



## ACADEMIC AUDIT-A SWOT ANALYSIS FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Education

Dr. P. Sridevi

PDF (ICSSR), School of Education, Pondicherry University

### KEYWORDS

#### INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions play an important role in the progress of the nation. One of the emerging problems faced by higher educational institutions are the maintenance of quality standards in performance areas. An increasingly prevalent trend in the higher education scenario in India in recent years is to establish high standards and benchmarks to guide their performance in keeping with the institution's vision and mission. More and more colleges and universities in the country volunteer to subject their activities and performances to be critically reviewed and audited by national and international agencies. The contributions by national bodies such as the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in the educational sector, NABH in healthcare practices and NABL in laboratory practices have sensitized an increasing number of forward-looking establishments in the country to foster participatory learning. Creation of internal quality assurance mechanisms that help to inculcate the gains made from such efforts in the day today work ethics and organizational culture of the institution is an indispensable requirement in any quality assurance scheme.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Higher Education, in India, is one among the top three areas of development undergoing a tremendous change. The country is becoming a global hub for educational activities and a feeder for all kinds of international manpower requirement. There is a growing demand for, and also concern to, provide quality education with standard curriculum and globally acceptable system of education. Everywhere the idea of increasing Gross Enrollment ration, Generating more human resource with intellectual inputs are given much thrust. The NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) of India has evolved certain benchmarks for ascertaining and ensuring quality at different levels of Higher Education and for its continued sustenance. During the last ten years, Universities in India have taken serious note of these emerging needs and demands and trying to update the curriculum, design new Programs and offer better educational services while maintaining high quality. Total Quality Management in an Academic Institution is attained by establishing Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) and conducting External Quality Assurance checks.

#### ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUDIT

Academic and administrative audit is a standard strategy for quality enhancement of higher education. Audit is an independent and systematic external evaluation. It assesses whether the quality system of a higher education institution is fit for purpose and functioning and whether it complies with the agreed criteria. It focuses on the procedures that the institution uses to maintain and develop the quality of its operations. The purpose of audit visit is to verify and supplement the observations made of the HEI's quality system based on the audit material. It is a mechanism to examine and enhance the quality of academic aspects and it is a systemic and scientific process of designing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the quality of academic systems, i.e. Inputs, processes and outputs. Also, it emphasizes on reviewing the performance of the academic inputs with respects to quality assurance as is a method of assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the operating system of the administrative procedures, policies, decision-making authorities and functionaries, strategies, process, feedback, control mechanism.

#### PURPOSE OF ACADEMIC AUDIT

The purpose of the Academic and Administrative Audit is to evaluate the performance of the university departments, schools and the centers and appreciate their achievements and give suggestions for further

improvement of the quality of teaching, research, administration, and curricular and extra-curricular activities. The area coverage and the scope of the subject matter of the activity depend upon the levels at which these programmes are organized. This apart, the programmes conducted at levels other than at the institutional level may demand a lot of skill, imagination, planning much in advance and with huge financial resources. It may be possible to organize only one or two such programmes in a year. At the institutional level, programmes are relatively easy to organize and such programmes may not need any financial resources and even if it becomes necessary, it will be insignificant. Besides, they may be organized at short notice. Several such programmes can be organized in a year. The students, teachers and other stakeholders will stand to benefit from such programmes. The prime tasks of the IQAC are:

- To develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the overall performance of institution.
- To channelize all efforts and measures of the institution towards promoting its holistic academic excellence.

#### NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Education plays a pivotal role in laying a proper foundation for the over-all socioeconomic development of any region. Education is considered as one of the principal means to foster deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war (Dellor Commission, 1996). Academic audit is an educational exercise to assess and evaluate the performance of teachers either directly or indirectly. It helps to have a pragmatic view about the status of implementing matters which include Curricular transactions, designing new syllabi as per the order of the day and to the tune of international standards, providing life skills education to the students etc.. This exercise can help in measuring the true performance and contributions of every teacher on a regular basis. The ultimate purpose of academic audit is to bring improvement in the performance through techniques of motivation and control. It is a unique tool to help the Educational planners, Heads of the Institutions, Educational policy makers as well as the teachers to understand the strengths and weaknesses in every one of them. The present investigation aims to analyse the same. The SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) Analysis may be carried out as an Awareness Programme also.

#### DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

- **Academic Audit:** Academic Audit is a mechanism to examine and enhance the quality of academic aspects of institute of Higher Education. It is a systematic and scientific process of designing implementing, mentoring and reviewing the quality of academic systems i.e. inputs, processes and outputs. It emphasizes on reviewing the performance of academic inputs with respect to quality assurance.
- **SWOT ANALYSIS:** It is a process that identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an organization.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to analyse the issues of Higher Education Institutions through SWOT analysis.

#### SWOT ANALYSIS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS STRENGTHS

- A significant initiative towards achieving quality was taken by UGC through the establishment of NAAC and NBA by AICTE.
- Indians have become the richest and the most skilled ethnic community in abroad by the virtue of the highest education and human resources.

- Higher education is highly subsidized and, thus it is accessible to the poorest of the poor. It is equity & accessibilities principle has enabled many of the economically poor to acquire higher education.
- Higher education has proved as an instrument of social change.
- It has integrated us globally by the virtue of English as a medium of instruction.
- Internationally competitive.
- Several institutions of excellence acquired Deemed Universities and Autonomy status.
- Indian universities are setting-up offshore campuses in abroad.
- Some Central Universities such as IITs, IIMs, TATA and IISC and the laboratories of CSIR are considered as Centres of excellence with global standards and are also recognized internationally.

#### WEAKNESSES

- No provision of academic audit in some of the Colleges.
- Lack of quest for quality in majority of institutions.
- Academic heads in majority of Universities, Colleges at the faculty level are elected by majority, not selected on merit.
- Decision making in universities is highly centralized.
- Complicated office procedures and administrative staff are not professionally trained.
- Students are not involved as partners in decision-making process.
- Multiple apex agencies like UGC, AICTE, NAAC, NBA, etc. are often overlapping functions.
- Autonomy of universities and institutions has not correspondingly increased the accountability.
- Lack of equality of educational opportunities.
- Uniform fee structure, irrespective of economic status and affordability of students.
- Multiple entrance tests for similar courses burdening students.
- No student assessment/feedback.
- No campus recruitment as well as part time job likes foreign universities in higher education

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Autonomy to be given only after NAAC's accreditation and higher rating for it.
- UGC/AICTE assessment expert committees may be clubbed with NAAC/NBA's assessment and accreditation peer terms in the areas of similarity. Acts, statutes and regulations of the UGC.
- AICTE and the universities are in conformity with one another and follow a similar pattern.
- The percentage of NET/SLET examination results of a University may be taken as the one of the key parameters of performance of a University/Institution.
- Gains in the information technology are to be taken to advantage education sector. Flexibility can be allowed for students in selections of curriculum.
- Removal of roadblocks in opening of educational institutions as done in the sectors of trade, industry and commerce.
- Apex agencies like UGC, AICTE have to pursue the responsibility of setting up and monitoring the academic standards.
- Private Universities may be allowed to be set up and their functions must be monitored and facilitated by the govt. agencies.
- Interface to be created between university-society, university-local community and university-industry.
- Universities required to react at pace with the global changes in other sectors.
- Students are needed to be treated as clients and the Universities have to work more towards satisfaction of the changing needs and ambition of the students.
- Alumni associations are to be formed. They can be tapped for expertise and endowments.
- Latest technologies like web education, internet, video conference is to be fully utilized. Education to be integrated with other sectors such as health care, poverty alleviation, infrastructure development etc to make education a key element of national development activity.
- Educational liberalization along with national and state level targets can be set-up in higher education as in the areas of Agriculture, Commerce, Economy, and Industry. Such targets are available in primary education also

#### THREATS

- Professional education to a significant extent is commercialized despite the intervention of the government.

- Majority of the students are studying traditional courses out of compulsion and lack of alternative but without an interest to pursue them earnestly.
- Art education and science streams have become endangered and hardly few takers are there for them.
- Several courses are run just for sake of survival of those departments and to sustain the jobs of teachers.
- Lack of academic audit mechanism makes it less possible to provide financial assistance on the basis of academic quality and output instead of numerical parameters.
- State government, which has larger role, has taken insufficient care of improving the quality of education.
- No earnest effort for updating the curriculum development.
- Most of the doctoral researcher do not contribute to knowledge but only create additional data.
- Quantitative expansion of higher education.

