**Executive Summary**

Tamil Nadu has taken admirable strides in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary education over the past decades. With respect to literacy, Tamil Nadu is one of the most literate states in India and has performed reasonably well in terms of literacy growth during the decade 2001–2011.The literacy rate of the State is 80.33 according to Censes 2011.

**Profile of Higher Education in Tamil Nadu**

Tamil Nadu is one of the leading states in the field of higher education and as of 2012-13, the GER is 42, the highest in the country after Chandigarh, against the all India figure of 21.1. The State takes pride in the fact that it is covered by a large number of colleges and universities, and there is no district which does not have a college, an engineering college and a polytechnic..There are 59 Universities (including Central and deemed universities) and 2423 colleges in the state. Further there are 135 autonomous colleges and 371 institutions have been accredited by NAAC. Apart from the network of government and government aided institutions, self-financing institutions in the State have played a key role in the higher education sector.

Apart from access, equity has been a major concern of Government of Tamil Nadu. The demography of the college population is itself indicative of an egalitarian system of higher education prevalent in the state. A large number of students are provided assistance through innovative state sector scholarship schemes in addition to Government of India schemes. Polytechnic, science and humanities education is being provided without any tuition fees in the government colleges. The first generation learners are provided fee reimbursement even when studying in private colleges. Other measure taken to ensure equity is giving of free bus passes and free text books.

Tamil Nadu has done reasonably well on gender equity. As per the 2012-13 figures the gender parity index of Tamil Nadu is 0.85. The GER for female is 38.7, the highest in the country after the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Delhi and Puducherry. The gender parity amongst the Scheduled Caste is still higher at 0.88 while that of Scheduled Tribe is marginally lower at 0.85. There is also an exclusive Women’s University in the state in the form of Mother Theresa Women’s University.

The GER for Scheduled Castes is 29.9, while that of Scheduled Caste is 34.2, against the national average of 15.1 and 11.0 respectively. The state follows the reservation policy for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Most Backward Classes and Most Backward Classes very meticulously in the education sector also. It is incumbent on all self-financing colleges in the State to adhere to the reservation policy with regard to admission. This has achieved inclusivenesseven in the self-financing colleges and social justice in the larger framework of higher education in the State. In one sense Tamil Nadu may be cited as a state where there is equal opportunity.

Tamil Nadu already has a functional higher Educational council which mostly concurs with the model made by RUSA in terms of structure and function. The *Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education (TANSCHE)* was established by an *Act of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly* in the year 1992 for the promotion and coordination of higher education at the state level and coordination of the state level programmes with those of the *University Grants Commission*. It, in accordance with its mandate for coordinating and determining standards in institutions of higher education in Tamil Nadu, overviews the policies and programmes of universities and colleges.

Building on the success so far, the government has been ambitious and future looking in the development of its education policies, which are clearly spelled out in the state’s *Vision 202.* The Vision Document declares that the Government of Tamil Nadu aspires to make Tamil Nadu a knowledge and innovation hub. The institutions are equally balanced by giving equal importance to humanities, sciences, engineering and other disciplines. The salient features of the education sector can be summarized as following:

1. Widespread of government and government aided institutions
2. Special attention to backward districts
3. Continuous efforts to reach out to women students to improve the GER of women
4. Boost in the scope for innovative and need based curriculum due to the increase in the number of autonomous institutions
5. March towards excellence due to increase in the number of institutions. Many of the institutions have obtained ISO certification which once again proves excellence.
6. More scope for industry-institute relationship due to industrial growth (SIPCOT, SEZ, SIDCO, etc.)
7. Increase in the scope of employability owing to the growth of automobile and software industry.
8. More of first generation graduates enrolling in professional courses due to state sector scholarship schemes.

