

Assessment and Accreditation of Teacher Education Institutions

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The mission of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council is to ensure that our higher education system is fully tuned towards creation of enlightened citizens who in turn will transform India into a prosperous, happy, strong and safer nation”.

-Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Former President of India.

Abstract- The assessment of an Educational Institution is widely recognized as a tool for improving its quality. The outcome of assessment enables the concerned institution to design and execute appropriate interventions to enhance the quality of its effectiveness. Recognizing the importance of Institutional Assessment and Accreditation, the University Grants Commission (UGC) established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 for the assessment of higher education institutions including Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) which form part of the Higher Education System. Like human beings, educational institutions too prefer a state of perpetual ‘homeostasis’. Change and homeostasis do not go together. Therefore resistance to change is quite natural but the urge to improve can surely influence this resistance to change, Assessment and Accreditation of TEIs should be seen as a step towards using external quality assurance mechanism as an input for improvement. The recent shift in policy favouring performance based funding can change ‘apprehension’ about assessment and accreditation to somewhat greater receptivity, which in time can lead to ready ‘appreciation’ of the process. The scheme of assessment and accreditation will help institutions to carry out their strength, weakness, opportunity and threat analysis, and in making their programmes more attractive to the students and to their potential employers. The norms and standards evolve with strengthening of the capacity of the system and commitment for raising the quality of the programme, which will be revealed by the system of assessment and accreditation. The NCTE is now looking forward to using assessment and accreditation as an effective instrument for determination and maintenance of norms and standards for teacher education programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education institutions have historically belonged to the relatively less regulated sector of the academia. The very complexity and diversity of their task has considerably accounted for this. Depending upon the specific stage of school education the TEIs cater to, they belong to the higher education or school education sector in a State. A TEI may be an independent institution devoted wholly to the cause of preparing competent teachers or it may be a part of a larger set-up e.g. a multi-faculty college. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was established in August 1995 with the mandate to ensure planned and coordinated development of teacher education across the country. The various aspects of this broad mandate given to the NCTE have been specified in the NCTE Act (1993). For example, in fulfillment of the provision in 12 (k) of the NCTE Act ‘to evolve suitable performance appraisal systems, norms and mechanism for enforcing accountability on recognized institutions’ for quality improvement of TEI, the NCTE joined hands with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) through an MOU and initiated the process of assessment and accreditation of all TEIs recognized by it.

In order to make the entire process of assessment and accreditation of TEIs transparent, the NCTE and the NAAC collaborated and developed a customized Self-Appraisal Manual for TEIs. The two-day National Conference held at Pune during December 2002 was a curtain raiser for the launch of the quality-oriented process of external

assessment. The response from various TEIs that sent delegates to the National Conference indeed augurs well for teacher education. One may say that assessment and accreditation of TEIs is an idea that has finally arrived and it shall impact teacher education in India in a truly remarkable manner.

WHY ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION?

The forces of globalization and liberalization have eroded the insularity of the education sector in India. Professional programs across the board have been influenced by these processes in a big way. Like the Indian industrial in products, professional education programs in India have now to compete internationally. It is easy to understand why management programs were the first to be impacted by liberalization and globalization and why leading business schools in the USA, the UK and Australia come to India for selecting promising candidates for their programs. What has happened in the areas of management education and medical education in India may be repeated in years to come in teacher education as well. The drive to recruit Indian teachers for American, European and Australian Schools during recent years has revealed that TEIs that perform well would have better credibility and their students would get ready employment. People these days want to buy brand products because a brand stands for quality. Similarly, in future TEIs would be known for the quality of their programs. The process of 'accreditation' reflects quality assurance of an educational programs. It is only a matter of time that candidates would prefer to join TEIs that have been accredited by the NAAC. Accreditation by NAAC would thus have the same credibility that

'AG Mark' has for various consumer goods.

The twin process of "assessment" and "accreditation" are inseparable as well as intertwined. Assessment comes first because its outcome is the basis of accreditation. "Self-appraisal", which ought to be the first step in the process of assessment, has a tremendous contribution to make, in promoting objectivity, self-analysis, reflection and professionalism on the part of TEIs. The Self-Appraisal proforma maps out different inputs as well as process norms that constitute indicators of the quality of a teacher education programs. The

very act of becoming aware of various aspects of quality vis-à-vis various facts of a teacher education programs can have an "educating" influence on those who fill up the Self-Appraisal proforma. It helps them to form a view about their strengths and weaknesses. This may soon be followed by the urge to integrate the markers of quality with the programs of the concerned TEI.

