



Quality Initiatives in Higher Education – A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Higher education has now become a real part of the globalization process: the cross-border matching of supply and demand. Consequently, higher education can no longer be viewed in a strictly national context. This calls for a broader definition of quality initiatives, which embraces the entire functioning of higher education and not merely a dimension or aspect of it, or the actions of some individuals who are part of it. This paper provides a conceptual and organizational framework of quality initiatives in higher education in the context of India which includes a discussion on quality related Terminology, Growth of higher educational institution in India, paradigm shifts in higher education, a description of the various rationales for and approaches to measuring quality, and an analysis of strategies of integrating international dimensions in a higher education institution.

KEYWORDS : - Quality Initiatives, Paradigm Shifts, Globalization

Introduction

The globalization of economies brings in the mobility of knowledge workers and seekers across the world in volume unprecedented in the history. If a particular country cannot produce the graduates with the skills that employers want, then the employers in that country may seek the employees from wherever they are available. There are already examples of employment in the 'knowledge based industries' moving to the workers rather than the workers moving. Whether the employer moves or the potential employee moves, the mobility will be dependant on the quality and standards of the qualifications offered by the educational institutions. Ensuring the quality and standards of the educational offering will constitute the first step towards internationalization of higher education. This in turn would involve restructuring of the contents, duration, quality and standards of educational offerings in line with the broad frame of higher educational systems in vogue in most of the countries of the world. Fortunately, ensuring the parity of the content and the duration of studies with those of others may not be a major problem since the qualification framework followed in most of the countries by and large falls into a common pattern, though there may be some extent of contextualization to the national culture, language and values. In this context, national level External Quality Assurance (NEQA) mechanism becomes important. The National Quality Assurance processes, whether it is assessment, academic audit or Accreditation used to assess and accredit the educational institution/programs should also conform to the international practices.

Quality Related Terminology

1. Quality control:-

A) Accountability—the mechanism by which institutions meet their obligation to report to others about how their resources have been used and to what effect—is a central concept in democratic societies (Trow, 1996). It can function through a variety of structures, including government regulation, private markets, and self-regulation (Graham, Lyman, and Trow, 1995).

B) Certification:- Certification is the process by which states assess individuals' qualifications for teaching jobs, and each state develops and enforces certification in its own way.

C) Testing:- States require some form of teacher testing as part of the certification or licensure process. Teacher tests may cover basic skills, general knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, or pedagogical knowledge.

D) Accreditation:- Professional societies associated with other fields, such as architecture, medicine, and law, require preparation

programs to obtain national accreditation as a way of assuring the public of the programs' soundness and rigor.

2. Quality Assessment:- Quality assurance refers to the policies, attitudes, actions and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced. Accreditation refers to an evaluation of whether an institution qualifies for a certificate status. In fact the underlying purpose of accreditation is to determine the extent to which institutions are discharging their responsibilities for realizing their goals.

3. Total Quality management (TQM)

The recent literature on quality assurance in higher education is focused on the planning and auditing of quality assurance systems. They typically include External and Internal quality assurance.

External Quality Assurance

The organizations that aim to increase their efficiency identify and manage numerous interrelated processes. Quality standards are typically based on the process approach.

A Case Study of Dasaratha Deb Memorial College

Based on the premise of process-based quality assurance, the Dasaratha Deb Memorial College Khowai has identified its processes. Senior teachers of the institution typically take responsibility to prepare for the external audits. The Internal Quality Assurance Cell organizes seminars, where the principles of quality assurance are promoted and good practices are shared within the personnel. These seminars are also used to train teachers, personnel and students to perform the quality audits. The members of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell and the top- management participate actively in key seminars in order to lead and remain apprised of the latest developments of quality assurance. College produces a self-study report, which is the written description of the institution and its quality assurance system. The basic information includes the description of strategic management and quality assurance, but it also includes information on processes, management, faculties, students and related matters. Institution also collects institutional evidence about the functioning of the quality assurance system. The amount of evidence may be one or two folders comprising several hundred pages. The members of the NAAC are provided with the usernames and passwords to the necessary information systems of the institution. The NAAC is given sufficient time to study the self-evaluation report prior to the site visit.

