

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES IN QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to provide an overview of setting up of quality assurance mechanism through the design, development and implementation standards and to ensure the fulfillment of criteria, goals and objectives of Indian higher education. This paper also attempts to provide approaches to quality by higher educational institutions around the world in general and India in particular. The recent initiatives of the Government of India relating to the mandatory assessment and accreditation with few references are highlighted in this paper. With the initiatives of the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions (NARAHEI) Bill, 2010 and also the UGC Regulations, 2012, make 'Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation' for each Higher Educational Institution in India. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been continuously fine-tuning its assessment and accreditation methodologies in synch with local, regional and global changes in higher education scenario. This helps in reaching out to HEIs (Higher Educational Institutions) and wider acceptance of the methodology. The methodology of NAAC has stood the test of time for last 20 years, mainly because it has remained dynamic and responsive to the stakeholder feedback.

Key Words

Quality Assurance, Assessment, International Initiatives, Indian Higher Education, NAAC

Introduction

Higher educational institutions universally, are at present confronting comparable difficulties of expanding student population, diversity within student group, under-prepared students, increasing workloads and decreasing resources. There are external pressures from funding agencies, accreditation professional bodies and employers which necessitate the maintenance of quality academic programmes through periodic reviews and assessment.

The previous four decades have seen the change of higher education in the greater part of the nations from prompting to a mass system. This development has occurred through the mix of two altogether different ideas of higher education: the routine colleges and universities, which were dependable to nobody for the nature of their arrangement, and the current expert and professionally situated establishments of higher realizing, which are capable to the observing and accreditation bodies. The massification of higher education has been joined by the improvement of an arrangement of a great deal more nosy quality affirmation and examination game plans.

Quality affirmation is the accomplishment of the fancied models through the use of concurred strategies. It requires constant performance control. Accreditation is a formal acknowledgment by an approved office of an organization having accomplished concurred gauges. It depends on, and takes after, quality evaluation. Quality to the possibility of value affirmation is the idea of value evaluation. The strategy of value appraisal can be both unpredictable and troublesome. The arrangement of accreditation is seen by many just like a method for guaranteeing the nature of program, or foundation, through evaluations and a motivating force for their change.

International Initiatives

The explanations behind the sympathy toward quality in higher education change from nation to nation. Variables like history, culture, condition of financial improvement and mindfulness and approach to the development of higher education, assume a huge part in the development of value guaranteeing and controlling system in a specific nation. In any case, it turns out to be evident that self-direction combined with associate audit made by an independent organization could acquire a period of value in higher education.

Lately, establishing national evaluation systems for higher education has been a noteworthy component of improvements in a number of countries. There are presently more than 70 quality

evaluation offices around the globe which have the duty of undertaking an audit of the higher education arrangement in their countries. Sympathy toward quality in Higher Education has turned into the primary plan of the nations world over. In nations like India, the unequivocal concentration on quality affirmation in higher education is moderately new. Until recently the access to higher education for an expanded rate of the pertinent age aggregate itself was a marker of national advance and for the individual going out of a foundation of higher education, it implied a stamp of separation from the masses. Be that as it may, in the changing setting of globalization of financial exercises, training has turned into a universal administration and to withstand the weight of this evolving setting, the nations have been pressurized to guarantee and guarantee quality at a worldwide level. Thusly, numerous nations have started quality affirmation systems. Presently, following a couple of years of viable experience, there is a reconsidering on many issues of value confirmation and nations search for the encounters and practices somewhere else.

American and British Perspective

Accreditation started first in the USA and that as well as a generally straightforward thought a willful exertion by a little gathering of educational foundations to concede to benchmarks of recognizing a school from an auxiliary school. In the course of the last eighty-five years or somewhere in the vicinity, be that as it may, accreditation has formed into an a great deal more modern process for assessing and enhancing educational quality in schools, colleges and equivalent establishments. The procedure that started as a method for setting up, safeguarding and deciphering in like manner terms the gauges of admission to universities, whatever be the strategy or the blends of techniques for affirmation, so as to suit relocating understudies and to secure simply understanding and organization of principles, has now been raised to a more extensive area of value in training.

Accreditation, the path honed in the USA, was for the most part obscure in most different nations since they depended on legislative supervision and control of educational organizations. Be that as it may, things are changing in every one of the nations.