**State Higher Education Plan**

The *State Plan,* which is made as per the guidelines given, brings to the fore all these aspects of higher education in the State of Tamil Nadu. While drafting the *State Plan*, the aim has been to strengthen the existing facilities and less on creating new institutions, taking note of the fact that GER is already beyond that which is aimed by RUSA. Hence focus has been more on quality improvement and value addition. The bottom up approach has been meticulously followed to ensure cohesive and integrated planning at the state level. The *State Plan* through its innovative plans and measures intends to offer more access, ensure equity and usher in excellence in higher education. As per the objectives of *RUSA* the *State Plan* addresses the removal of inequities, implementation of governance and regulatory reforms, improvement of the quality of teaching learning process, the need for competitive and employable graduates, amelioration of intra state differences and the achievement of uniform progress across the State.

**Vision**

Keeping in view the promise that Tamil Nadu holds for the achievement of a truly egalitarian society, the State envisions an action plan for higher education which maintains the fine balance between opportunity for all and commitment to excellence. Given the inroads made into the less privileged sections of society, the State aspires to catapult these sections of youth into the global market. The State envisages an ideal of development that is evident in its social fabric – the strands of rational thinking, social justice, gender parity, human values, art and culture, all woven together to make Tamil Nadu a unique educational hub.

**Goals**

1. Research and Development on par with global standards with a view to stem brain drain and thereby ensure investment of knowledge in the State.
2. Skill Development to be integrated into higher education with the twin objective of meeting the nation’s need for a workforce and also eradicating erroneous notions of ‘white collar’ respectability.
3. Paradigm shift towards excellence by promoting an academic culture that encourages original thinking.
4. Continuous exercise of faculty development
5. Investment in innovation with a view to expand the frontiers of knowledge
6. Art and culture to be promoted in accordance with the rich cultural heritage of the State and the Nation.
7. To set target the target at meaningful and self-enriching employability
8. To strengthen Industry institution symbiosis with a view to achieve a synergy between the burgeoning industry requirements and the demands on the educational sector

**Methodology**

In accordance with the guidelines provided by *MHRD,* the *State Plan*, strikes a balance between physical targets and budgetary estimates. The bottom up approach is employed to ensure equitable development of education across the State fulfilling the critical objectives of *RUSA*. The *State Plan* has strategically integrated perspective planning with special focus on excellence while at the same time addressing spatial and geographical gaps. Meetings were convened with the Principal Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Vice Chairman, *TANSCHE,* vice chancellors, registrars of universities, Director of Collegiate Education, regional joint directors of collegiate education, Commissioner for Technical Education, principals of government colleges, the project monitoring units of government colleges and with the project monitoring units of aided colleges. In connection with *RUSA* and the preparation of institutional development plans, several meetings were held with the governing bodies of the stakeholders along with the Principal Secretary, Department of Higher Education, and Vice Chairman, *TANSCHE*. The various proposals were analyzed in detail and assimilated. At every stage of the preparation of the *State Plan*, *TANSCHE* frequently consulted the stakeholders. They were actively involved in the deliberations and discussions for the effective planning of the major initiatives. The *State Higher Educational Plan* was drafted with a panoramic view of addressing the requirements of the educational institutions, identifying and quantifying the targets for implementation and clubbing the state level budgetary requirements.

**Five year Perspective Plan**

The State expects the emergence of Tamil Nadu as a very active centre of academic excellence and as one of the most sought after destinations by students across the globe to secure quality education and pursue research. Even before the advent of RUSA, the state has strived towards this aim. It has been carefully assessing and analyzing the challenges and has come up with pragmatic plans to address such issues. It is also willing to accommodate changes to achieve this goal. So, in the first and second year of this plan, the State would stabilize, revamp and fortify the infrastructural requirements. The State has planned to intensify the measures leading to excellence and by the end of the third year hopes to achieve this.

Though the educational institutions have been established on a strong foundation of knowledge, the delivery systems need to be revamped. As per the guidelines of *RUSA*, stakeholder consultations were held to assess the current scenario and also to invite innovative proposals to resolve various challenges. In accordance with the outcome of the SWOT analysis, the *State Plan* and the key activities proposed have been organically linked. Strategic thinking coupled with need based planning has enabled in encapsulating the futuristic plans for promoting and ensuring excellence in higher education.

