



BEST PRACTICES UNDER RUSA



With the Vision to impart quality Higher Education and Excellence in the State, Human Resource Development Department, Government of Sikkim under RUSA has taken several steps. Sikkim State Project Directorate-RUSA has been working rigorously for the betterment of Higher Education scenario in the state. On the roadway to achieve our vision the state has taken several RUSA initiatives for the enhancement and improvement of HEIs.

The mission of Higher Education Department of the state is to equip the Higher Education Institutes with all necessary resources to develop knowledge based society and to increase GER at higher education through intervening on equity measures, enhancing access, monitoring & improving quality through curriculum reforms, periodic assessment, networking of Higher Education Institutions.

1. AUTONOMY

The development of Higher Education in the state of Sikkim has grown over the decade. Sikkim is fast emerging as a rich educational hub as the state is in pursuance to strengthen the quality and excellence in higher Education.

The need for Autonomy in Higher Education arises on the grounds of academic expansion, excellence and innovation. It is also a key mandate of academic reforms under RUSA. The HEIs in their first NAAC cycle are advised to work towards the improvement of their NAAC grades.

Having understood the importance of autonomy in Higher Education but failing to fulfill certain criterions for autonomous status, the Directorate of Higher Education –Sikkim has been working rigorously to bridge the gap in between and fulfill those criterions.

2. ACCREDITATION

Warmly nestled in the heart of the eastern Himalayas, the State of Sikkim joined the national mainstream of India as its 22nd state in the year 1975. Sikkim was an independent state ruled by the Chogyal Monarchy till then. The region is endowed with rich biodiversity and natural resources but the development of the region is impeded by certain inherent difficulties such as inadequate infrastructure, adverse climatic conditions and mountainous landscape.

Regarding the higher Education, it is considered that Sikkim still remains many steps back in comparison with other states of the nations. Until the last nineties, the people of Sikkim went to other states for admission in Higher education especially in science education; same kind of system was practiced even in pre merger days.

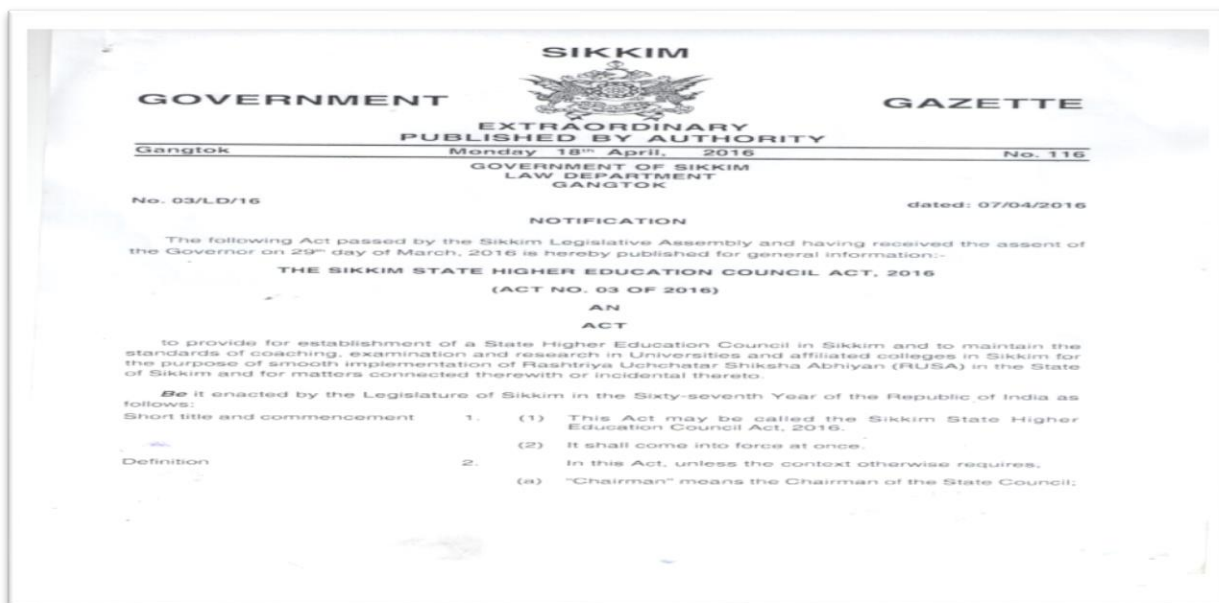
In the year 1977, only one degree college was established in Gangtok, affiliated to the North Bengal University with arts, Science and commerce subject up to graduate level. Hence, we can say that the dream for University's of Sikkim people was just a far reaching goal in early nineties. There is no doubt that the development of Higher Education in Sikkim was started very late and it was slow. However, the state has shown gradual progress over the period of time.