Trends in Other Countries:

The evaluation of value in higher education is presently on the plan of numerous nations. The approach and techniques are pretty much the same. The main cross national contrasts of approach concern the topic of what is to be incorporated into quality appraisal; specifically, regardless of whether both instructing and research go together or they are to be dealt with independently. The Netherlands has recently endeavored to survey the higher education in Dutch Universities. The Association of Universities in the Netherlands does outside quality appraisal of instructing in Dutch Universities. The Dutch Model depends on self-assessment and associate survey. Despite the fact that it is too soon to make a judgment on the effect of external evaluation on Dutch Universities, we can state that there is a rationale in assuming the quality of resources to be important.

In Germany the strategies for quality evaluation in the field of instructing are immature and request scholastic associations, in this regard, have not yet been converted without hesitation. The ascent of private higher education in Portugal has made the Portuguese Council of Rectors (CRP) present a quality evaluation instrument. They have received the Dutch model with specific adjustments. The anxiety is on strengthening the free character of the outer going to group.

Taking a gander at these occasions at a worldwide level and the present wave for disguise of training, it could be really anticipated that the unrest for quality, as of now enveloping the areas of higher education will be further fortified later on. The whole procedure of evaluation and accreditation is aimed towards accomplishing the quality in higher education.

An Indian Perspective

Over the past 60 years India has built up an extensive arrangement of training and has made an endless assemblage of very gifted academicians furnished with logical and innovative capacities, powerful humanist, philosophical thought and inventiveness.

India is the biggest majority rules system in the World and India has the largest educational system too. Indian higher education system is one of the biggest on the planet. There were only 20 colleges and 500 schools with 0.1 million undergraduates at the time India gained autonomy. This

has expanded to 740 colleges and college level organizations and 34,452 schools in 2015-2016 (AISHE, 2016).

The educational system in India is today in a basic state impervious to change. It is in risk of soon getting to be distinctly unimportant. Since Independence, however many commissions have presented their reports and numerous prominent men have propounded their arrangements for restoring the system, there has dependably been a wide hole between the arrangement and the activity leaving the system still stranded on the streets. This huge arrangement of higher education merits that move must be made intermittently to evaluate its execution, to lead scholarly reviews and furthermore give a system to its appraisal and accreditation. Though large, our educational system is neither relevant nor effective. India's educational ethos needs major reforms in the context of changes that are sweeping our country. Transformation that society is going through warrants a rejuvenation in the way we teach and what we teach. Restructuring of our educational institutions and the contents of the curricula is what is needed to produce the desired outcome.

The subject of appraisal and accreditation is new to the Indian higher education system. Just as of late individuals have begun perceiving these phrasings. Being recently created ideas they make a greater amount of a fear as opposed to a preparation to endeavor to comprehend what they mean. The inclination is that it is one more development that is skimmed by those higher up in the approach stepping stool and, subsequently, when educators or educationists or so far as that is concerned supervisors of instruction are asked whether they might want to think about evaluation, keeping up elevated expectations, guaranteeing institutional responsibility, making training more important and accreditation, the reaction is normally not extremely positive. Nonetheless, on the off chance that they are asked whether they would be keen on such themes like giving more independence to organizations, being receptive to understudies' and society's needs and creating more assets, the intrigue level takes off. Truth be told appraisal and accreditation deliver themselves to every one of these subjects and it is a movement to accomplish change in the working of an establishment in every one of its circles of exercises in order to create quality in its prime assignment that is training.

Higher education being exceptionally costly, countless nations including India can't offer it to all who need it. It will be much more regrettable to give higher education without legitimate and sensible offices. Truth be told this is what is as a rule really done by a large portion of the colleges and universities with the lamentable outcome that unemployable graduates are being created in extensive numbers. Truly higher education in India is intensely subject to government bolster and in that capacity it can scarcely create private assets to keep up its free status and extension.

Administrative financing on such a substantial scale additionally has brought about bringing down of the quality, getting simple higher degrees and confirmations bargaining, the scholastic legitimacy and skill. An adjustment in this example is in reality required.

Role of UGC to make Accreditation a Must

Accreditation has been made compulsory inside six months for higher education organizations in the general stream to meet all requirements for awards from the Center. The University Grants Commission (UGC) today informed the new control that progressions the way of accreditation, which till now was intentional. The compulsory control will cover each broad stream establishment that has either finished six years or has given instruction to two clumps of understudies, whichever is prior.

As per the Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions Regulations, 2012, any establishment of higher learning, other than those in specialized and restorative streams, should obligatorily take accreditation from an authorizing office inside six months from now in the event that they satisfy certain conditions. The notice said no college or school would be qualified for gifts from the focal government unless authorize. In the event that any unaccredited organization is getting awards, the UGC will issue notification and stop the distribution.