**Major targets and financial outlays**

The five year perspective plan encapsulates the aim of enhancing innovative thinking, research motivation, better employability, entrepreneurial capabilities and availability of quality faculty in higher education thus making Tamil Nadu an education hub, locally responsible and globally relevant.

**The Proposal**

**Component 1**-**Creation of New Universities by way of Up gradation of existing autonomous colleges into Universities**

**Component 2**-**CreationofUniversities by Conversion of Colleges in a Cluster**

The state universities located in various districts function with the objective of imparting higher education to students of all walks of life and provide accessibility by virtue of their being positioned in strategic locations across the State. These universities have a reasonable number of affiliated colleges. Granting autonomy to many colleges has reduced the burden of the universities which have otherwise had evolved into mere administrative units or exam conducting bodies. In Tamil Nadu, These colleges function independently and behave like free universities. Even the government autonomous colleges function very effectively and enjoy their autonomy as much as the private autonomous colleges. The universities which offer distance education have a separate directorate to look into the administration and effective functioning of this wing. Consequently, the academics in the university are more focused on promoting teaching and research. Therefore, the state has decided against the creation of more universities, up gradation of existing autonomous colleges into universities and the conversion of colleges to cluster universities but, would rather expend their energies and focus on routing mediocrity and enriching education with a view to achieving excellence.

**Component 3** – **Infrastructure Grant to Universities**

Infrastructure with the right ambience, proper facilities and necessary amenities is necessary to provide a favourable atmosphere for the aspiring learners. These universities are the nodal centres of excellence for a number of colleges and hence it is absolutely necessary to upgrade the infrastructural facilities of the universities. The funding will enable the universities to function effectively and would enable in extensive research. Hence the Council has carefully prepared the proposal for this component so that each of the universities may receive about Rs 20 cr each which totals to Rs. 235.64 cr.

**Component 4- Model Colleges**

The State is very keen to strengthen the new model colleges which have been established in educationally backward districts. They would become institutes of regional development and impart holistic education while ensuring well-being and social justice in the State. They would also counter the challenges of pseudo urbanization and modernity and bring about real growth by improving the employability skills of the youth. These model colleges will be institutes of regional development and hopefully address the problem of exodus from villages and towns to the claustrophobic metropolis. There will be a reciprocal relationship between the potential of the region and the human potential in the region. This is not to say that the model college will be circumscribed only to the skills such as agriculture, weaving, etc, i.e. the potential of the region. The model colleges will in a meaningful way enhance the College Population Index (CPI). Apart from the infrastructure already made by the state government the *State Plan* proposes that model buildings are built and infrastructure provided for all these colleges to the tune Rs 252 cr at about Rs 12 cr each.

**Component 5 –Up gradation of Model Colleges**

It is proposed that 12 of the government arts and science colleges some of them started in 1954 itself, to have their infrastructure upgraded to that of a model college. Also 19 of the university constituent colleges are also to be upgraded. It is proposed to provide modern infrastructure to these 31 colleges at a total cost of Rs 123.70 cr.

**Component 6 – New Colleges (professional & Technical)**

The Government of Tamil Nadu is keen to promote quality education in the field of Technical Education at degree and diploma levels. At present, there are 10 Government Engineering Colleges, 3 Government-Aided Engineering Colleges, 18 Constituent Colleges of Anna University and 605 Self-Financing Engineering Colleges. In the polytechnic sector, there are 41 Government Polytechnic Colleges, 34 Government-Aided Polytechnic Colleges, 3 Affiliated Polytechnic Colleges, 1 Film Institute, 1 Labour Institute and 15 Hotel Management and Catering Technology Institutions and 406 Self-Financing Polytechnic Colleges in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu has 32 districts. There are only ten governmentcolleges, one in each district, which means that the State needs to establish 22 new engineering colleges so that each district will have one government engineering college. Though the State has many self financing colleges and though the State controls the fee structure of these colleges, the eligible but marginalized student finds it difficult to pursue technical education in these colleges. A total of Rs56247.76 is requested for 22 engineering colleges