Besides, the fact that some TEIs may have better accreditation rating than others, It can also support quality improvement and strengthen the urge to excel oneself. Those TEIs that have top accreditation rating would be eager to at least maintain their rating and if possible to further improve upon it during the next round. On the other hand TEIs with a lower rating would surely attempt to improve their programs and get a higher rating the next time.

THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

The process of assessment and accreditation is essentially a three-stage process as described below: Stage I: In pursuance of its decision to seek NAAC Accreditation, the TEI prepares the Self-Appraisal Report along with various enclosures and annexures to provide information and supporting evidence. Usually a two-or-three-member committee of teachers at the TEI does this job in consultation with the Head or the Principal and the Management. The filled in Self-Appraisal proforma and the Self-Analysis report are sent to the NAAC for consideration and further necessary action.

Stage II: A team of peers comprising two or three experienced teacher educators visits the TEI to validate the self-assessment report submitted by the institution. The peer team validates personally whatever has been mentioned in the Self-Appraisal Report since members of the peer team are not connected with the TEI visited by them, their validation is objective as well as consensual. The team may invite the concerned TEI to supply additional information or supporting documents so that the gaps, if any, in the Self-Appraisal Report are reconciled.

Stage III: The Self-Appraisal Report as well as the recommendations of the peer team are analyzed by

the NAAC Executive Committee according to pre-determined criteria for various categories of TEIs and the final accreditation rating is determined and communicated to the TEI.

IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

- Helps the institutions to know strengths, weaknesses, opportunities through an informed review.
- Identifies internal areas of planning and resource allocations.
- Enhances Collegiality on the campus.
- The outcome of the process provides the funding agencies with objectives and systematic database for performance funding.
- Initiates institution into innovative and modern methods of pedagogy.
- Given the institution a new sense of direction and identity.
- Provides the society with reliable information on the quality of education offered by the institution.
- Employers have access to information on standards in recruitment.
- Promotes intra-institutional and inter-institutional interactions.
- Quality sustenance and promotion by sensitizing institutions to concepts such as credit transfer, student mobility, mutual recognition.
- Networking among accredited institutions in order to promote exchange of best practices.
- Formation of Quality circles for follow-up of a accreditation outcomes.
- State-wise analysis of accreditation results for policy initiatives.
- Promoting the concept of lead colleges and cluster of colleges for quality initiatives.
- Project grants for accredited institutions for quality innovations.
- Financial support to accredited institution conductin seminars/conferences/workshops on quality issues in TEIs.
- Developing international linkages for mutual recognitions.
- Collaborating with other national professional bodies for accreditation of specialized subjects.

CORE VALUES FOR ITS ACCREDITATION

1. Contributing to National Development.
2. Fostering Global Competencies among Students.
3. Inculcating a Value System among Students.
4. Promoting Use of Technology.
5. Quest for Excellence.

CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT

The Self-Appraisal proforma includes six criteria that subsume and account for current practices that can lead to quality improvement in teacher education are listed below:

1. Curriculum Design and Planning:
 1. Curricular Design & Development.
 2. Academic Flexibility.
 3. Feedback on Curricular.
 4. Curriculum update.
 5. Best Practices in Curricular.
2. Teaching –learning and Evaluation:
 1. Admission Process and Student Profile.
 2. Catering to Diverse needs.
 3. Teaching–learning Process.
 4. Teacher quality.
 5. Evaluation Process and Reforms.
 6. Best Practices in Teaching Learning and Evaluation.
3. Research, Consultancy and Extension:
 1. Promotion of Research
 2. Research and publication output
 3. Consultancy
 4. Extension Activities
 5. Collaborations
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources:
 1. Physical Infrastructure.
 2. Maintenance of Infrastructure.
 3. Library as Learning Resource.
 4. ICT as Learning Resource.
5. Student Support and Progression:
 1. Student Progression.
 2. Infrastructure and Learning Resource.
 3. Organization and Management.
 4. Student Support and Progression.

CONCLUSION

Assessment and accreditation is broadly used for understanding the “quality status” of an institution. in

the context of teacher education, the accreditation status indicates that the particular higher educational institutions (HEI) – a college, a university, or any other recognised unit there in, meets the standards of quality as set by the accreditation agency, in terms of its performance, related to the educational processes and outcomes, covering the curriculum, teaching-learning, evaluation, faculty, research, infrastructure, learning resources, organisation, governance, financial wellbeing and student services.

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