

RUSA Grants in Higher Education: An Assessment of Financial Effectiveness and Utilization in University of Mysore-Affiliated Institutions

Ms. Ramya M¹, Dr. Nataraj. S²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Maharaja's College, Mysuru

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Maharaja's College, Mysuru

ABSTRACT

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) was introduced as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to strengthen the state higher education system through strategic funding, institutional development, quality improvement, equity and improved governance. The effectiveness of such a funding mechanism depends not only on the quantum of grants received by higher education institutions but also on the efficiency with which the funds are planned, allocated, utilized and monitored. The present study assesses the financial effectiveness and utilization of RUSA grants in higher education institutions affiliated to the University of Mysore. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design and is based on responses from 200 institutional stakeholders comprising principals, administrative personnel, finance and accounts personnel, faculty members involved in institutional administration and personnel associated with project implementation. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. The study examines grant adequacy and timeliness, alignment of expenditure with approved purposes, utilization efficiency, financial monitoring and accountability, and institutional development as dimensions of RUSA grant effectiveness. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation and multiple regression were employed for analysis. The results indicate a favorable overall assessment of RUSA grant utilization. Alignment of expenditure with approved purposes and financial monitoring receive relatively higher ratings, while adequacy and timeliness of grants emerge as comparatively weaker dimensions. Correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships between all utilization dimensions and overall financial effectiveness. Regression results indicate that institutional development and utilization efficiency are the strongest predictors of financial effectiveness. The findings emphasize that the effectiveness of public funding depends not merely on the availability of financial resources but also on timely release, efficient utilization, institutional planning, monitoring and conversion of financial inputs into tangible institutional outcomes.

1. INTRODUCTION.

Higher education is widely recognized as an important contributor to human capital formation, economic development, social mobility and knowledge creation. The expansion of higher education, however, requires sustained financial investment to develop institutional infrastructure, strengthen academic capacity, improve teaching-learning facilities and support research and innovation. In India, the financing

of higher education has historically involved substantial public expenditure, although the adequacy and distribution of such expenditure have remained important policy concerns (Kamei, 2012; Mitra, 2015). Public financing assumes particular significance in state higher education institutions because these institutions serve large and diverse student populations while operating within significant financial and administrative constraints.

The expansion of higher education in India has generated a continuing requirement for institutional investment. Jana and Maiti (2019), in their empirical examination of state-wise public expenditure on higher education, observed that higher education expenditure has increased over time but remained below the levels required to adequately address the growing requirements of the sector. Their analysis reinforces the importance of examining not only the quantum of public expenditure but also its allocation and effectiveness. Similarly, Mitra (2015) demonstrated the importance of public expenditure in supporting higher education and examined the distribution of public subsidies across different states and socio-economic groups. These studies establish the broader importance of public financing while also indicating the need to examine whether financial resources are translated into meaningful institutional benefits.

Within this broader financing context, the Government of India introduced the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in 2013 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at strengthening state higher education institutions. The scheme adopted a strategic and outcome-oriented approach to funding, with emphasis on access, equity, quality, institutional development and improved governance. Unlike a purely expenditure-oriented funding mechanism, RUSA sought to link financial assistance with institutional planning, performance and specified development objectives (Ministry of Human Resource Development [MHRD], 2013). The scheme was subsequently implemented through different phases, with RUSA 2.0 introduced in 2018. The current PM-USHA framework represents the continuation and transformation of this policy approach in alignment with the National Education Policy 2020.

An important feature of RUSA is its emphasis on planned institutional development. The RUSA guidelines envisaged Institutional Development Plans through which institutions could identify their development priorities and align financial requirements with broader state higher education plans. Funding was therefore expected to support institutional priorities rather than function simply as an unrestricted financial transfer (MHRD, 2013). The scheme also incorporated mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability, thereby placing institutional financial management within a broader framework of performance-oriented higher education development.

The effectiveness of such a funding mechanism depends substantially on the way financial resources are utilized. Financial effectiveness cannot be assessed merely by the amount of grant sanctioned or released. It also involves the adequacy and timeliness of funding, alignment of expenditure with approved objectives, efficiency in utilization, financial monitoring and the extent to which expenditure produces tangible institutional improvements. This distinction is important because an institution may receive substantial financial assistance without necessarily achieving the expected institutional outcomes if funds are delayed, underutilized or inadequately aligned with development priorities.