The NAAC visit of three days to the DDM College Khowai was in November 2015. On the first day, the NAAC team met separately with the top- and middle management, teachers, research and development, support services, students and partners. The second

day consisted of site visits to faculties and thematic interviews with personnel administration, language education and the support services of branches.

. Finally the NAAC team interviewed the top-management a second time and gave the preliminary feedback of the visit results. In case of non-conformity the management should immediately take corrections corrective actions or preventive actions. The closing seminar was arranged for the management and personnel of the Dasaratha Deb Memorial College. The NAAC team presented the recommendations, which were discussed at the seminar.

Growth of Higher Educational Institutions In India

The 21st century is the age of knowledge-based economy, and the center-stage of change. Higher education has not escaped the impact and is in the process of challenge. Central Government and state Governments are trying to nurture talent through focusing on the number of Universities and Colleges for expansion of higher educations. In the table 1 the number of institutions related to higher education up to 2011-12 is shown. It indicates that there is expansion of high education In India.

Table-1 Number of Higher Educational Institution up to 2011-2012

Sl- No	Types of Institutions	Number
1.	Central Universities	44
2.	State Universities	306
3.	State Private	145
4.	Deemed Universities	130
5.	Institutions of National Importance Plus other Institutions	60
6.	Institutions established under state legislative Acts	5
Total	690	
7.	Total Colleges	35,539
	Grand Total	36,229

Source: Economic Survey of India, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi.

Table 2 Expenditure on Higher Education

Year	Expenditure % of GDP
2006-07	1.14
2007-08	1.09
2008-09	1.23
2009-10	1.25

Source: University Grants Commission, New Delhi (2012).

The table no. 2 indicates percentage of GDP in expenditure on higher education in the year 2006-07 was 1.14 which increased to 1.25 in the year 2009-10. It means there is increasing expenditure on higher education by the central Government. Due to this increasing expenditure there is growth in the institutions which is providing higher education to the masses.

Table-3 Growth of Higher Education institutions in India (Dec. 2011)

Year	No. of Universities	No. of Colleges
1950-51	30	695
1960-61	55	1542
1970-71	103	3604
1980-81	133	4722
1990-91	190	7346
2000-01	256	12806
2010-11	564	33023

Source: University Grants Commission, New Delhi (2012).

Table 3 shows the growth of higher educational institutions in India for the period 1950-51 to 2010-11. In the year 1950-51 the number of Universities was 30 which went up to 564 in the year 2010-11. The increase in the Universities during the period was 18 times. In the year 1950-51 the number of colleges was 695 which increased to 33023 in the year 2010-11. The increase in the colleges for the above mentioned period was 47 times. This growth in the Universities and Colleges was due to massive efforts and policy decisions were taken by the central government and the state government. Though the number of colleges and institutions related to higher education has increased but there is disparity in the growth of higher education at the national level In India.

Table-4 State wise Number of Universities and University level institutions listed by the UGC

Sl no	States/ Union Territories	Total (Dec., 2011)
1	Andhra Pradesh	46
2	Arunachal Pradesh	03
3	Assam	10
4	Bihar	21
5	Chhattisgarh	15
6	Delhi	25
7	Goa	02
8	Gujarat	36
9	Haryana	22
10	Himachal Pradesh	18
11	Jammu Kashmir	11
12	Jharkhand	12
13	Karnataka	42
14	Kerala	19
15	Madhya Pradesh	28
16	Maharashtra	44
17	Manipur	03
18	Meghalaya	09
19	Mizoram	03
20	Nagaland	04
21	Orissa	19
22	Punjab	17
23	Rajasthan	48
24	Sikkim	05
25	Tamil Nadu	59
26	Tripura	03
27	Uttar Pradesh	58
28	Uttaranchal	19
29	West Bengal	26
30	Chandigarh Chandigarh	03
31	Pondicherry	04
	Total	634

Source: University Grants Commission, New Delhi (2012).

The table no. 4 indicates that the total state wise Universities and University level institutions were 634 in December 2011. Universities and University level institutions were highest in Tamil Nadu (59) followed by Uttar Pradesh (58). It means 18% Universities and University level institutions were in these two states.

