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NAAC AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN, INDIA

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Abstract

Quality, as we know so far, was originally developed in the manufacturing industry. In the area of higher education, the adoption of quality control has been superficial and diluted by the exercise of academic . Further, the prevailing culture of universities is often based on individual autonomy, which is zealously guarded. Thus, it is usually difficult to apply the features of quality to higher education considering the fact that quality requires. However, the quality of higher education is very important for its stakeholders. Notably, providers (funding bodies and the community at large), students, staff and employers of graduates are. The most commonly grouped dimensions of quality are product, software and service. In the changing context marked by expansion of higher education and globalization of economic activities, education has become a national concern with an international dimension. To cope with this changing context, countries have been pressurized to ensure and assure quality of higher education at a nationally comparable and internationally acceptable standard. Consequently, many countries initiated "national quality assurance mechanisms" and many more are in the process of evolving a suitable strategy. Most of the quality assurance bodies were established in the nineties and after a few years of practical experience, they are rethinking many issues of quality assurance. At this juncture where countries look for experiences and practices elsewhere, the experience of India has many valuable lessons and this report is an attempt to share those developments.

SELF-ASSESSMENT (SWOT): Self-assessment is often performed through a SWOT analysis. SWOT is an acronym for • S- Strengths • W-Weaknesses • O- Opportunities • T-Threats

ABBREVIATIONS - AB: Accreditation Board ABET: Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology AICTE: All India Council for Technical Education APQN: Asia Pacific Quality Network AUQA: Australian Universities Quality Agency CHEA: Council on Higher Education Accreditation CMM: Capability Maturity Model CMMI: Capability Maturity Model Integration COA: Commission on Accreditation COPA: Council on Post-secondary Accreditation CORPA: Commission on Recognition of Post-Secondary Accreditation DEC: Distance Education Council DEI: Danish Education Institute Dip.: Diploma ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ECPD: Engineer's Council

for Professional Development EQM: External Quality Monitoring FRACHE: Federation of Regional Accrediting Commission of Higher Education GOI: Government of India HEI: Higher Education Institution ICAR: Indian Council of Agricultural Research IGNOU: Indira Gandhi National Open University ICT: Information and Communication Technology IHEP: Institute of Higher Education Policy INQAAHE: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education IQAC: Internal Quality Assurance Cell ISO: International Organization for Standardization JUSE: Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers MCETYA: Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs MoA: Memorandum of Understanding NAAC: National Assessment and Accreditation Council NBA: National Board of Accreditation NET: National Eligibility Test NIST: National Institute of Standards and Technology ODE-AAB: Open and Distance Education Assessment and Accreditation Board ODL: Open and Distance Learning PDCA: Plan-Do-Check-Act PDSA: Plan-Do-Study-Act PG: Post Graduate PoA: Programme of Action QAA: Quality Assurance Agency SPC: Statistical Process Control TQM: Total Quality Management UG: Under Graduate UGC: University Grants Commission UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization USDE: United States Department of Education

Methodology and Sources :

The Historical methodology is adopted in this study is. The data is collected only from secondarysources . The researcher has consulted government records, government reports, government orders, reports of commissions, committees and census reports. The secondary sources consist of various books, journals, periodicals, newspaper clippings. The researcher also has visited a number of relevant websites and has collected materials, for the study.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council:

Interestingly, all these four concepts of higher education are not exclusive; rather they are integrated and give an overall picture of what higher is in higher education. If we look at the activities of colleges and universities, we will realize that teaching, research and extension form the three main functions of higher education.