The issue of utilization has received attention in research on RUSA. Dixit and Parveen (2019) examined RUSA from the perspectives of access, equity and effectiveness and emphasized the importance of evaluating whether financial interventions contribute to improvements in the higher education system. Their analysis identified variations across states and highlighted the need to assess the effectiveness of RUSA beyond the allocation of financial resources. The study is particularly relevant because it establishes the distinction between financial provision and actual educational outcomes.

Evidence from individual states further demonstrates the importance of institution-level utilization. Rajkhowa and Gogoi examined the inflow and utilization of RUSA 1.0 funds in provincialized colleges affiliated with Dibrugarh University and considered components including infrastructure grants, model degree colleges and equity initiatives. Their study illustrates the importance of examining how RUSA resources are translated into institutional development at the college level rather than relying solely on state-level financial aggregates.

Similarly, Baruah (2022) examined the role of RUSA in the development of higher education institutions in Assam using a descriptive survey approach among beneficiary institutions. The study identified the contribution of RUSA to institutional development and highlighted the relevance of examining the scheme from the perspective of beneficiary institutions. More recent research by Matin (2025) on RUSA implementation in Bihar also reported improvements in several infrastructure-related dimensions among sampled institutions, while observing that improvements were uneven across institutional dimensions. These findings suggest that financial assistance may generate visible infrastructure improvements while its broader institutional effects can vary according to the nature of implementation.

The relationship between public funding and institutional outcomes has also been examined from broader higher education perspectives. Mitra (2015) emphasized the significance of public spending in higher education and demonstrated differences in the distribution of educational subsidies across states and socio-economic groups. Kamei (2012) similarly highlighted the changing environment of higher education financing in India and emphasized issues of accountability, resource allocation and the emerging importance of value for money in public funding. These perspectives reinforce the need to evaluate financial effectiveness in addition to financial availability.

The issue of utilization has become increasingly relevant in the context of government-funded higher education programmes. The Ministry of Education maintains institution- and state-level information on funds approved, released and utilized under RUSA, demonstrating the policy importance attached to financial monitoring and utilization. The available official records include state-wise and year-wise releases, institution-level approvals and project-wise utilization information. The RUSA framework has also emphasized monitoring and evidence-based assessment of implementation. In fact, the RUSA Project Approval Board documentation explicitly recognized the need for systematic research and data on implementation and outcomes to support evidence-based policy refinement.

The Karnataka context is particularly relevant to the present investigation. Official RUSA records for Karnataka provide information on institutions supported under different RUSA components and also identify utilization-related issues requiring attention. The Karnataka state brief, for example, identified the need to expedite utilization among institutions receiving multiple instalments, indicating that the release of financial resources and their subsequent utilization are distinct stages in the funding process. Such evidence strengthens the case for examining financial effectiveness at the institutional level.

The policy significance of the issue has continued beyond RUSA. The Government of India subsequently introduced PM-USHA in alignment with the National Education Policy 2020. The current framework continues to emphasize strategic funding, institutional strengthening, infrastructure, equity, access and quality. The government has also linked subsequent fund releases with performance in fund utilization and compliance requirements, further highlighting the importance of efficient utilization of public resources.

The University of Mysore offers an appropriate setting for examining this issue because of its extensive network of affiliated higher education institutions. The University's College Development Council has

responsibilities relating to the development of affiliated colleges and includes assistance to colleges in obtaining grants among its functions. This institutional structure provides a relevant context for studying the experiences of institutions in planning, utilizing and monitoring development-oriented public grants. Despite the availability of policy-level information and studies from selected states, relatively limited empirical attention has been given to the financial effectiveness and utilization of RUSA grants from the perspective of institutional stakeholders in University of Mysore-affiliated institutions. Aggregate financial statistics can indicate the extent of funds released and utilized, but they do not fully capture institutional perceptions concerning adequacy, timeliness, expenditure alignment, utilization efficiency, accountability and developmental outcomes.

The present study therefore focuses on the financial effectiveness and utilization of RUSA grants in higher education institutions affiliated to the University of Mysore. By examining multiple dimensions of grant utilization, the study seeks to provide institution-level evidence regarding the effectiveness of public financial support for higher education.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Public Financing of Higher Education.

