



INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF IQAC: A TOOL FOR IMPROVING QUALITY EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES (HEIS)

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A quality education has the power to transform societies in a single generation, provide children with the protection they need from the hazards of poverty labour exploitation and disease and given them the knowledge, skills and confidence to reach their full potential-Audrey Hepburns

ABSTRACT:

Quality in higher education has become the prime agenda of countries worldwide. Knowledge is at the core of all development efforts in advancing economic and social well being in an emerging nation like India, Higher education is a powerful tool to built knowledge for an information based society. Quality education has become a very important need as well as matter of concern in the last one decade. Quality and excellence should be the vision of every higher educational institution. Acquisition and enhancement of quality is the great challenge faced by almost all higher educational institutions maintaining the momentum of quality consciousness in crucial in colleges. Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), in fact, is conceived as a mechanism to built and ensure a quality culture at the institutional level. Every higher educational institute (HEIS') should have an Internal Quality Assurance system, with appropriate structure and processes, and with enough flexibility to meets the diverse needs of stakeholders. The mechanism of the institutions may be called 'Internal Quality Assurance Cell' (IQAC), which is meant for planning, guidance and monitoring quality assurance and quality enhancement activities of the colleges. The IQAC may channelize and systematize the efforts and measures of an institution towards academic excellence.

IQAC is made effective which may serve as a powerful tool for efficient administrations in the

institutions. So, effectiveness of IQAC is brought in by setting goal, monitoring and analyzing results by feedback and improving accordingly by modified mechanism. The expected function of the IQAC is the development and application of quality benchmarks i.e. parameters in various activities of the institution.

This paper gives a brief review of role of IQAC in improving quality education in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and in aiming to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the institution and to promote measures for institutional functioning towards quality enhancement.

Keywords: IQAC, Quality Education, Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs')

INTRODUCTION:

‘Vince Lombard’ clearly stated about quality matters that ‘The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor’

Quality assurance and enhancement is the continuous process, for which IQAC has been constituted in many colleges. IQAC is the first step towards the internalization and institutionalization of quality enhancement, its success depends upon the sense of belongingness and participation it can inculcate in all the constituents of the institutions. The IQAC has the potential to workout ‘Intervention Strategies to remove deficiencies and enhance quality.’ The uneasiness prevails among the various stakeholders of education viz. parents, employers, teachers, students etc. In recent times the numbers of institutions are engaged in providing higher education in India and numbers of students are enrolled for the same, but now the quality in education in comparison to the quantity has become the defining element in the century. The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for quality maintenance in all directions. The IQAC has to ensure whatever is done in the institution for education is done efficiently and effectively at self defined standards and is devoid of mistakes of all kind. So the IQAC needs established procedures and modalities to collect data and information by using the probes on the different parameters. Therefore IQAC should become a vehicle for ensuring the quality.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been instilling a momentum of quality consciousness among higher education and institutions establish an Internal Quality

Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is the continuous process; the IQAC will become a part of an Institutions system and work towards realizing the goal of quality sustenance and enhancement

An institution that really understands its strength, weakness, potentials and limitations is likely to be more effective in carrying out its educational mission. Continuous improvement, self evaluation and an external peer evaluation are inevitable for quality assurance. NAAC and universities play a vital role as mediators and facilitators for professional guidance to the colleges so that they can impart better learning process among the students. Most of the HEIs' have undergone the assessment by NAAC and as per requirement each and every colleges has formed the IQAC.

IQAC: SMART GOALS

- The primary aim of the IQAC is to develop system for conscious, consistent and catalytic action to improve quality in the academic and administrative performance of the institution.
- IQAC is to generate good practices, ideas, planning and implementing and measuring the outcome of academic and administrative performance of the institutions.

COMPOSITION OF IQAC

IQAC should be formulated as per the guidelines of NAAC with some necessary specific modifications as given. The IQAC shall have the following composition:

- a) Principal - A chair person
- b) Five senior teachers and one senior administrative official - Member.
- c) Two external experts on quality management/Industry/Local Community-Member.
- d) Director/Coordinator-Member Secretary.

The members at (b) and (c) of the above shall be the principal of the college in consultation with the academic body of the college (Academic committee of a college). The membership of such nominated members shall be for a period of two year. The IQAC should meet at least once in a quarter. The Quorum for the meeting shall be two third of the total numbers of members.

In IQAC teacher representative should be selected from different faculties considering their participation in teaching-learning, evaluation, research and extension work. The agenda, minutes and action taken reports are to be documented with official signatures and maintained electronically in retrievable format.

IQAC: STRATEGIES

The IQAC shall evolve mechanism and procedure for-

- Ensuring timely, efficient and progressive performance in academic, administrative and financial tasks.
- The relevance and quality of academic and research programmes.
- The credibility of evaluation procedures.
- Sharing a research finding and networking with other institutions in India and abroad.

IQAC: FUNCTIONS

Some of the function expected of the IQAC are:

- Organization of workshop, seminar on quality related themes and promotion of quality circles.
- Development and application of quality benchmarks for the various academic and administrative activities of the institutions.
- Dissemination of information on the various quality parameters of higher education.
- Preparation annual quality of assurance report (AQAR) to be submitted to NAAC
- Documentation of the various programmes leading to quality improvement.

BENEFITS: CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

IQAC will facilitate/Contribute

- To better internal communication.
- To act as a change agent in the institution.
- To provide sound basis for decision making to improve institutional functioning
- Build an organized methodology of documentations and internal communication.
- Ensure internalization of the quality culture etc.

ROLE OF COORDINATOR IN IQAC

The role of the coordinator of the IQAC is crucial in ensuring and effective functioning of all the members. The coordinator of IQAC may be a senior person with expertise in quality aspects. He/ She may be a full time functionary or may be a senior academic/Administrator entrusted with IQAC as an additional responsibility. It is preferable that the coordinator may have sound knowledge about the computer, its various functions and uses for effective communication.

The coordinator of IQAC has a major role in implementing preparation of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR). The awareness of the coordinator is the catalytic role when is something left identified, this totally personalizes and thus paralyzes the mechanism of quality enhancement.

CONCLUSION: BASED ON FINDINGS

IQAC must be made statutory apex body similar to local management committee (LMC) The awareness towards quality and excellence must be taken into consideration rather than the position of the person in the seniority list for being selected as a coordinator. IQAC meetings should be regularly conducted at least thrice in an academic year and whose proceeding should be properly recorded and seriously implemented as well as mentioned. IQAC must go through SWOT analysis as a periodic activity and evolve the mechanism which is made routinised by the principal and coordinator by assigning duties to the stakeholders.

As NAAC is triggering a 'Quality Culture' among the various constituents of the HEI as well as enhancing the awareness of institutional quality assurance. So the role of IQAC for the quality enhancement in higher education is distinct and important as it works towards improving and maintaining the quality. So IQAC should work for internalize and Institutionalize quality benchmarking.

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