



NAAC: Need of the Hour

JATIN G. JAYSWAL

Assistant Professor,
Smt. S. M. Panchal Science College, Talod (SK).
Gujarat (India)

Abstract:

Our higher education system has to adopt such paths that ensure open, transparent and efficient education system that produces value added knowledgeable human power and this demands quality in functioning of educational institutions. Quality education is possible when it aims at full development of learner - mind, heart and ability to act that is thinking, feeling, doing. To assess and accredit institutions of higher education with an objective to improve quality of education NAAC a need of the hour.

Keywords: NAAC, Quality

1. Introduction

After Independence the priority in education was given to quantitative expansion. It was the need of the hour to increase the literacy rate of the world's largest democracy. Higher education is supposed to provide society with competent men and women trained in agriculture, medicine and technology and various other professions which can provide necessary technical know how for bringing about economic change in the country. In the garb of quantitative success there is qualitative failure. There has been tremendous quantitative expansion in terms of institutions, enrolments, teachers and increase in financial allocation, but all at the cost of quality. The post Independence period may be described literally as "era of higher education " in Indian educational history. It was also convinced that the future of the Indian Society depends upon Universities symbolised best in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's observation : " A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. "

2. Meaning

Quality is an elusive attribute, an attribute of values, which cannot be easily measured or quantified. Webster's dictionary describes it; amongst other things as a degree of excellence ' and 'superiority in kind . It is relative concept that means different things to different people. In field of education, while discussing quality, focus of students may be the facilities provided, of teachers on teaching/learning process, of management and parents on scores or grades achieved, and of prospective employers on the nature of the output.

3. Definition

'Quality is fitness for use. '(Juran 1974)

'Quality is conformance to requirements or specifications.' (Cross by)

According to Arun Nigavekar Quality may be viewed:

- In terms of the exceptionally high standards.
- In terms of consistency with references to processes and set of well defined criteria.
- As fitness for purpose, satisfying priorities of different interest groups like students, teachers, technical/administrative staff, parents, would be employers, funding agencies and society.
- Is equated with value for money which brings idea of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

- Is seen as 'transformative' - which is treated as an ongoing process of transformation of the learner that is the student.
- In higher education the term 'Standard' means a basis for 'measurement' or a 'yardstick' to describe a required characteristic which varies from nation to nation.

4. Need For Quality in Higher Education

Quality has been one of the major concerns of education across all levels. With globalisation of economy, demand for quality in education has become all the more important. In India the year 2002 has been declared as the 'Year of Quality in Higher Education'. Educational institutions have realised that in a highly competitive environment students can be attracted only by providing the best that is available. Government bodies responsible for funding ask the Universities to demonstrate their commitment to quality before approving major financial assistance.

Our higher education system has to adopt such paths that ensure open, transparent and efficient education system that produces value added knowledgeable human power and this demands quality in functioning of educational institutions. Quality education is possible when it aims at full development of learner- mind, heart and ability to act that is thinking, feeling, doing.

5. Policy Recommendations

5.1 Education Commission (1964 - 66) observed

"There is general feeling in India that situation in higher education is unsatisfactory and even alarming in some ways, that the average standard have been failing and that rapid expansion has resulted in lowering quality".

5.2 National Policy on Education (NPE) and Programme of Action (POA) 1986 recommended that

"Excellence in institutions of Higher education is a function of many aspects: Self evaluation and Self improvement are important. If a mechanism is set up which will encourage self assessment in institutions and assessment and accreditation by a council, the quality process, participation, achievements etc. will be constantly monitored and improved. "To bring about qualitative improvement in teaching at under-graduate level, the UGC introduced in 1974-75 the College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP) and College Humanities and Social Science Improvement Programme (COHSSIP). To promote excellence in research UGC has devised a Special Assistance Programme (SAP) under which selected departments in faculties of science, humanities, social sciences, engineering and technology are given financial support in form of Departmental Research Support (DRS) or Centres of Advanced Studies (CAS). UGC assists Science and Technology Department in universities for procuring sophisticated and costly equipment under scheme formulated by the Committee for Strengthening of Infrastructure in Science and Technology (COSIST).