**Component 7 - Infra structure grants to Government Colleges.**

The first step towards excellence is ensuring that all colleges have the necessary infrastructure. There are 81 government arts and science colleges in the State and they lack proper and adequate infrastructure to match with the growth of the institutions. Of these 12 are proposed to be upgraded into model colleges under Component 5. The balance 69 colleges are proposed to be taken up under this component. Apart from this 13 constituent colleges of Anna University are also proposed to be taken up under this component. The colleges lack modern amenities and infrastructure. Separate hostels for boys and girls and toilet facilities are absolutely essential. Further, academic buildings, administrative buildings, library, classrooms, auditorium, laboratory, cafeteria and equipments have to be upgraded. Thus, it is proposed to provide funds to these colleges to strengthen their infrastructure. An amount of Rs. 156.75 cr for the 81 government arts and science colleges and Rs 26 cr for the 13 constituent colleges of technology affiliated to Anna University (total 182.75) is being sought to reinforce the infrastructure of colleges.

**Component 8 - Research and Innovation**

This is the major thrust area. "The Knowledge Society varies widely in form and *modus operandi*, and this cultural diversity must be celebrated as an indicator of dynamism. For this reason, understanding local and indigenous knowledge through research is of the greatest importance" says Mary-Louise Kearney, Director of the *UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge.* Higher education, research and innovation activities have converged and become strategically interlinked. The Government of Tamil Nadu has recognized, supported and patronized the research potential of the state universities and some colleges have been identified as well suited for pursuing path breaking research. The UGC sponsored major and minor projects have made astounding exploration in the realm of science. These inventions, discoveries and innovative approach have massive impact on the growth of Tamil Nadu as one of the leading states for promoting research and encouraging the spirit of enquiry. The state universities and government colleges have transferred their fervour, commitment and innovative thinking into ingenious proposals and they require adequate funding to proceed in the path of research. The state universities have the potential to do key technology and high end research. Hence, the State deems it necessary to grant funds to pursue research of critical importance, to scale up the industry-academia partnership, to create incubation centres, to procure need based e-resources and to support the setting of cutting edge technology, research for enhancing the potential of the region and establishing instrumentation facility in these state universities. Though each state is eligible for only Rs 120 cr under this component, given the unique necessity of Tamil Nadu to boost research the State has proposed that the state universities be given Rs 184.23 cr and the twelve identified government colleges *with the*  potential to do substantial and meaningful research are granted Rs. 23 cr.

**Component 9 - Equity**

The demographic reality in Tamil Nadu as already said is very optimistic in equity issues as most of the students admitted in government arts and science colleges belong to MBC and SC categories. However, gender access is still an area to be addressed. One of the reasons of increase in access not being matched gender equity is the absence of gender specific infrastructure in terms of toilets. There is an urgent need in government colleges to tackle the problems of hygiene of the lady students and to increase these students’ privilege for better sanitation. With this in view the State plans to install e-toilets (electronic fully automated toilets). The toilets will have sanitary napkins vending machines and incinerators. The most attractive feature of the e-toilet is that it flushes automatically even if a person fails to flush. These fully automated toilets with GPRS devices would be a boon to lady students if installed in colleges. Of the 81 government arts and science colleges, 21 women’s colleges may be installed with 2 toilets each costing Rs 5 lakh amounting to Rs 2.1cr and 60 coeducation colleges may be installed with 1 toilet each @ Rs 5 lakh each amounting to Rs 3cr(total 5.1cr).