Role of Higher Education in the Society:

Higher education is generally understood to cover teaching, research and extension. If we critically analyze the different concepts of higher education, we can list the various roles higher education plays in the society. Higher education is the source or feeder system in all

walks of life and therefore supplies the much-needed human resources in management, planning, design, teaching and research. Scientific and technological advancement and economic growth of a country are as dependent on the higher education system as they are on the working class. Development of indigenous technology and capabilities in agriculture, food security and other industrial areas are possible because of our worldclass higher education infrastructure. Higher education also provides opportunities for life long learning, allowing people to upgrade their knowledge and skills from time to time based on the societal needs. The Kothari Commission (1966) listed the following roles of the universities (higher education institutions in the modern society): • to seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage vigorously and fearlessly in the pursuit of truth, and to interpret old knowledge and beliefs in the light of new needs and discoveries; • to provide the right kind of leadership in all walks of life, to identify gifted youth and help them develop their potential to the full by cultivating physical fitness, developing the powers of the mind and cultivating right interests, attitudes and moral and intellectual values; • to provide the society with competent men and women trained in agriculture, arts, medicine, science and technology and various other professions, who will also be cultivated individuals, imbibed with a sense of social purpose; • to strive to promote quality and social justice, and to reduce social and cultural differences through diffusion of education;

The report of the UNESCO International Commission on Education in the 21st Century titled "Learning: The Treasure Within" (popularly known as Delors Commission) emphasized four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. While, higher education intends to inculcate all these four in individuals and the society, the report highlighted the following specific functions of higher education: • To prepare students for research and teaching; • To provide highly specialized training courses adapted to the needs of economic and social life; • To be open to all, so as to cater to the many aspects of lifelong education in the widest sense; and • To promote international cooperation through internationalization of research, technology, networking, and free movement of persons and scientific ideas (UNESCO, 1996).

Variables: Indicative parameters of the value framework Values / Goals Suggested Parameters 1. Contribution to national (More access with equity development)Developmental thrust in identification of research areas and academic programmes and Community engagement

2 Development of application skills students and Development of life skills

3. Inculcating value system andValue integration in academic programmes in students

4. Value inculcation through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

5. Promoting the use of Enrichment of learning technology , Increasing access – online programmes.

6.Institutionalization of continuous improvement systems.

Quality Movement in Indian Higher Education

The University Grants Commission (UGC) with its statutory powers is expected to maintain quality in Indian higher education institutions. Section 12 of the UGC Act of 1956 requires UGC to be responsible for "the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations and research in universities". To fulfill this mandate, the UGC has been continuously developing mechanisms to monitor quality in colleges and universities directly or indirectly. In order to improve quality, it has established national research facilities, and Academic Staff Colleges to re-orient teachers and provide refresher courses in subject areas. The UGC also conducts the National Eligibility Test (NET) for setting high standards of teaching. Various committees and commissions on education over the years have emphasized directly or indirectly the need for improvement and recognition of quality in Indian higher education system. The concept of autonomous colleges as recommended by Kothari Commission (1964-66) has its roots in the concept of quality improvement. Since the adoption of the National Policy on Education (1968), there has been a tremendous expansion of educational opportunities at all levels, particularly in higher education. With the expansion of educational institutions, came the concern for quality. The constitutional amendment in 1976 brought education to the concurrent list making the central government more responsible for quality improvement (Stella and Gnanam, 2003). The New Education Policy (1986) emphasized on the recognition and reward of excellence in performance of institutions and checking of sub-standard institutions. Consequently, the Programme of Action (PoA) in 1986 stated, "As a part of its responsibility for the maintenance and promotion of standards of education, the UGC will, to begin with, take the initiative to establish an Accreditation and Assessment Council as an autonomous body". After eight years of continuous and serious deliberations, the UGC established NAAC at Bangalore as a registered autonomous body on 16th September 1994 under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. The milestones in the emergence of NAAC can be identified as follows (Stella, 2000): 1986: UGC constituted a 15-

member committee on Accreditation and Assessment Council under the chairmanship of Dr. Vasant Gowarikar. 1987-1990: Nine regional seminars and a national seminar organized to debate Gowarikar Committee report. 1990: Dr Sukumaran Nair's project report submitted to UGC that reflected a consensus to have an accreditation agency accountable to UGC