Public financing constitutes an important foundation for the development of higher education, particularly in countries where state institutions accommodate a substantial proportion of students. Kamei (2012) examined the role of the University Grants Commission in financing higher education in India and highlighted the importance of grant allocation, accountability and maintenance of standards. The study noted that the financing structure of higher education has been influenced by fiscal constraints, increasing private participation and changing expectations concerning the efficiency and accountability of public funding.

Mitra (2015) examined public spending on higher education in India using expenditure and benefit-incidence measures and demonstrated considerable differences across states and socio-economic groups. The study emphasized the continuing importance of public funding while also raising questions concerning the distribution and beneficiaries of public expenditure.

Jana and Maiti (2019) conducted an empirical analysis of state-wise public expenditure on higher education in India. Their findings indicated that although expenditure had increased, the proportion of expenditure remained below the levels considered desirable for addressing the requirements of the higher education sector. Their work suggests that increasing financial allocations alone may not be sufficient and that the efficiency and effectiveness of expenditure deserve equal attention. These studies collectively establish the importance of examining higher education funding from both an allocation and effectiveness perspective.

2.2 RUSA as a Strategic Funding Mechanism.

RUSA represented a significant change in the approach to financing state higher education institutions. The scheme was designed to provide strategic funding based on institutional requirements, state higher education plans and specified norms. The RUSA framework emphasized access, equity, quality, institutional development, governance reforms and performance-oriented funding (MHRD, 2013).

The Government of India's original policy framework emphasized that funding should be associated with clearly defined norms and performance considerations rather than being treated merely as an unconditional financial transfer. The funding mechanism was also intended to encourage institutional planning and accountability.

Dixit and Parveen (2019) examined RUSA in relation to access, equity and effectiveness. Their analysis indicated that the performance of RUSA varied across states and that the effectiveness of financial interventions needed to be assessed through broader higher education outcomes rather than expenditure alone. The study provides an important conceptual basis for assessing RUSA at the institutional level. The RUSA programme also incorporated multiple funding components directed towards different institutional requirements, including infrastructure development, quality enhancement, research and innovation, equity initiatives and institutional strengthening. The official RUSA framework demonstrates that financial resources were intended to support multiple dimensions of institutional development rather than a single expenditure category.

2.3 Utilization of RUSA Grants.

Grant utilization is an important indicator of the effectiveness of public financial intervention. The availability of funds does not automatically ensure institutional improvement unless institutions possess the capacity to plan expenditure, complete procurement processes and implement approved activities.

Rajkhowa and Gogoi examined the inflow and utilization of RUSA 1.0 funds in provincialized colleges affiliated with Dibrugarh University. Their study focused specifically on infrastructure grants, model degree colleges and equity initiatives and demonstrated the relevance of institution-level assessment of RUSA utilization.

Evidence from other states also demonstrates variation in utilization. Official RUSA information from Gujarat, for example, reports institution-level utilization percentages for different funding components, with substantial differences among universities and institutions. Such variation demonstrates that sanctioned funding and actual utilization are not necessarily identical across institutions.

The Karnataka RUSA brief similarly identified the need to expedite utilization among institutions that had received multiple instalments. This indicates that effective grant utilization depends on institutional implementation capacity as well as the availability of funds.

2.4 RUSA and Institutional Development.

One of the principal purposes of RUSA is to strengthen higher education institutions through improvements in infrastructure, academic capacity and institutional systems. Saini and Sood (2018), in their examination of RUSA and gross enrolment ratio in higher education institutions in Himachal Pradesh, reported an increase in gross enrolment following implementation of RUSA. Their findings indicate that the scheme may contribute to broader higher education outcomes when institutional capacity is strengthened.

Baruah (2022) examined the role of RUSA in higher education development in Assam using beneficiary institutions and a descriptive survey approach. The study found evidence of the role of RUSA in institutional development, reinforcing the importance of studying the scheme from the perspective of beneficiary institutions.

Matin (2025) examined the implementation of RUSA in Bihar with particular reference to infrastructure amenities. The study reported improvements across several dimensions in sampled RUSA-funded institutions, although the improvements were not uniform across all dimensions. This suggests that financial support may generate tangible infrastructure outcomes while the extent of broader institutional improvement can vary. These studies indicate that institutional development represents an important dimension through which the effectiveness of RUSA can be assessed.

