

The Role of UGC And NAAC in Continuous Evaluation of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract-Higher Education Institutions carries the responsibility of catering to the academic and non academic qualification. It carries a huge responsibility of developing reasoning, questioning skills among students for a better society. UGC and NAAC are the two very important institutions to maintain standards and quality sustenance. The initiative to assess colleges and universities improves the education system and thereby ensures quality maintenance and continuous evaluation process ensures the participation of all stakeholders in the everyday college activities. This paper makes an attempt bring out the objectives of UGC and NAAC and the benefits that higher education institutions get out of it.

Key Words – UGC, NAAC, Quality, Excellence, Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education plays an important role in society. It supplies the human resources in management, planning, design, teaching and research. The improvement in the field of agriculture, industry, advancement of technology etc have been possible because of our world class higher education. It will also upgrade our skill and knowledge.

Higher Education

Higher education means different things to different people in a society full of diversity, ideologies and opinions. If we have to understand the term Higher in Higher Education is in terms of level. It includes college and university teaching & learning through which students attain higher educational qualification. It develops the students ability to question and seek truth, it also broadens the intellectual powers of the individuals and also gives him/her a wider perspective of the world around.

Quality:-

The word Quality comes from the Latin word

“Quality” meaning ‘What kind of’. It is a much debated term. To some it is like ‘beauty’ that lies in the eye of the beholder.

The British Standard Institution defines Quality as ‘the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.

Gren and Harvey identified five different approaches to define Quality. They are :- 1. “Exception” – Exceeding high standards and passing a required standard. 2. Consistency – ‘Zero defects’, 3. Fitness of purpose -product or service meets the stated purposes, customer specification and satisfaction 4. As Value of money –effectiveness and efficiency 5. As transformative – qualitative change.

ROLE OF UGC :

Post independence the government of India thought that education must be given the maximum importance from the elementary education to the highest levels of education such as the PhD degree. This is exactly why they wanted to come up with a body that will ensure that the education in India meets a certain standard. The UGC was originally looking into Aligarh University, Benaras University and Delhi University.

In 1957 almost all the universities came under the control of the UGC. It is the only grant giving institute in the country. It provides funds and it also arranges for the coordination and maintenance of the universities in India. The UGC controls the following in India:

1. Maintaining the standard of research, teaching and examination in the universities.
2. Promoting university education
3. Making regulations to maintain the minimum standard of education in the country

4. It is a link between the union government and the institutes of higher education
5. It also advises the government about the steps to be taken in order to improve the education system.

UGC plays a vital role in the education of the country. It has ensured that a system it followed in higher education. UGC also ensures that the education in all these top universities is of the same standard so that the students passing out of these colleges can be considered equal.

It has been successfully doing its role for almost half a century and will continue to do so even in the future. One of the best ways to ensure that the education in all these universities is at par is to ensure that the teachers are equally good. This is exactly why the final approval of the UGC is required before a lecturer is appointed in any of these colleges. So, in order to maintain the quality assurance in the higher educational institutions 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.

NAAC VISION

To make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives.

MISSION

- ☞ *To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programs or projects;*
- ☞ *To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality of teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions;*
- ☞ *To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education;*

- ☞ *To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programs, and*
- ☞ *To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.*

The main objectives of NAAC as envisaged in the Memorandum of Association (MoA) are to:

- grade institutions of higher education and their programs;
- 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.

Value Framework

To promote the following core values among the HEIs of the country:

- *Contributing to National Development*
- *Fostering Global Competencies among Students*
- *Inculcating a Value System among Students*
- *Promoting the Use of Technology*
- *Quest for Excellence*

Continuous Improvement

The Japanese call it *Kaizen*, which means incremental improvements of the on-going processes. It is a philosophy to improve the quality of goods and services of an organization. As we know in general, everything deteriorates with time and use. Continuous improvement is an intervention to stop this and increase the quality.

Internal Quality Assurance Cell

The continuous improvement process is future directed and believes in a 'transformation' model to a 'revolution' model. The process expects commitment from all involved parties and also recommends empowerment of the participants, which is possible through regular staff development activities. In India, NAAC proposes that every accredited institution should establish the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to continuously

improve quality as ‘enhancement’ and sustain the good work of the institution. IQAC will facilitate the process of internalization of the quality and play a catalytic role in performance improvement of the institution. All the accredited institutions with IQAC are expected to submit annual quality assurance reports to NAAC as self- reviewed progress reports. IQAC will create internal awareness on quality issues and also establish credibility for the external quality evaluation.

A quality organization is one that has a ‘culture of quality’ meaning quality is its hallmark in whatever it does. This includes: its mission and goals that are focused towards the customers (students), its activities and processes are standardized (there are documented practices, which can reply to what, why and how), and it satisfies the needs of the stakeholders (society, employers) and goes beyond to create ‘customer delight’.

Guidelines for the Creation of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)

In pursuance of its Action Plan for performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation and quality up-gradation of institutions of higher education, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore proposes that every accredited institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post-accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC will become a part of the institution’s system and work towards realisation of the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance. The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the overall performance of institutions. For this, during the post-accreditation period, it will channelize all efforts and measures of the institution towards promoting its holistic academic excellence.

The work of the IQAC is the first step towards internalization and institutionalization of quality enhancement initiatives. Its success depends upon the sense of belongingness and participation it can inculcate in all the constituents of the institution. It will not be yet another hierarchical structure or a record-keeping exercise in the institution. It will be a facilitative and participative voluntary system/unit/organ of the institution. It has the

potential to become a vehicle for ushering in quality enhancement by working out planned interventionist strategies to remove deficiencies and enhance quality like the “Quality Circles” in institutions.