**Component 10 – Faculty Recruitment Support**

Faculty is the greatest asset of any university. Hence, it is imperative to consider recruitment of faculty as the foremost priority of any university. In Tamil Nadu, the overall student teacher ratio is considerably good. The Student Teacher Ratio is 18:1, and to reduce it to 14:1 when only the regular mode of teaching is considered. However a large number of vacancies have affected the ratio adversely. It is proposed to fill up 4435 vacant posts under this head in government arts & science colleges, universities and government polytechnics at a total cost of Rs 526.04cr.

**Component 11 – Faculty Improvement**

Of the state universities in Tamil Nadu, four of them – University of Madras, Madurai Kamaraj University, Bharathidasan University and Bharathiar University have academic staff colleges. The academic staff colleges offer their invaluable service of motivating the teachers thereby boosting the quality of education. The four academic staff colleges in the state universities is a hub for dissemination of knowledge through systematic orientation in specific subjects, techniques and methodologies. This system of inculcating values is indispensable towards the actualization of a teacher's role of encouraging innovative thinking and imparting quality education. But, the lack of resources impedes efficient functioning of these colleges. Therefore to facilitate the spurt of quality enhancement programmes in these colleges, to help the Faculty Training Institute, Government College of Technology, Coimbatore to train its teachers of technology it is proposed that Rs 15.92cr is granted.

**Component 12 - Vocationalisation of Higher Education**

The State proposes to undertake Vocationalisation of Higher Education for which a prototype has already been framed by National Vocational Education Qualification framework (NVEQF) of MHRD. The move in the direction of Vocationalisation of Higher Education is obviously a development based on the success of the venture in the sphere of Secondary Education. Moreover the vocational stream in Higher Secondary Education also creates the need for vocational education in Higher Education. 11.09 cr is asked to establish vocational coursesin 69govt Arts and Science Colleges, 26 Polytechnic Colleges, Alagappa University and a cell in TANSCHE.

**Component 14 – Institutional Restructuring and Reforms**

While TANSHE is in existence it will need strengthening in terms of technical support. Further, a Project Directorate is to be set up for the project. And establishment of quality assurance systems has become a necessity not only for monitoring quality in higher education delivered in the country but also for engaging in delivery of higher education internationally. It is proposed to establish an accreditation council to assess the standard of all universities and colleges periodically. The total funds proposed for all these is Rs 20 cr

**Component 15 – Capacity Building and Preparation, Data Collection and Planning**

As proposed in the guidelines it is planned to have baseline surveys, data collection, consultations, workshops, hiring of consultants, etc. Towards this end an amount if Rs 10 cr has been proposed.

**Component 17 – Support to Polytechnics**

All the four components under polytechnics is being proposed. Under sub-component 1, 11 polytechnics which have already been announced by the Government in 2013-14 are proposed to be taken up at a total cost of Rs 135 cr. Under subcomponent 2, 9 polytechnics are still to be covered for strengthening. A total amount of Rs 18 cr is proposed for them at the rate of Rs 2 cr each. Under sub-component 3, it is proposed to set up women’s hostel in the remaining 19 polytechnics at a cost of Rs 19 cr @ Rs 1 cr each. Under sub-component 4, apart from 56 existing polytechnics where the programme is already running, additionally 26 Government polytechnics and 74 private polytechnic colleges are proposed to be brought under the programme. Accordingly Rs 92.04 cr is proposed for this sub-component. Thus the total amount proposed for this component is Rs 264.34 cr.

**Management Monitoring Evaluation and Research**

An amount of 1% of the total outlay amounting to Rs 24.16 cr has been proposed under the scheme.

**Conclusion**

The *State Plan* is based on ground realities and genuine ambitions. Based on the ground realities of very high GER coupled with adequate statewide geographical coverage there is very little requirement for new institutions. This fact is reflected in the absence of proposals for the components related to this aspect. The thrust has been on improving the standards and expanding research and innovation and so grants are requested mainly for these components. While requesting sectoral allocation against a particular component this overall objective is kept in mind.