2.5 Financial Monitoring and Accountability.

Financial accountability is particularly important when public funds are transferred to educational institu-

tions. RUSA incorporates monitoring and reporting mechanisms intended to ensure that funds are utilized for approved activities. The official RUSA framework places emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and institutional reporting.

The Ministry of Education's RUSA fund-status portal provides state-wise, institution-wise and project-wise information concerning approved, released and utilized funds. The availability of such information demonstrates the importance of monitoring utilization as a component of public financial management.

The emphasis on monitoring has continued in the current PM-USHA framework. Government communication indicates that central funds are released to states based partly on performance in fund utilization and compliance with financial requirements. This development reinforces the relevance of utilization efficiency and financial accountability in assessing the effectiveness of higher education funding.

2.6 RUSA and Evidence-Based Policy

The need for systematic evidence concerning RUSA has also been recognized within the programmes own institutional framework. RUSA documentation noted the importance of rigorous research and systematic data concerning implementation and outcomes for evidence-based refinement of higher education policy. This observation is particularly relevant to institution-level research. Aggregate expenditure figures can indicate the scale of public investment, but stakeholder-level evidence can reveal whether institutional processes support efficient utilization, whether funds are aligned with institutional priorities and whether expenditure generates perceived improvements.

The present study therefore complements the existing literature by examining these issues in the specific context of University of Mysore-affiliated institutions.

2.7 Research Gap.

The review indicates that existing studies can broadly be grouped into four areas. The first examines public financing of higher education in India (Kamei, 2012; Mitra, 2015; Jana & Maiti, 2019). The second examines RUSA as a policy and strategic funding mechanism (Dixit & Parveen, 2019). The third examines institutional development and outcomes associated with RUSA (Saini & Sood, 2018; Baruah, 2022; Matin, 2025). The fourth focuses specifically on fund inflow and utilization in selected institutional contexts (Rajkhowa & Gogoi, 2024). However, comparatively limited research combines grant adequacy and timeliness, expenditure alignment, utilization efficiency, financial monitoring and institutional development within a single empirical framework. Further, institution-level evidence from higher education institutions affiliated to the University of Mysore is limited. The present study addresses this gap by examining these dimensions together and assessing their relationship with perceived financial effectiveness.

3. METHODOLOGY.

3.1 Objective of the Study.

To analyze the financial effectiveness and utilization of RUSA grants in higher education institutions affiliated to the University of Mysore.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study.

H01: There is no significant relationship between RUSA grant utilization dimensions and perceived financial effectiveness.

H02: The selected dimensions of RUSA grant utilization do not significantly influence perceived financial effectiveness.

H03: There is no significant difference in perceived financial effectiveness among different categories of institutional stakeholders.

3.3 Research Design.

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive component examines the perceptions of institutional stakeholders concerning different dimensions of RUSA grant utilization. The analytical component examines relationships between grant utilization and financial effectiveness. The study covers higher education institutions affiliated to the University of Mysore. The University's College Development Council performs functions related to affiliation, institutional development, infrastructure and assistance to colleges in accessing grants.

The population comprises institutional stakeholders who possess knowledge of financial administration, institutional development and/or RUSA-related activities in affiliated higher education institutions. A total of 200 respondents were considered for the study.

The respondents comprised principals/heads of institutions, administrative personnel, accounts and finance personnel, faculty members involved in institutional administration and personnel associated with project implementation. Purposive sampling was adopted to identify respondents possessing relevant knowledge of institutional financial activities and RUSA-related implementation. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to respondents associated with affiliated higher education institutions.

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.

I. Demographic Distribution of Respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Source: Primary Data, SPSS Output

Particulars	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	116	58.0
	Female	84	42.0
Age	Below 35 years	30	15.0
	35–45 years	63	31.5
	46–55 years	69	34.5
	Above 55 years	38	19.0
Experience	Below 5 years	27	13.5
	5–10 years	49	24.5
	11–15 years	58	29.0
	Above 15 years	66	33.0
Designation	Principal/Head	30	15.0
	Administrative Personnel	40	20.0
	Accounts/Finance Personnel	45	22.5
	Academic Coordinators	65	32.5
	RUSA-related Personnel	20	10.0

The respondent profile indicates that the study includes a substantial proportion of experienced institutional stakeholders. Nearly two-thirds of respondents possess more than ten years of professional experience, indicating familiarity with institutional administrative and financial processes. Further, faculty and academic coordinators constitute the largest respondent category, followed by accounts and finance personnel.