The nation now has more than 500 colleges and around 30,000 general universities. Before March 31, 2011, only 161 of 504 colleges and 4,371 of 28,000 schools were authorized by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

The UGC issued a new control under guidelines from the Union human asset advancement service. The service had as of now presented in Parliament the National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill which accommodates obligatory accreditation for all establishments. The service has likewise asked the specialized instruction controller, the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), to detail isolate directions for obligatory accreditation for specialized institutions. The service is of the view that required accreditation will guarantee quality. The higher education system in India is growing with colossal inconsistencies among the establishments and immense contrasts in foundation offices exist amongst open and private organizations. In India, the idea of obligatory accreditation comes from proposals of two higher education boards. The National Knowledge Commission, headed by Sam Pitroda, had in 2007-08 prescribed the foundation of a free administrative specialist for higher education with various accreditation offices to survey quality and give office insightful rating notwithstanding institutional evaluations.

The Vision of NAAC is to make quality the characterizing component of higher education in India through a mix of internal and external quality assessment, advancement and sustenance activities. The statements of purpose of the NAAC go for making an interpretation of the NAAC's vision without hesitation arranges and characterize particular errands of NAAC engagement and attempt as given beneath:

- ✓ To organize intermittent appraisal and accreditation of organizations of higher education or units thereof, or particular scholastic projects or undertakings;
- ✓ To empower the scholastic condition for advancement of value in showing learning and research in higher education organizations;
- ✓ To empower self-assessment, responsibility, self-rule and developments in higher education;
- ✓ To attempt quality-related research studies, consultancy and preparing programs, and
- ✓ To team up with different partners of higher education for quality assessment, advancement and sustenance.

Endeavoring to accomplish its objectives as guided by its vision and statements of purpose, NAAC fundamentally concentrates on evaluation of the nature of higher education establishments in the nation. The NAAC system for Assessment and Accreditation is particularly like that took after by Quality Assurance (QA) offices over the world and comprises of self-appraisal by the organization and outside companion evaluation by NAAC.

The Assessment Process of NAAC

NAAC's procedure of appraisal is towards all encompassing, efficient, objective, information based, straightforward and shared understanding for institutional change.

The procedure for evaluation and accreditation extensively comprises of:

- ✓ Preparation of Self-study Report (SSR), and transferring on the foundation site before accommodation of LOI.
- ✓ On-line accommodation of the Letter of Intent (LOI).
- ✓ On-line accommodation of Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment (IEQA) for material organizations.
- ✓ Submission of Hard Copies of SSR
- ✓ Peer group visit to the establishment.
- ✓ Final choice by NAAC.

Implementation of revised Grading System of NAAC w.e.f. 1st July 2016

As per the decision of Executive Committee the Grading System of NAAC has been revised as below. The revised grading system will come into effect from 1st July 2016.

CGPA	Letter Grade	Status
3.76 – 4.00	A++	Accredited
3.51 – 3.75	A+	Accredited
3.01 – 3.50	A	Accredited
2.76 – 3.00	B++	Accredited
2.51 – 2.75	B+	Accredited
2.01 – 2.50	B	Accredited
1.51 – 2.00	C	Accredited
≤ 1.50	D	Not Accredited

A+ Accredited A Accredited B++ Accredited B+ Accredited B Accredited C Accredited D
Not Accredited

- ✓ The present system of descriptors for letter grades, i.e., Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, is discontinued in the revised grading system.
- ✓ All higher education institutions for which visits will take place from 1st July 2016 onwards will be graded as per the revised grading system irrespective of the date of submission of Self Study Report (SSR).
- ✓ As of now except for the latter grades to be assigned, all other aspects of Assessment and Accreditation methodology such as the Criteria, Key aspects, calculation of Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) etc. and the manuals remain the same.
- ✓ Higher Education Institutions already accredited in the earlier grading system will continue with the same accreditation status till validity period.

Summing Up:

The overall encounters show that a large portion of the issues in evaluation and accreditation focus on the accompanying appropriate inquiries:

- ✓ Should the accreditation be made compulsory and connected up with the (a) standards of subsidizing (b) standards of acknowledgment to colleges and lasting association to universities?
- ✓ Can the criteria connected now be made more delicate to the fluctuating institutional settings?
- ✓ What would be the Benchmarks against which we can put the establishments on the quality continuum?
- ✓ What pointers could be helpful in narrowing down the between group changes in their appraisal of organizations and projects?
- ✓ How such pointers could be translated to help the associate judgment dispassionately?
- ✓ Mushroom development of colleges and schools has been the primary driver of absence of value in HEIs. There must be an arrangement choice as respects opening of another educational establishment and this be taken simply subsequent to looking at its need and possibility.

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