

## HIGHER EDUCATION: GOVERNANCE IN MANIPUR

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### Abstract

In India we have a centralized higher education governance through machineries like UGC and MHRD to update the National Policy on Education since 1986. The country is now quite eager to join GKS by 2020 as visualized by the policy makers and real emphasis is given in higher education. And the proliferation of higher educational institutes thus eventually provides the gateway to various programmes of higher studies and research.

The UGC has formulated regulations for the development of higher education sector of the country at different levels with modification, rectification and amendment on regulation from time to time. The UGC's Regulation 2010 and its amendment in 2013 provides basic minimum requirements of the teaching and non-teaching communities both for Universities and Colleges at different levels. However, there have been certain irregularities in adopting the UGC's scheme.

The higher education and research in the North East India particularly in Manipur have not been able to uplift socio-economic development. It is being impeded by certain factors. The objective of this present paper is to critically analyse the policy initiatives and the specific responsibilities in higher education governance based on secondary data.

**Keywords:** UGC, MHRD, GKS, proliferation, modification, rectification, amendment.

### Introduction

Education was, is still and will be fundamental to realize and promote our socio-economic development. All the policy-programmes, modes of schemes regarding academic reforms of all levels of education, initiated by the centre suffered from lack of co-ordination between centre and states and moreover lack of transparency and honesty inside the state itself. As Education required freedom of thought, analytical mindset, motivation, innovation and peaceful environment the policy makers need to introspect in creating conditions for the empowerment of the teaching community. Development of Higher Education and State Governance are closely interrelated.

### The Concept of governance

In the development literature we often come across the term 'good governance'. It has also been accepted as one of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS). Governance systems set the parameters under which management and administrative systems will operate. Governance is about how power is distributed and shared, how policies are formulated, priorities set and stakeholders made accountable. It thus represents the norms, values and rules of the game through which public affairs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive and responsive. Governance therefore can be subtle and may not be easily observable. In our context of institutional environment, we can refer 'governance' to those structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsibilities, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment and broad-based participation.

The constitution of India was amended in 1976 to change education from a State subject to the Concurrent list. As envisaged in the National Policy on Education – 1986 (revised in 1992), development of education is pursued as a 'meaningful partnership between the Centre and the States'. Under a federal structure, the centre and the states share the responsibilities for the planning and implementation of education development programmes. There exist well-defined mechanisms for sharing of resources and responsibilities between the centre and the states, and for harmonious exercise of their respective powers in the planning and management of education programmes in the national interest.

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The present phase of ailing education is the outcome of lacking vision of social transformation. In 1950s or 1960s the state has full autonomy to frame policies on education, particularly school education. There was in principle autonomy to the state to present policy framework as education was in the state list. However, state governments followed largely the policy of central government and could not use the autonomy to the fullest benefit for the social transformation by putting emphasis on literacy, school education and general higher education. Further initiative by the Union Government was taken in terms of Kothari Commission (1964). During all these periods State governments found it too difficult due to resource crunch. Autonomy of the state in giving shape to independent policy on education was not exercised to the fullest benefit to the society.

### Expansion – increasing the access

In the 1970s when the sphere of public ownership and control increases, the state government had no option but to gradually move towards mass education. Planning for education meant satisfying demand for more schools and colleges and till date private institutions are growing innumerable or mushrooming in the domain of education, while educational planning for expansion was initiated, state government found it soon as non-sustainable proposition unless education is considered as the responsibility of union and state governments. Thus before and after concurrency of education of education state largely misused the state resources to support the expansion and developmental planning in education. This large scale mismanagement was obviously not sustainable. There was fall in the quality of higher education by misdirecting higher education in the state when transition from elite to mass education began.

The University and Higher Education Department, Manipur plays the most vital role in determining the quality of life and development of the state. This department should set the parameters under which management and administrative systems will operate with enlightened public policy which gives a legal framework for growth and development with committed bureaucracy for the welfare of the people with accountability and transparency. However, the administration of higher education in the state lacks direction and vision due to manning the higher functionaries by untrained persons. There is always serious difference of opinion between the administrative officers and academicians. Till date there is no regular Director from the academicians instead appointment of cadre officers are taking charge from time to time. We should keep in mind that academic administration is totally different from that of other civil service administration. The academicians are

having the thorough knowledge of higher education policies and UGC Regulations with visions of the importance of research and development in higher education for the future of the country in general and for the state in particular. All the government colleges in Manipur is run by the principal-in-charges. Hence the question of commitment arises. Recently there are three separate court cases regarding the appointment of three regular principals violating UGC Regulations 2010 and its 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment 2013. If the rule of law and the regulation laid down for academic governance are followed as per prescribed framework, no judiciary intervention may be necessary. As for the record, more than ten cases are being admitted and undergoing on different irregularities in the state. It may be summarized as in Table – I for ready reference:

**Table – I**

Sl. No.	Irregularities	Problems Created
1.	Three cabinet decisions taken with vindictive idea of discrimination	Agitations from teachers' fraternity
2.	The inclusion of an arbitrary clause in the orders of 12 August 2011	Non-payment of SCA & TA till date. Incomplete pay components
3.	The date of implementation of 6 <sup>th</sup> ROP not at par with other employees of the state violating the constitution of India	Case being filed in the High Court (Manipur) by 148 teachers under Federation of Government College Teachers' Association (FEGOCTA)
4.	Biometric Attendance Record in some of the colleges	Defamation to the teaching community, tarnishing image with unauthorized news
5.	Orders imposing restrictions to teachers in participation of seminars/conferences	Affects academic freedom A stumbling block in availing API score
6.	Order imposing restrictions in engagement of necessary manpower in colleges with mandate to punish principals under Manipur Public Servants' Liability Act 2006	The colleges are without chowkidars, Grade-IV employees, Librarians, ministrel staff and not appointing vacant posts