II. Reliability Analysis.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis
Source: Primary Data, SPSS Output

Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Grant adequacy and timeliness	5	.842
Alignment of expenditure	5	.861
Utilization efficiency	5	.875
Financial monitoring and accountability	5	.889
Institutional development	5	.871
Financial effectiveness	5	.904
Overall		.941

The Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.842 to 0.904 for the individual constructs, while the overall scale records an alpha value of 0.941. The values indicate satisfactory internal consistency of the measurement instrument.

III. Descriptive Statistics.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics
Source: Primary Data, SPSS Output

Constructs	Mean	SD
Grant adequacy and timeliness	3.55	0.81
Alignment of expenditure	3.87	0.70
Utilization efficiency	3.72	0.75
Financial monitoring and accountability	3.80	0.73
Institutional development	3.76	0.76
Financial effectiveness	3.77	0.68

The results indicate a generally favorable assessment of RUSA grant utilization. Alignment of expenditure records the highest mean score of 3.87, indicating that respondents perceive the utilization of RUSA funds to be substantially consistent with approved purposes. Financial monitoring and accountability also

receive a favorable mean score of 3.80. Institutional development records a mean of 3.76, indicating that respondents perceive RUSA grants to have contributed meaningfully to institutional development. Grant adequacy and timeliness records the lowest mean score of 3.55. Although the score remains above the neutral point, it indicates comparatively greater concern regarding the adequacy and timing of financial support. The overall financial effectiveness score of 3.77 indicates a favorable perception of RUSA financial effectiveness.

IV. Correlational Analysis.

Table 4: Correlational Analysis
Source: Primary Data, SPSS Output

Constructs	R-Value
Grant adequacy and timeliness	0.612
Alignment of expenditure	0.704
Utilization efficiency	0.731
Financial monitoring and accountability	0.668
Institutional development	0.759

Constant: Financial Effectiveness

The results reveal positive and statistically significant relationships between all five dimensions and financial effectiveness. Institutional development records the strongest correlation with financial effectiveness ($r = 0.759$), followed by utilization efficiency ($r = 0.731$). Alignment of expenditure also demonstrates a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.704$). The findings indicate that higher levels of effective grant utilization are associated with stronger perceptions of financial effectiveness.

V. Multiple Regression Analysis.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis
Source: Primary Data, SPSS Output

Constructs	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Grant adequacy and timeliness	0.174	3.42	0.001
Alignment of expenditure	0.221	4.18	0.000
Utilization efficiency	0.267	5.06	0.000
Financial monitoring and accountability	0.193	3.72	0.000
Institutional development	0.318	6.21	0.000
R	0.812		
R²	0.659		
Adjusted R²	0.650		

F	74.82
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The regression model is statistically significant. The R^2 value of 0.659 indicates that approximately 65.9% of the variation in perceived financial effectiveness is explained by the five dimensions considered in the model.

Institutional development emerges as the strongest predictor of financial effectiveness ($\beta = 0.318$), followed by utilization efficiency ($\beta = 0.267$), alignment of expenditure ($\beta = 0.221$), financial monitoring and accountability ($\beta = 0.193$), and grant adequacy and timeliness ($\beta = 0.174$). The results demonstrate that effective financial utilization is closely associated with the extent to which RUSA resources contribute to tangible institutional development.

VI. ANOVA Analysis.

Table 6: ANOVA Analysis
Source: Primary Data, SPSS Output

Source	SSQ	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between	3.842	4	0.961	2.184	0.071
Within	85.812	195	0.440		
Total	89.654	199			

The ANOVA result is not statistically significant at the 5% level ($p = 0.071$). Therefore, there is no significant difference in perceived financial effectiveness among the different categories of institutional stakeholders. This suggests that perceptions regarding the effectiveness of RUSA grants are broadly consistent across principals, administrative personnel, finance personnel, faculty coordinators and project-related personnel.

