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01st December, 2014

D.O. No. 1-44/2014-RMSA-1

Dear

     The Project Approval Board meetings for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) to consider the State Annual Work Plan and Budget for 2015-16 will be held from February 2015 and I am sure your team is in the process of preparation of Annual Work Plan and Budget for integrated Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan.

2.   At the outset I would like to draw your attention to the significant efforts that has been made to bring in transparency and efficiency, leveraging technology. The dedicated *rmsaindia.org* portal as you amy recall was launched by the Minister Human Resources Development on 26th August, 2014 during the National Conference on School Education. Since then we have been able to develop various modules including sanctioning and release of funds, merging of GIS mapping of schools in significant number of States on national platform (with NIC), effective linkages to UDISE and preparation of monthly briefs, updates on financial utilisation, QPR submissions online through Project Monitoring System (PMS) and so on. Capacity building training through Video Conference on PMS has already been held on 10th & 11th November 2014 with all States/UTs.

3.   The format for submission of Plan Proposal for 2015-16 along with detailed guidelines on all components under RMSA is available online on www.rmsaindia.org under Project Management (State Login à Download) and plan proposal will be submitted/uploaded under Financial Management. Further, all proposals now onwards will be received only online and all submissions within the time prescribed, will be appraised and appraisal note shared online before the PAB so that states can prepare their submissions well in time.

4.   With this as context, I would like to share with you some of the concerns, issues and priorities that you may like to keep in mind while formulating the State's proposal.

(i)   Progress on civil component has been slow in some of the States/ UTs, and delayed implementation will lead to further escalation of construction costs which is highly avoidable especially with the huge backlog of approved works. States proposing new civil works will have to ensure that the pending civil works have all been taken up as also the capacity of the State institutions to undertake further works.

(ii)   For better planning and implementation, 4 schemes i.e. ICT @ school, Girls Hostel, Vocational Education and Inclusive Education for Disabled Students at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) have been subsumed under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in 2013-14.

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Since then MHRD has been striving to take forward the integrated implementation of these schemes. In 2014-15, the budget heads of these schemes were merged under the major head of RMSA and accordingly funds in 2014-15 were released in integrated mode. RMSA State Implementation Agency has been made the nodal agency for implementation and monitoring of these components as part of integrated RMSA.

(iii)   To smoothen the process, necessary changes in the components / schemes have been carried out by MHRD. Some of the recent changes which have been approved by National Mission held on 19th September 2014 are as follows:

- Revision of Allowance for girls admitted in Girls hostels at par with KGBV provisions.
- Integration of teacher training component under RMSA
- Revision of IEDSS component for integration under respective heads of RMSA-civil works to be part of RMSA civil works component, focus on student components, limited role of NGOs, deployment of special educators at block level to support general teachers at school
- Re-orientation of ICT@ school to harmonise components with RMSA-hardware component to be part of nonrecurring head of RMSA while providing more flexibility to ensuring maximisation of access points, deleting provision for SMART school etc.

5.   While some of these revisions will need further approval before implementation, components with no financial implication like integration of teacher training, subsuming of ICT components are being incorporated for Annual Plan 2015-16. Minutes of the 2nd National Mission Meeting are available at http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/minutes/RMSA.pdf. While formulating the Annual Plan for 2015-16, these may kept in mind.

6.   You may also note that there is a shift in the approach to planning specially for quality and equity interventions from the current set of 'activities' to Project based outcome orientation. The National Resource Group of RMSA, had also endorsed the need for taking on a 'theme based approach' to planning for quality interventions. Submission of Plan format has been accordingly amended and detailed guidelines are available online. In line with the Government of India's agenda to optimize the available resources, it is expected that a clear convergence plan would form part of the AWP&B highlighting steps taken by the State Government in converging the funds available from different sources ensuring optimal resource utilization.

7.   Another area to which I would like to draw your attention is the gap in recruitment and availability of subject teachers as well as special educators in schools. You would agree 'quality' implications of not resolving this issue is significant. Some of the other factors to be considered while planning are whole school approach of planning, integration of ICT and vocational education into mainstream education, and to all such efforts the use of UDISE data is critical and non-optional.

8. I would also urge you to also review and provide brief on the status on toilets in the schools and steps taken by the State Government to ensure availability of functional toilets in all the secondary schools and the timeline for the same.

9. On the aspect of innovation (see guidelines on innovation), you may like to explore options in the areas of issues relating to access to gender, Children with Special Needs, disadvantaged groups (SFDs, EBBs..). ICT related steps may look at the *nroer.in* initiative and how it can be synergised with state specific content creations including for teachers training. Convergence with other IT initiatives especially under the Digital India, can be explored for appropriate synergies for both hard and soft ICT enhancements in the schools systems.

10. I request you to kindly refer to the rmsaindia website for detailed guidelines and formats (along with calendar of the meetings scheduled) in which the Annual Plan will need to be submitted online. Looking forward to any further suggestions on improvement to this collaborative exercise, as always.

(Radha Chauhan)

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