7.	SQAC & IQACs not functioning properly in true perspectives	Problem of API calculation arises
8.	Violation of UGC Regulations in case of the retirement age of two Librarians	Case in High Court Manipur
9.	Appointment of cadre officials as the Director of Higher Education Dept., Chairman Board of Secondary Education Manipur (BOSEM) & Council of Higher Secondary Education Manipur (COHSEM)	Pressure to constitute Manipur State Higher Education Service (MSHES)
10.	Appointment of three regular principals violating UGC Regulations 2010 and its 2 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment 2013	Invited three separate Court cases
11.	Advertisement for appointment of 25 regular principals	Case of 12 principal-in-charges even upto Supreme Court & case of two teachers in High Court
12.	New Reservation Policy of 280 posts of Assistant Professors	Needs to modify not to create another problem
13.	New transfer & Posting Policy	Needs to modify (ref. MSHES)
14.	Proposal for decentralization of UGC funding in the colleges	UGC Funding only to colleges affiliated under UGC Act Section 12 13 & 2f will stop

Source: *Higher Education in India : Many irregularities in Manipur - L. Randhoni Devi.*

About Higher Education Budget, the funds allocated to the UGC have also stagnated at last years' levels. The budget would not be sufficient even to meet the basic requirements of higher education. Thus, the budget 2015-16 ignored several expert commission recommendations to grant at least 10 percent budget for education sector. The financial crunch in the state will endanger the developmental and inclusive growth of the higher education sector. To bring NE India at par with other parts of India needs special attention from the centre with a time bound mode of 100% funding to achieve the goal of reaching GKS uniformly all over the country. Transformation of higher education in North East Region is a must

since there are disparities between the region and the rest of India in the standard of Higher Education.

**Table – II : Area-wise Budgetary Provisions**

Sl. No.	Sector / Scheme	(Proposed Allocations) (Rs. in crore)
1.	Enhancing Aggregate Access	1,44,350
2.	Equity	16,260
3.	Quality & Excellence	22,240
4.	Research Projects	5,350
5.	ICT Integration	4,450
6.	Relevance & Value Based Education	1,240
7.	Governance & Efficiency Improvement	1,950
	Total Projected Requirements	1,84,740

Source : XII Plan proposal of UGC.

The area-wise budgetary allocations in the XII Plan perspectives showing an extraordinary emphasis in Expansion out of three Es : Equity, Expansion and Excellence.

**Table - III : Region-wise Distribution of Colleges**

Region	% of Colleges	Population in the age group of 18 – 23 (in crores)
Southern	33	2.90
Central	22	4.70
Western	19	4.26
Eastern	22.5	3.56
Northern	10.5	*
North-East	3.5	0.60

Source: XII FYP-proposal of UGC.

Now, in table II, North East is facing the worst scenario : the whole north east which covers a prominent area of the country has only 3.5% of the colleges (only 0.6 crore) of the population of youths between the age group (18-23) while southern India covers 33%, Central India covers 22% etc. and we are far behind that of other parts of the country. The NE India is facing a huge lost in human capital and human resource.

In Manipur, the college teachers are privileged to be the first to enhance the age of superannuation to 65 years. However, we are also the last to implement 6<sup>th</sup> ROP at a far latter date from 1-11-2010, while other teachers in the country more than 6 lakhs enjoyed it from 1-1-2006 and even the state employees of nearly 70,000 enjoyed 6<sup>th</sup> ROP from

1-10-2009. This mismatch between policy and implementation due to the twists and turns of some vindictive officials has made teachers into a pressure group over and above our normal teaching-learning process and other academic activities in research and development, examination and evaluation, syllabus and curriculum up gradation as well as knowledge up gradation. Project, modes of schemes and programmes at all levels of education, initiated by the centre, suffered from lack of co-ordination between centre and states. While the country is now eager to join GKS (Global Knowledge Society) by 2010 as visualized by the policy makers, the deteriorating physical and human infrastructure in HEIs seems to affect horribly in Manipur. This failure is resulted mostly in the inbreeding in teacher cadre, growth of populist measures in the promotion of teachers, differentiated growth of educational institutions.

Good Governance in higher education requires to be guided by the set norms with good temper, there should be positive motivation with a strategic vision, able leadership to direct and formulate high-level goals and policies, management and co-ordination. And other related practices and activities can be regulated and performed without hampering the academic atmosphere. While central funding agencies and financial supports given by One time mission mode RUSA (90% central assistance for faculty and infrastructure development for our state, 10% state matching share), governance is too crippled to carry on due course of action to keep pace with accelerating process of transformation of higher education. Due to the absence of financial discipline, the mindset of concentrating power and share by overlooking the accountability of the most important stakeholder of higher education and lack of transparency are some of the constraints towards organizing best practices of quality sustenance and enhancement. The Manipur government must rise to the occasion with political goodwill with good governance initiatives to lift higher educational institutions to bring to the national level in quantity and quality.

## Conclusion

The central governments new strategy to restructure education was initiated through the centrally sponsored schemes. The 12<sup>th</sup> plan has made many pronouncements to reform, motivate and empower the teaching community. At the state level, autonomy, academic freedom, transparency through e-governance, following rules and regulations, functional state Higher Education Council, State Higher Education Service and Advisory Bodies by inclusion of academicians, educationalists and stakeholders in the operational decisions and policies can address some of the burning issues and challenges.

“The collapse of education is the collapse of the nation”. “Collapsing any Nation does not require use of Atomic bombs or the use of long range missiles. But it required lowering the quality of Education and allowing cheating in the exams by the students”.

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