessment/provision of educational needs, physical infrastructure, human resource, human resource, academic inputs and effective monitoring of implementation of the programmes. The strategies for universalising secondary education and improving its quality are as under.

### **Access**

- For providing universal access to quality secondary education, it is imperative that specially designed broad norms are developed at national level. The norms for secondary schools should be generally comparable to those of Kendriya Vidyalayas.
- Upgradation of upper primary schools based on micro planning exercise with all necessary infrastructure facilities and teachers.
- Upgradation of secondary schools to higher secondary schools based upon the requirements.
- Opening of new schools based on schools mapping exercise.
- Rain harvesting systems will be installed in existing school buildings also.

- Existing school buildings will also be made disabled friendly.

### **Quality**

- Providing required infrastructure like Black board, furniture, libraries, science and mathematics laboratories, computer labs, toilet cluster.
- Appointment of additional teachers and in-service training of teachers.
- Bridge course for enhancing learning ability of students passing out of Class VIII.
- Reviewing curriculum to meet the NCF, 2005 norms.
- Residential accommodation for teachers in rural and difficult hilly areas.
- Preference will be given to accommodation for female teachers.

### **Equity**

- Free lodging/boarding facilities for students belonging to SC, ST, OBC and minority communities.
- Hostels/residential schools, cash incentives, uniform books, separate toilet for girls.
- Providing scholarships to meritorious/needy students at secondary level.
- Inclusive education will be the hallmark of all activities. Efforts will be made to provide all necessary facilities for the differently abled children in all the schools.

- Expansion of open and distance learning needs to be undertaken, especially for those who can't pursue full time secondary education.

### **Institutional Reforms and Strengthening of Resource Institutions**

Making necessary administrative reforms in each state will be a pre-condition for central assistance. These institutional reforms include

- Reforms in school governance:- Improve the school's performance by decentralizing their management and accountability.
- Adopting a rational policy of teacher recruitment, deployment, training, remuneration and other career advancement.
- Undertaking reforms in educational administration including modernisation/e-governance and delegation/de-centralisation.
- Provision of necessary professional and academic inputs in the secondary education system at all levels.
- Stream lining financial procedures for speedy flow of funds and their optimal utilization.
- Necessary strengthening of resource institutions like NCERT, NUEPA, NIOS, SCERT, SIEMAT's, State Open School, University Departments of Education, reputed institutions of Science/Social Science/Humanities education and colleges of teacher education/Institutions of advanced study in education/ funded under centrally sponsored scheme of teacher education.

- Number of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas will be increased in view of their importance as pace-setting schools.
- Participation of parents, teachers and community will be ensured in planning process, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Central government operates four centrally sponsored schemes before universalisation of secondary education. They are

- i. ICT @ schools for computer aided education in secondary and higher secondary schools.
- ii. Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) for assisting state governments in mainstreaming the disabled children in school education.
- iii. Strengthening boarding and Hostel facilities for girls of secondary and higher secondary schools.
- iv. Quality improvement in schools which included yoga, environmental education, population education and international science Olympiads.

### **Financing Pattern**

The central government will bear 75% of the cost to implement this project for all states and union territories except the North Eastern States during the XI<sup>th</sup> five year plan. For the North Eastern States, 90% of cost will be borne by the central government. The state government will design a comprehensive financial management system for the transfer and use of funds through the existing SSA Society.

Separate bank accounts shall be opened for funds under the scheme at the state, district and school levels. The account shall be opened in public sector banks. The Headmaster or principal of the school Education Committee will be the joint holder of the account at the school level and the district programme co-ordination will be a joint holder of the account at the district level.

For the XII<sup>th</sup> five year plan, the sharing pattern between central and states will change to 50:50 for the North eastern states, the sharing pattern will be 90:10 for both 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> five year plans.

### **Feasibility of RMSA in Kerala Context**

The educational scenario of Kerala is entirely different from that of other states of the country. Eventhough greater access in number of institutions for secondary education exists in the state, equity and quality of secondary education needs review. Equity in secondary education is considerably higher than that of other states, but there still exists discrimination owing to the backwardness of coastal and tribal areas. There are still dropouts among students from tribal areas and coastal areas due to various reasons.

As far as quality of education is concerned, Kerala is in an average position. Therefore during the implementation of RMSA, paramount importance will be given to quality enhancement.

Lack of comprehensive policy is the main constraint for quality enhancement of school education in the state. An all inclusive plan should be prepared by incorporating representatives from elementary, secondary, TTI, DIETs, CTE's, SCERT and university departments is necessary. The wide gap between existing

pre-service training and school education practices should be properly bridged. Training institutions are institutions to tryout new reforms under controlled conditions. Mass implementation of any new reform must be tried out and revised through training institutions at various levels.

All types of schools including unaided private schools and CBSE should be unified according to some norms like that of Kendriya Vidyalaya and Jawahar Navodayas.

Decentralization of school education with adequate delegation of powers to local bodies, school management committees, etc. should be undertaken.

There is an urgent need for reform of the prevailing examination system to reduce stress on children and also to enhance its quality.

The government should take the survey of available school facilities including non-governmental educational institutions and pass percentage and transition rates of 14 to 18 years age group to facilitate their education and development.

### **Role of Teacher Education Colleges and University Education Departments in Implementing RMSA**

Teacher education colleges and university education departments are places where new generation teachers are designed and moulded. Because it is there the pre-service training courses like B.Ed. and M.Ed. are provided. Therefore it is the right place to take new decisions in the educational field.

Only if new schemes are implemented in the teacher education centres, then only it will reach the classrooms of the country, because teachers are born in the teacher education centres.

At present in the field of education, there is no role for teacher education centres in decision making regarding the implementation of new schemes. Actually decisions and theories on philosophy of the new scheme should be made from teacher education centres and university education departments and they should make aware the prospective teachers about any new scheme, its vision, objectives, their role in implementation, etc.

Now a days the training colleges and education departments doesn't take much initiative in the activities other than teaching their students. This situation should be changed into more socially accountable manner.

During the implementation of RMSA, the authorities should take necessary steps to ensure the participation of training colleges and university education departments, SCERT, SIEMAT,DIET, and other research centres in education..

It is suggested that the authority should take the following measurement to enhance the quality of secondary education in our state.

- Prepare a comprehensive policy by incorporating various issues of quality enhancement.
- Teachers should be provided adequate reference books and other resource materials for better teaching.

- In service training programmes should be redesigned as need-based and problem solving in nature.
- EDUSAT facility can be utilised for quality and uniform dissemination of training.
- Reference books, dictionaries should be made available in adequate number in each classroom with storage facility.
- To enhance the quality of IT education, it should be incorporated in pre-service training as there is lack of specialised teachers in this very discipline.
- Uniformity among the schools should be established by modifying course structure, and through fee system and governance reforms.
- Research studies conducted by SCERT, DIETS, and other agencies on various aspects of SSA should be published immediately through a website. So that lessons of those studies can be utilised for better implementation of RMSA.
- A thorough plan should be prepared for utilisation of fund in well advance in place of utilising fund for distributing free textbooks for children.
- Evaluation measures should be well defined by incorporating the changes in techno pedagogy.
- Research institutions and departments of education should focus on conducting research in various aspects of RMSA for its better implementation.

## REFERENCE

[http://education.nic.in/secedu/sec\\_rmsa.asp](http://education.nic.in/secedu/sec_rmsa.asp) retrieved on 8.09.09