6. Statutory Bodies to Ensure Quality

6.1 University Grants Commission

It is statutory body for the purpose of allocation and disbursement of grants to universities and responsible for co-ordination and maintenance of Standards of the Universities. Its achievement includes the introduction of three year degree course, promotion of research, revision of pay scales, improvement of libraries and laboratories.

Its objective, under the UGC Act of 1956, is to take " all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and co-ordination of University education and for determination and maintenance of standards in teaching, examination and research in the universities. "

6.2 NAAC

In pursuance of the recommendations of NPE and considering the need of the hour, UGC under section 12CCC of the UGC Act of 1956(3) established the National Assessment and Accreditation

Council (NAAC) on 16th September 1994, at Bangalore.

The prime function of NAAC is to assess and accredit institutions of higher education with an objective to improve quality of education.

The Principal Objectives of the council are to :

- ➔ Grade institutions of higher education and their programmes.
- ➔ Stimulate the academic environment in these institutions.
- ➔ Help the institutions in realizing their academic objectives.
- ➔ Promote changes, innovations and reforms necessary for above purposes, and encourage innovations, self evaluation and accountability in higher education.

7. Basic Components Enhancing Quality

7.1 Teachers

Education Commission (1964-66) recommended that standards in education depend first and foremost on quality, commitment and competence of teachers. The teacher should have broad and deep knowledge of subject, transaction of subject, class management, evaluation, professional development. Shri Aurbindo said "Every teacher should bear in mind that nothing can be taught but everything can be learnt. Teaching is one major aspect of academic life and it is the input from the personal scholarship and research expertise of the staff that gives university its special flavor."

The efficiency of a teacher may be judged on basis of his/her contribution to teaching, research, extension activities and to administration. A teacher in a University department should be reasonably competent in both teaching and research and perhaps excel in one of these.

An assessment of teacher's performance should take into consideration:-

- The 'teaching load' of the teacher.
- Level and nature of the course taught.
- The innovations introduced in teaching.
- Contributions made to curriculum development.

7.2 Students Learners

The other very important component is the output or finished product who will come out of Universities with their degrees either graduates, post graduates etc. Youth of University of a nation are the iron pillars on whom future of nation stands. Students should acquire skill of self learning and apply what they have learned to real life situations. But what we really find is there, is lack of commitment and accountability on part of students. Due focus on learning to learn, learning to do, learning to live together has to be emphasized. Opportunities for part time education (correspondence courses, evening courses) should be extended widely.

7.3 Curriculum

A serious malaise facing higher education at the turn of millenium is solid frozen syllabi. Course content in most of the universities have not changed for decades which leave the students to struggle to keep pace with fast changes in the world around. Prof. Armaity Desai, former Chairperson of UGC said that course revision is essential otherwise students will question what they are learning and that isn't healthy. The UGC has through its Curriculum Development Centers, prepared model curricula in 27 subjects, at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. It is therefore necessary to examine the procedure by which various syllabi are drawn, the frequency with which they are updated and extent to which revised syllabi are actually implemented. In most Universities curriculum design and development is the responsibility of ' Board of Studies ' which includes teachers and experts in the subject.

7.4 Administration

For the successful implementation of teaching and research programmes it is necessary that different academic units receive full support from the administration. Some indicators of administrative

efficiency are timely scheduling and Holding of meetings, time taken for completion of admissions to various academic programmers, declaration of results, performance of essential functions, ratio of teaching to non-teaching staff. NPE (1986) POA (1992) Department of education constituted a committee in January 1991 to suggest measures for the augmentation of training facilities for University and College administration.

7.5 Infrastructure

An idea of physical infrastructure of an institution can be obtained from a layout map and general survey of the campus. Apart from academic departments, library, computer centre, student welfare facilities like health centres, hostels, canteen, sports facilities, recreational centres, staff housing, guest house are all included in infrastructure. So it has to be seen that whether these facilities are adequately available or not.