None of the Government colleges were accredited with NAAC before the state of Sikkim became a part of RUSA. With the implementation of RUSA in the state, a lot of infrastructural developments of HEIs were undertaken along with conduction of NAAC workshop. Sikkim State Project Directorate in consultation with MHRD pushed all HEIs for NAAC accreditation. As a result, in the year 2016 Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College, Tadong (NBBDC) was NAAC Accredited with "B" Grade. Following the footsteps of NBBDC, Tadong all the eligible colleges applied for NAAC Accreditation in the end of 2018 and got accredited. Refer below chart for reference:-

Name of the college	Grade
Namchi Government College, Kamrang	"B"
Government College, Rhenock	"C"
Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies, Pangthang	"B"
Sanskrit Mahavidhalaya, Samdong	"C"
Sikkim Government College, Gyalshing	"C"

3. REFORMS

a) **Governance:** The State Government has taken several initiatives to transform Sikkim into an education hub of the Nation. For this, the State legislative Assembly has also passed the Sikkim State Higher Education Council Act, 2016 to ensure smooth-functioning of its flagship project in the state. The focus of the bill is to bring about qualitative changes in education, to allocate a significant percentage to the State budget for education and to provide quality Higher Education to all including the students belonging to the BPL category especially to SC/STs and socially and educationally backward classes, women, minorities, and differently-abled persons.



b) Academic:

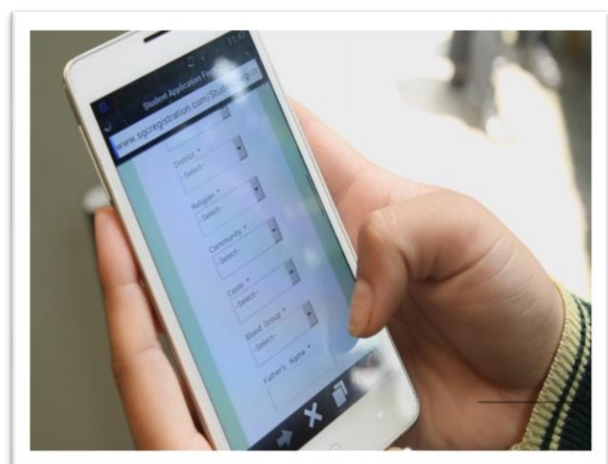
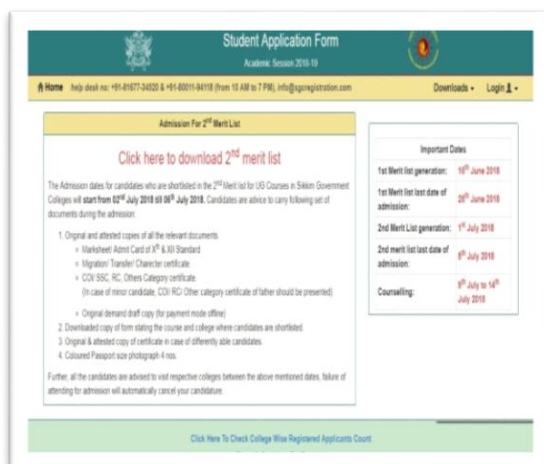
i. Online Admission

The Geographical landscape of Sikkim is such that it poses some serious constraint when the question pertains to students commuting to different locations seeking admission. Adding to this, the colleges are scattered all across the state from the busy and populous Gangtok in the east to the isolated and sparsely populated west district; such factors aggravate the problems even further and in turn limits the avenues for the students to apply in a college of their choice, preference and convenience. This being the case had always restricted the inter-district mobility of the students across the state. As the wise old saying goes 'old methods cannot cope up with new challenges', so a new mechanism was required to address such real time issues of the students.

The online admission system has proven to be a common and productive platform wherein the candidate applies for any college based on his/her preference through a dedicated web portal. The student is required to apply for a college of his/her choice opting for honors (major) subject as per his interest, aptitude and past performance. The newly devised and implemented online platform has led to the whole admission process being open, transparent and merit-based.

The online admission process has resulted in an even distribution of student enrolment across all colleges in the state. Prior to its implementation, majority of students would choose Sikkim Government College, Tadong as their preferred college. Through time such a practice led to overcrowding at Tadong centre while the rest of the colleges struggled to fetch the required number of students to function as sites of higher learning. The online platform served as a productive alternative and has led to an overall improvement of access, equity and quality.