Paradigm Shifts in Higher Education

In recent years Indian graduates have done well in knowledge industry and they are now at an advantageous position in

knowledge-controlled world economy. The Indian youths are now looking for education that would be of quality and immediate utility which has lead to several paradigm shifts in higher education, such as:

1. From 'State Controlled Education' to an 'Open Market Economy Education'
2. From 'Education for Human Development' to Education for Human Resource Development
3. From 'Education for a Few' to 'Education for Many'.
4. From 'National' to 'Global Education'.
5. From 'Institution or Teacher Centered Education' to 'Student Centered Education'
6. From 'Subsidized Education' to 'Education for a Price.'

There can be no denying to the fact that changes in higher education scenario in India are utterly fast, changes are phenomenal and changes continue to be inevitable. India with more than a billion residents has the second largest education system in the world (after china). Experts estimate that 32% of the Indian population is under the age of 15. (the world fact book, CIA, 2004 estimate) In the Indian system of education the tertiary education or higher education starts after the 10+2 stage. Colleges form the backbone of Higher Education in India since 88% of undergraduate education and 56% of post-graduate education is imparted through colleges with approximately 83.37% of the teachers being concentrated in colleges.

There are various college universities and private institutions that offer BBA /B.com. /Bsc etc. The colleges follow semester examination system and offer basic knowledge in specific areas. After completing a Bachelors degree the student can qualify for admission to Master's degrees such as MA/Mcom/Msc/MBA /MD etc. The present days scenario however extends the strings of Indian higher education to the private sector thereby ensuring master's degree programme in more specialized areas. Post graduate studies comprise of competition, access, and education for a price.

Quality Improvement in Higher Education

Following measure shall be taken for improvement of quality in higher educational institution in India-

- 1) Infrastructure Development - While urban infrastructure has definitely seen progress, the rural sector still lies in dismal neglect over a larger proportion. The government must emphasize on construction of higher education institutions in closer proximity to villages.
- 2) Provision of adequate trained and qualified faculty - Student Teacher ratio must be brought up to an ideal level and all faculty must possess adequate qualifications and training before taking up education.
- 3) Eliminate Ethnic inequalities - Caste must be removed from focus and only economic backwardness must be made criteria for extending government support to all communities. Several individuals continue to exploit the opportunities provided, preventing the real oppressed groups from any significant benefits.
- 4) Promote use of Internet and Communication Technology - Adequate emphasis must be placed on improvement of internet and communication technology as it enables easier access to information and educational content.
- 5) Improve financial schemes reach - Traditionally backward sections have shirked away from higher education owing to their

inability to bear the costs of higher education. But with genuine and easily available government financial aid, becomes much more across communities.

- 6) Make curriculum industry oriented - The higher education system must provide for updating of curriculum over regular frequencies to help learning for match industry requirement.

Internalization of Higher Education

The policy makers, over the years have taken steps towards internationalization and have framed policies to promote Indian higher education overseas. Recently, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI initiated a consultation meet on 'Internationalization of Higher Education' which was organized by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) at Pune.

Some of the Government backed initiatives to promote internationalization include the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme (GCSC) implemented through ICCR which encourages student mobility by providing scholarships to countries from Latin America, Africa and Asia. [12]; the Global Initiative for Academic Networks (GIAN) approved by the Government of India which promotes interaction between scientists, entrepreneurs and students internationally. A number of foreign countries have taken initiatives to promote internationalization through linkages with leading Indian institutions. These tie-ups are in the form of student exchange programmes and academic collaborations in different academic areas.

Conclusion

Internationalization of higher education is an amalgamation of a number of international dimensions. People mobility and the other accepted pathways like establishing academic partnerships, forming cultural and sports linkages, research collaborations have always been considered to be the prime drivers and determinants to internationalization.

Indian HEIs must find ways to market their education whereas abroad and devise strategies to draw students not just from developing countries but also from the developed countries. Indian HEIs have a great advantage in terms of Indian higher education being very affordable as compared to many other developed countries. Indian HEIs should undertake measures to add multiple internationalization dimensions to their higher education and reap the many academic and economic benefits that internationalization offers.

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