

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Higher Education is an important sector for the growth and development of individuals that contributes to the development of a society. While Students desired ‘employability and higher studies’ as the primary outcome of higher education, the Society wants higher education to contribute towards ‘creation of new knowledge through research’ and ‘diffusion of knowledge through effective teaching/learning processes’. On the other hand, Government aims to ‘create a high-quality higher education system which is easily accessible to all sections of society’. Overall, a robust and strong governance structure is also of paramount importance in achieving the aforesaid outcomes. Through this Performance Audit, an attempt was made to evaluate the extent of achievement of these outcomes, as practicable.

The Performance Audit was conducted during October 2019 to January 2020 covering the period from 2014-15 to 2018-19. Out of the nine State Universities providing education in general streams (Science/ Arts/ Commerce), two universities (22 *per cent*) viz., Utkal University (UU) and North Odisha University (NOU) were selected for audit scrutiny. Out of a total universe of 299 colleges under these universities, 32 were selected for test check.

The system of maintenance of data related to critical parameters such as job placement of outgoing students, progression to higher studies at both university and college levels needs to be strengthened.

On an average 26.10 *per cent* (2014-19) students of UU and 3.79 *per cent* (2014-19) students of NOU could get placements through Placements Cells/ Job Fairs. There was less than optimal functioning and, in many cases, complete absence of Placement and Career Counselling Cells and Job Fairs at test checked universities and colleges. The State Government needs to take robust steps for providing coaching to the students of the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) for competitive examinations.

There was no long term vision on the part of the Department of Higher Education (DHE) of the State to provide a continuous supporting mechanism for the students and improve results.

Curricular aspects are the mainstay of any educational institution and include curriculum design, development, enrichment, planning and implementation. Audit test checked syllabi of 18 out of 42 subjects in UU and NOU and found that syllabi of 15 subjects were not revised, though due for revision. In NOU, only a quarter of courses had focus on employability and not a single value-added course was introduced in any of the test-checked Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).

Additionally, availability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, *i.e.*, classrooms and the number of faculties using ICT tools in the test checked HEIs remained low (8 to 58 *per cent* classrooms).

Shortage of quality faculty coupled with lack of faculty mobility across regions was a major constraint. The vacancy position in Utkal University and North Odisha University was 38 *per cent* and 34 *per cent* respectively in 2018-

19 and in both Universities, there were significant instances of persistent vacancies. The Students Teacher Ratio in HEIs also did not adhere to the laid down norms (20:1), especially at college level. Adequate number of opportunities were not provided to teachers to attend professional development training programs. Percentage of completion of research works in UU remained very low (16 *per cent*). Development of patents was nil in both the universities and non-existent in the test-checked colleges. The test-checked colleges had no collaborative activities with the industries and no MoUs had been signed.

The College Density in Odisha remained stagnant at 23 during 2014-19. Government of Odisha did not prepare any Master Plan for opening of new colleges and needs to identify regions/blocks that lack adequate higher education facilities. In the State, 19 Blocks were devoid of any kind of HEI and only 12 *per cent* of Government colleges were present in rural areas.

Infrastructure facilities for Persons with Disability (PwD) like ramps were available only in eight test checked colleges and in none of the test checked colleges other facilities like, Braille signboard, audio books, sign language, accessible website, *etc.*, were available. In UU and NOU also, only 80 *per cent* and 60 *per cent* of all buildings were disabled friendly.

The State Level Quality Assurance Cell (SLQAC) needs to be strengthened to overcome the persisting low (20.50 *per cent*) accreditation of colleges in the State. Out of 20 Autonomous colleges of test checked universities, autonomous status of 14 colleges had lapsed and were not renewed. The position of NAAC accredited HEIs in the State was also dismal as only 20.50 *per cent* of colleges were NAAC accredited as of March 2019. Further, only 4.42 *per cent* (8 out of 181) of accredited colleges obtained 'A' grade indicating requirement of more efforts for increasing the quality of education in HEIs of the State.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has registered only a slight increase (by 4.4) between 2014-15 and 2018-19, highlighting the fact that more sustained efforts to improve the same, are required on the part of the State Government and the HEIs. The GER of SC and ST category was lower than the State GER (22.1).