The experiment has led to transparency in the entire admission process. The merit-based system ensures that a deserving student will not be deprived of studying the subject of his/her choice and interest. The online admission process has also ensured easy accessibility where a student does not have to travel to individual college for submission of admission forms. It has warranted that a completely functional, limpid and hassle-free procedure is possible, feasible and viable.



ii. PG and B.voc Course Introduction

Sikkim Government College, Tadong, being one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in the state had the basic infrastructure and teachers for under graduate courses, but the college was unable to introduce and commence post graduate courses due to lack of certain infrastructural facilities such as class rooms, smart classes, laboratories for undertaking scientific experiments and relevant and updated study materials etc. Further, the state was not been able to fill in the gap for required number of local teachers in science subjects in the school education sector.

The College worked towards Identifying and prioritizing critical gaps that would immediately help to commence PG Courses and intervene on these gaps by utilizing RUSA grants for this purpose on priority basis.

Sikkim Government College, Tadong, in the academic year 2016-2017, established the Post Graduate Departments in five disciplines viz. Economics, English, History, Mathematics and Physics with a total enrolment of 157 students. The number has only increased since then. Today, an aspiring Post Graduate candidate has to undergo a vigorous entrance examination. Only meritorious candidates are provided admission in the said course. Students have been performing exceeding well in the post graduate examination conducted by Sikkim University with few of them securing the top rung. The state will now be able to fill in the gap of required number of local science teachers, after the introduction of post graduate courses in mathematics and physics.

To promote the skill oriented courses, B.Voc is introduced at Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College Tadong. With this a one of its kind Virtual Laboratory is set up in B.voc Pharmaceutical Chemistry Course under the provision of RUSA. NBBBD College is the one of the first Government College in the country to establish a virtual Lab. Virtual Lab creates new flexible learning facilities for the students. It is one of the best examples, for the use of latest technology in classrooms.

- iii. Management Information System of HEI:** MIS of all RUSA beneficiary colleges was developed and initiated but at presents the up gradation and enhancement of MIS is on Progress. This MIS will be the repository of college information like admission details, personal information of college staff, college/department/course details, along with data on infrastructure, payroll of teaching & non teaching staff, inventory of labs, library, hostels, computer rooms, campus, etc. This system will not only provide centralized information but also it will reduce the effort of institutes towards information circulation. It will be quite easy to pass messages to the student from different medium and to update the information as and when required on a single window. Further, it would be extended to other staff such as teaching and non-teaching staff.

c) Administrative: The State legislative Assembly has passed the Sikkim State Higher Education Council Act, 2016 to ensure smooth-functioning of its flagship project in the state. There are multiple functions of SHEC and SPD; planning and coordination to prepare consolidated programs in the sphere of higher education in the state, keeping in view the guidelines that may be issued by the UGC or MHRD, to evolve prospective plans for development of Higher Education in the state and many more.

The Structure of State Higher Education Council and State Project Directorate are below:-

SHEC	
Chairman	Minister in charge-HRDD
Vice Chairman	Vice Chancellor –Sikkim University
Ex Officio Members	
Other Members	

SPD	
State Project Director	Additional Chief Secretary,HRDD
Joint State Project Director	Special Secretary cum Director Higher Education, HRDD
TSG	Joint Director, RUSA
	Additional Chief Engineer
	Additional Director, Accounts
	Consultant

d) Affiliation: All the state Government Colleges are affiliated with Sikkim University.

4. Employability: Employability is another challenge for the state as the state doesn't have many Private sectors. Students and youths are more focused on Government Sector Jobs. In order to spread the awareness and change the perspective of private sectors, the colleges have started to set up placement cells in the colleges.

5. STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY: For all the initiatives under RUSA undertaken in the state, testimonials of the students from different colleges are taken and a video for the same has been shared with MHRD.

6. ACCESS AND EQUITY: The State of Sikkim since it came under the umbrella of RUSA, the GER is up by 7% which is 37.3% (2017-18) compared to 30.3% in the year 2014 – 15. The

enrolment of students at various levels has also gone up with total enrolment for the state to 29000(approx) as compared to 24023(approx) in the year 2014 -15. The enrolment in the undergraduate level has gone up from 8320 (2014 -15) to 10304 (2017-18).

NOTE: Video testimonial of students will be enclosed in the mail.