In 1992, The revised New Education Policy reiterated all round improvement of educational institutions. 1994: Prof. G. Ram Reddy committee appointed to finalize the memorandum of association and rules and regulation of the accreditation board (July 1994). 1994: National Assessment and Accreditation Council established at Bangalore (September 1994). The main objectives of NAAC as envisaged in the Memorandum of Association (MoA) are to: • grade institutions of higher education and their programmes; • stimulate the academic environment and quality of teaching and research in these institutions; • help institutions realize their academic objectives; • promote necessary changes, innovations and reforms in all aspects of the institutions working for the above purpose; and • encourage innovations, self-evaluation and accountability in higher education. Like NAAC (which is responsible for colleges and universities), there are other statutory bodies in India to assure quality in professional education. Some of these are: • All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) • National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) • Medical Council of India (MCI) • Indian Nursing Council (INC) • Bar Council of India (BCI) • Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) • Distance Education Council (DEC) • Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR)

The AICTE established the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) in 1994 to accredit programmes offered by technical institutions. The NBA accredits programmes and it is a voluntary process like that of NAAC. Other professional statutory bodies mostly undertake review exercises to recognize or de-recognize the institutions on the basis of their quality audit. Thus, quality issue is on the top of the agenda of Indian higher education.

Software quality dimensions of higher education Dimensions Definition in higher education

Correctness The extent to which a programme/course complies with the specified requirements Reliability The degree to which knowledge/skills learned is correct, accurate and up to date Efficiency The extent to which knowledge/skills learned is applicable to the future career of graduates Integrity The extent to which personal information is secure from unauthorized access Usability The ease of learning and the degree of communicativeness in the classroom Maintainability How well an institution handles customers' complaints? Testability How fair examinations represent a subject of study? Expandability Flexibility

Portability, reusability and The degree to which knowledge/skills learned is applicable interoperability to other fields

Service Quality dimensions in higher education Dimensions Definition in higher education

Reliability The degree to which education is correct, accurate and up to date. How well an institution keeps its promises? The degree of consistency in educational process. Responsiveness Willingness and readiness of staff to help students Understanding customers Understanding students and their needs Access The extent to which staff are available for guidance and advice Competence The theoretical and practical knowledge of staff as well as other presentation skills Courtesy Emotive and positive attitude towards students Communication How well lecturers and students communicate in the classroom? Credibility The degree of trustworthiness of the institution Security Confidentiality of information Tangible State, sufficiency and availability of equipment and facilities Performance Primary knowledge/skills required for students Completeness Supplementary knowledge and skills, use of computer Flexibility The degree to which knowledge/skills learned is applicable to other fields. Redress How well an institution handles customers' complaints and solves problems?

CONCLUSIONS:

The conclusions indicate there is very little research on quality management, despite quality's role growing in importance as universities strive to compete in an increasingly underfunded market for students and research funds. This paper provides the rationale for strong quality assurance systems for higher education as a factor in enhancing global interactions, and makes recommendations for countries and regions which do not yet have effective systems in place. Quality is a judgment about the degree to which activities or outputs have desirable characteristics, according to some norm or against particular specified criteria or objectives. The performance of higher education institutions is a growing concern. The pressure for quality assurance poses a major challenge for higher education as in case of many developing countries including India. While quality assurance has always been a matter of concern and significance in education, in general, and in professional education such as technical education in particular, the recent quantitative expansion of an unprecedented nature, in India, has caused educators to devote careful attention to the quality aspect. National policy of Education, 1986 updated in 1992 envisage improvement and expansion of education in all sectors, elimination of disparities in: access and laying greater stress on

improvement of quality and relevance of education at all levels. National Board of Accreditation (NBA), a body under AICTE, is the only authorized body in India entrusted with the task of undertaking accreditation of technical education programmes. The prime mandate of NAAC, as envisaged in its Memorandum of Association (MoA), is to assess and accredit institutions of higher learning, universities and colleges or one or more of their units, i.e., departments, schools, institutions, programmes etc.

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