#### CONCLUSION

Academic and Administrative Audit gives a standard system based on parameters for Quality education. Quality enhancement is defined in terms of institutional policies, procedures and activities that are designed to promote the learning experience and learning outcomes of students and also contribute to the enrichment of the curriculum. The approach to enhancement will involve an institutional assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of current academic practice and the identification of potential areas for improvement. It may also reflect the particular mission and strategic priorities of institutions, where enhancement is seen in terms of a strategy for driving change and promoting student achievement and capabilities. Hence it is concluded that there is a dire need to pay proper attention to institutional strategies and policies for global engagements, extending the experience and aspirations of students to participate in an increasingly global community.

#### REFERENCES

1. Agarwal, P. "Higher education in India: The need for change," working paper 180, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi, 2006.
2. Jadhav B.U. and N. Rohidns, Academic and Administrative Audit: A parameter of Quality Education.
3. Agarwal, P. Sputtering out of steam: Engineering education; changing realities, The Economic Times, February, 2003.
4. Aggarwal, J. C. Development and Planning Of Modern Education, 9E. Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 2009.
5. Arunachalam .P. Higher education sector in India: Issues and Imperatives, journal of Global Economy, Vol.6 No.4, pp297-291, 2010.
6. Chinhoi University of Technology. Directorate of Quality Assurance and Graduate Studies. Internal Academic Audit Handbook. Retrieved from [http://www.cut.ac.zw/downloads/quality\\_assurance/Academic%20Audit%20Handbook.pdf](http://www.cut.ac.zw/downloads/quality_assurance/Academic%20Audit%20Handbook.pdf) on 21-11-2015
7. Dalhman, Carl and Utz, Anuja, India and Knowledge economy: leveraging strengths and opportunities. The World Bank, Washington DC. January, 2005.
8. Gupta, B.L. , Academic Audit, Concept Publishing, New Delhi 2011
9. Joshi, M.M. Higher Education in India: Vision and Action, UNESCO: World Conference on Higher Education in the Twenty first century Country Paper, Oct. 5 – 9 Paris, 1998.2.
10. K.B.Powar, WTO, GATS and Higher Education: An Indian Prospective, University News: New Delhi, January, 2003.
11. Kundu, C. S. 26 March (2015) Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/post/What\\_is\\_the\\_importance\\_of\\_academic\\_audit\\_in\\_educational\\_institutions\\_on\\_20-11-2012](https://www.researchgate.net/post/What_is_the_importance_of_academic_audit_in_educational_institutions_on_20-11-2012)
12. L.C.Singh Self Financing Higher education ,University News New Delhi,2002
13. Mohanasundaram, V. SWOT Analysis of Indian Higher Education, ECONSPK 3(1), 2011.
14. Mishra, S. Quality assurance in higher education: An introduction. Commonwealth of Learning; National Assessment and Accreditation Council, 2007.
15. NCERT [National Council of Educational Research and Training]. (1998). Sixth All India Educational Survey. New Delhi.
16. Obadya Ray Shaguri, Higher Education in India –Access, Equity and Quality. Global Access to Post Secondary Education 2013.
17. PETER, E. G., & EBIMOBOWEI, A. Audit Risk Assessment and Detection of Misstatements in Annual Reports: Empirical Evidence from Nigeria. Research Journal of Finance and Accounting, 4(1), 97-108, 2013.
18. Philip Kotler, Marketing Management, Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi, 1999.
19. Power, M. Making things auditable. Accounting, organizations and society, 21(2), 289-315, 1996.
20. Raj Agarwal, Globalization of Higher Education and WTO, University News: New Delhi, 2002.
21. Ramana, P. V., & Rao, V. C. Use of information technology in central university libraries of India. DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology, 23(2), 2003.
22. Ravi, J. S. Making the Multiversity: An Open Higher Education Model. VIKALPA, 37(3), 7, 2002.
23. Shore, C., & Roberts, S. Higher Education and the Panopticon Paradigm: Quality Assessment as "Disciplinary Technology", 1993.
24. Stella, A., & Gnanam, A. Quality assurance in distance education: The challenges to be addressed. Higher Education, 47(2), 143-160, 2004.
25. Tiwari, E. S. Education in India Vol# 4. Atlantic Publishers & Dist. 2007.
26. <https://www.scribd.com/doc/87780483/SWOT-analysis-of-Indian-Higher-Education>