8. Threats to Quality in Higher Education System

- 1. Education Set up system --** There is vast network of institutions of higher education in country consisting of about 250 universities, 9000 colleges, 3,00,000 teachers and 5 million students (Oza, 1999). Due to failure in controlling unplanned expansion, highly bureaucratic system of management, inflexible academic structure, political pressure tend to bring down the quality of education.
- 2. Student's unrest:** It refers to dissatisfaction among the student community, thwarting of their needs, desires, safety, expectations and aspirations. This results in closure of institution for long period because of agitation and 'bandh', protest against stiff paper or demand for grace marks, protest against rising of fees. Due to all this syllabus is not completed, environment is such that students don't feel like studying, which affect their performance and result which in turn lowers the quality of educational system.
- 3. Weakening of Student's Motivation:** This may result due to dissatisfaction from teachers. Lack of commitment from teacher's side, proper guidance and counseling, teacher centered teaching methods. Due to this students may not cope up with what is going on in the class. A feeling of resentment, frustration, demonization results due to which interest in learning is lowered which lowers the quality of educational system.
- 4. Inadequate infrastructure:** Quality of educational institution is lowered due to inadequate infrastructure facilities available to students in form of building, lab, libraries, equipment, tools, and instruments. Attention is not paid towards maintenance, cleanliness of these facilities.
- 5. Increased Number of Educated Unemployed:** Quality of higher education is lowered due to this factor because the supply of educated person has been augmented by the expansion of opportunities for education but all those who complete their education are not absorbed in productive employment due to lack of opportunities to work.
- 6. Influence of tuition class:** Students prefer going for tuition classes rather than attending college lectures due to which they are unaware of the content, method taught in college. Absenteeism, bunking of lectures may be due to disinterest, less practice given for certain subjects like mathematics, accounts, statistics, physics, chemistry etc. Due to all these reasons quality is affected to a greater extent which affects the image of an institution.
- 7. Finance:** Financial outlays on education are inadequate to implement different policies. Role of education is well accepted in developing a country but only 3.7% of GNP is devoted to education which is very less to implement developmental plans which again affects the quality of any institution.

9. Suggestions

Close relationship of mutual support service between universities, colleges, local community.

1. Focus should be on developing life skills such as decision making, creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving.
2. Private initiative or self financed courses should be encouraged depending on local needs.

3. Increase in student's service like orientation of new students, health services, residential facilities, guidance and counseling including vocational placement, students welfare activities.
4. Earnest efforts from students, parents, teachers, state government, and political parties to remove educational deficiencies those contribute to student unrest.
5. Education should be cost effective and affordable. Emphasis should be on resource generation and cutting down of wasteful or unnecessary expenditure.
6. Curriculum development to absorb repeated expansion of new knowledge.
7. Periodic assessment should be encouraged.
8. Autonomy should be given to universities to discharge their duties and obligations efficiently and effectively.
9. Institutional Scholarship should be given to promote and motivate students for research activities.

10. Conclusion

Indian higher education is truly facing an unprecedented crisis and the academic communities, staff in higher education system have to rise and work for assuring quality in higher education. There is very little understanding about the price that society has to pay to create national system of education. It is the price in form of investment of thought of dedication, hard work by teachers, students, educational administrators and others. We have no choice but to rise and work to assure quality in higher education.

References

1. Agarwal, J.C.(1982). Development and planning of Modern Education, New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
2. Crosby, A. (1968). Creativity and Performance in Industrial Organisation, New York: McGraw-Hill.
3. Diwan, P. and Agarwal, R. (2000). Continuing Education Programmes, University News, Vol. 38(52), Dec. 25.
4. Government of India, (1986). National Policy on Education Programme of Action; New Delhi: MHRD.
5. Louis, V. (2002). Quality in Education: A Teacher's Perspective, University News, Vol40 (26), July 7.
6. Maitreya, B. (1996). New Education Policy and Development Changes, New Delhi: Kanishka publishers.
7. Naik, J.P. (1975). Equality and Quantity - The Elusive Triangle in Indian Education, Bombay : Allied Publisher.
8. Nigavekar, A.(2001). Qualify in Higher Education (Convocation Address) in University News, Vol39(19).
9. Oza, N.B.(1999). Privatisation of Higher Education - Issues a n d options Jaipur Mangal Deep Publications.
10. Pillai, L and Ponnuduraj, B.S.(2002). The year of Quality in Higher Education, University News Vol. 40(31), Aug. 11.
11. Powar, K.B.(1996).Accreditation in Higher Education, New Delhi : Viva Books Pvt. Ltd.
12. Ranjan, J. (2001). Quality Assurance in Teaching University News,Vo1. 39(18), May 6.
13. <http://naacindia.org/>caccessed on 28/12/2013