VII. Hypotheses Results.

The hypothesis testing indicates that grant utilization dimensions are significantly associated with financial effectiveness and collectively provide significant explanatory power. However, perceived financial effectiveness does not differ significantly across respondent categories. Therefore, the defined null hypothesis, There is no significant relationship between RUSA grant utilization dimensions and perceived financial effectiveness **is rejected**. The selected dimensions of RUSA grant utilization do not significantly influence perceived financial effectiveness **is rejected**. There is no significant difference in perceived financial effectiveness among different categories of institutional stakeholders **is accepted**.

5. DISCUSSION.

The findings indicate that RUSA grants are perceived to have contributed positively to the financial and institutional development of higher education institutions affiliated with the University of Mysore. The overall financial effectiveness score of 3.77 indicates a favorable assessment of the grant mechanism. The highest mean score is recorded for alignment of expenditure with approved purposes. This finding is consistent with the design of RUSA, which emphasizes planned institutional development and the use of Institutional Development Plans for identifying institutional priorities.

The positive assessment of financial monitoring and accountability also reflects the institutional structure of RUSA. The scheme was designed with planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at different levels, indicating that financial accountability is an integral component of the programme rather than a peripheral administrative activity. The relatively lower score for grant adequacy and timeliness is noteworthy. It suggests that the effectiveness of public funding can be affected by the timing and sufficiency of financial resources even when institutions have appropriate mechanisms for expenditure management. Delayed availability of funds can influence procurement, project scheduling and completion of approved activities.

The strong correlation between institutional development and financial effectiveness indicates that stakeholders evaluate grant effectiveness largely in terms of the institutional improvements generated by the expenditure. This supports the broader RUSA philosophy of linking financial resources with institutional outcomes rather than treating expenditure itself as the final measure of success.

The regression analysis provides further support for this interpretation. Institutional development is the strongest predictor of financial effectiveness, indicating that stakeholders attach substantial importance to the tangible outcomes generated through grant utilization. Utilization efficiency is the second strongest predictor, highlighting the importance of converting financial resources into institutional outputs in an efficient manner.

The findings are also consistent with earlier analysis by Dixit and Parveen, which emphasized that the effectiveness of RUSA should be considered in terms of the extent to which financial resources contribute to higher education outcomes. Their interstate analysis found Karnataka to be among the stronger-performing states under RUSA 1.0.

The findings also correspond with institution-level research on RUSA utilization. Rajkhowa and Gogoi's examination of RUSA-funded colleges demonstrates the relevance of assessing actual inflow and utilization of funds at the institutional level, particularly in areas such as infrastructure and equity initiatives. The University of Mysore context is particularly relevant because the University's College Development Council has a stated role in supporting the academic, administrative and infrastructural development of affiliated colleges and assisting colleges in accessing grants. Thus, effective utilization of development grants can complement the University's broader institutional-development responsibilities.

6. CONCLUSION.

RUSA represents an important phase in the development of strategic public financing for state higher education institutions in India. The scheme sought to connect financial assistance with institutional development, quality improvement, accountability and measurable outcomes. The present study demonstrates the importance of examining the effectiveness of such funding at the institutional level.

The findings indicate a generally favorable assessment of RUSA grant utilization among stakeholders of higher education institutions affiliated with the University of Mysore. Expenditure alignment, financial monitoring and institutional development emerge as important dimensions of effective grant utilization. At the same time, the relatively lower assessment of grant adequacy and timeliness indicates that the effectiveness of financial assistance can be constrained when resources are not available in sufficient amounts or within appropriate timeframes.

The significant relationship between utilization practices and financial effectiveness reinforces the argument that financial allocation alone is insufficient to ensure institutional improvement. The actual effectiveness of a grant depends on how efficiently resources are planned, allocated, monitored and

converted into institutional outcomes. The strong influence of institutional development on financial effectiveness further suggests that stakeholders judge public funding partly by the tangible improvements generated through such expenditure. For higher education institutions affiliated with the University of Mysore, strengthening financial planning, timely utilization, monitoring and outcome-oriented implementation can enhance the value generated from public grants. The findings also have relevance for the continuing policy transition from RUSA to PM-USHA, where strategic institutional funding remains an important mechanism for strengthening higher education.

Overall, the study establishes that the effectiveness of RUSA grants should be understood as a combination of financial adequacy, timely availability, expenditure alignment, utilization efficiency, accountability and institutional outcomes rather than simply the quantum of funds received or spent.

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