Objective

The primary aim of IQAC is

- To develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the institution.
- To promote measures for institutional functioning towards quality enhancement through internalization of quality culture and institutionalization of best practices.

Strategies

IQAC shall evolve mechanisms and procedures for

- a) Ensuring timely, efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial tasks;
- b) The relevance and quality of academic and research programmes;
- c) Equitable access to and affordability of academic programmes for various sections of society;
- d) Optimization and integration of modern methods of teaching and learning;
- e) The credibility of evaluation procedures;
- f) Ensuring the adequacy, maintenance and proper allocation of support structure and services;
- g) Sharing of research findings and networking with other institutions in India and abroad.

Functions

Some of the functions expected of the IQAC are:

- a) Development and application of quality benchmarks/parameters for various academic and administrative activities of the institution;
- b) Facilitating the creation of a learner-centric environment conducive to quality education and faculty maturation to adopt the required knowledge and technology for participatory teaching and learning process;
- c) Arrangement for feedback response from students, parents and other stakeholders on quality-related institutional processes;

- d) Dissemination of information on various quality parameters of higher education;
- e) Organization of inter and intra institutional workshops, seminars on quality related themes and promotion of quality circles;
- f) Documentation of the various programs/activities leading to quality improvement;
- g) Acting as a nodal agency of the Institution for coordinating quality-related activities, including adoption and dissemination of best practices;
- h) Development and maintenance of institutional database through MIS for the purpose of maintaining /enhancing the institutional quality;
- i) Development of Quality Culture in the institution;
- j) Preparation of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) as per guidelines and parameters of NAAC, to be submitted to NAAC.

Benefits

IQAC will facilitate / contribute

- a) Ensure heightened level of clarity and focus in institutional functioning towards quality enhancement;
- b) Ensure internalization of the quality culture;
- b) Ensure enhancement and coordination among various activities of the institution and institutionalize all good practices;
- c) Provide a sound basis for decision-making to improve institutional functioning;
- d) Act as a dynamic system for quality changes in HEIs;
- e) Build an organised methodology of documentation and internal communication.

Composition of the IQAC

IQAC may be constituted in every institution under the Chairmanship of the Head of the institution with heads of important academic and administrative units and a few teachers and a few distinguished educationists and representatives of local management and stakeholders.

The composition of the IQAC may be as follows:

1. Chairperson: Head of the Institution
2. A few senior administrative officers
3. Three to eight teachers
4. One member from the Management

5. One/two nominees from local society, Students and Alumni
6. One/two nominees from Employers /Industrialists/stakeholders
7. One of the senior teachers as the coordinator/Director of the IQAC

The composition of the IQAC will depend on the size and complexity of the institution. It helps the institutions in planning and monitoring. IQAC also gives stakeholders or beneficiaries a cross-sectional participation in the institution's quality enhancement activities. The guidelines given here are only indicative and will help the institutions for quality sustenance activities.

The membership of such nominated members shall be for a period of two years. The IQAC should meet at least once in every quarter. The quorum for the meeting shall be two-third of the total number of members. The agenda, minutes and Action Taken Reports are to be documented with official signatures and maintained electronically in a retrievable format. It is necessary for the members of the IQAC to shoulder the responsibilities of generating and promoting awareness in the institution and to devote time for working out the procedural details. While selecting these members several precautions need to be taken. A few of them are listed below:

¶ It is advisable to choose persons from various backgrounds who have earned respect for integrity and excellence in their teaching and research. Moreover, they should be aware of the ground realities of the institutional environment. They should be known for their commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

¶ It would be appropriate to choose as senior administrators, persons in charge of institutional services such as library, computer center, estate, student welfare, administration, academic tasks, examination and planning and development.

¶ The management representative should be a person who is aware of the institution's objectives, limitations and strengths and is committed to its improvement. The local society representatives should be of high social standing and should have made significant contributions to society and in particular to education.

The role of coordinator

The role of the coordinator of the IQAC is crucial in ensuring the effective functioning of all the members. The coordinator of the IQAC may be a senior person with expertise in quality aspects.

Operational Features of the IQAC

Quality assurance is a by-product of ongoing efforts to define the objectives of an institution, to have a work plan to achieve them and to specify the checks and balances to evaluate the degree to which each of the tasks is fulfilled. Hence devotion and commitment to improvement rather than mere institutional control is the basis for devising procedures and instruments for assuring quality. The right balance between the health and growth of an institution needs to be struck. The IQAC has to ensure that whatever is done in the institution for “education” is done efficiently and effectively with high standards. In order to do this, the IQAC will have to first establish procedures and modalities to collect data and information on various aspects of institutional functioning. The coordinator of the IQAC and the secretary will have a major role in implementing these functions. The IQAC may derive major support from the already existing units and mechanisms that contribute to the functions listed above. The operational features and functions discussed so far are broad-based to facilitate institutions towards academic excellence and institutions may adapt them to their specific needs.

Monitoring Mechanism

The institutions need to submit yearly the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) to NAAC. A functional Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and timely submission of Annual Quality Assurance Reports (AQARs) are the Minimum Institutional Requirements (MIR) to volunteer for second, third or subsequent cycle's accreditation. During the institutional visit the NAAC peer teams will interact with the IQACs to know the progress, functioning as well quality sustenance initiatives undertaken by them.

So, UGC, NAAC and IQAC play a major role in continuous evaluation of quality in higher educational institutions.

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