Building a Quality Management System in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate research on issues of women's empowerment can be promoted in institution. Programmes on population education and premarital counselling can be important activities, which will greatly help college students both boys and girls The quality management systems in higher education can be developed specific to the location objectives of the institution, social environment, expectations of the students and locally available resources. Importantly, more can be learned from each other's experience. Upgradation of quality education in colleges is a universal need. If average colleges feel the need to adopt new initiatives, the better colleges need to create new systems. Prominent institutions in the society need to compete with their own ambitious goal of total quality education. This is the basic purpose of the mass movement towards quality education initiated by assessment and accreditation exercise

Keywords: *Quality Management, Indian Education System, Upgradation of System*

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is all about systems that lead to good academic culture, first-class academic results, progressive and accommodative management, clean administration, and spectacular profile of students and above all, review and modification of inputs. The students, faculty, administrative staff, college management, parents of students, and society synergize in the growth of an institution. In continuous quality pursuits, all the stakeholders have a prominent role to play.

The National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action state that institutional excellence is a function of 'self-evaluation and self-improvement'. Self-evaluation is an integral part of assessment and accreditation exercise. Self-improvement, on the other hand, should lead to developing quality management systems by the institution in pursuit of total quality in higher education. Quality systems are the building blocks of quality education.

NAAC's responsibility is to assess and accredit public and private institutions of higher learning, based on certain parameters, which reflect on the functioning of the institution in totality: The philosophy of NAAC is ameliorative and enabling, rather than punitive and judgmental, so that all constituencies of institutions of higher education are empowered to maximize their resources, opportunities and capabilities.

Quality systems in education are defined in terms of the seven parameters by NAAC. The council allots them as Curricular Aspects, Teaching- learning and Appraisal, Research, Consultancy and Extension, Base and Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression, Organisation and Management as basic norms. In addition, healthy practices are identified with educational innovations working with mission and goals, master plan for the institutional growth, feedback from stakeholders for improvement of the institutional functions innovations in management, communication and quality enhancement strategies.

Development of quality systems in education is prompted by the contribution made by NAAC in providing that kind of a push needed for shaking awake average educational institutions from the deep slumber of perpetuating the status quo without material contribution towards new initiatives.

Even if an institution has not considered new initiatives in the past, it can always start, even while preparing for the assessment exercise. Thus, it is never too late to implement quality systems in an institution.

Assessment process considers certain systems crucial in quality education in higher education. In addition to calibrating the institutional performance and quality practices, the assessment process induces change towards quality education. The institutions start thinking afresh towards improving quality again but are held up due to certain misconceptions of costs and finances.

Quality Management Systems

Building the quality management systems at college is not an expensive proposition. Quality in education is driven by quality of manpower more than the volume of capital inflows. A good think-tank can make all the difference in quality education even within the same financial frame.

There are systems, which need only the administrative will and skilful design. An overview of such quality systems will enable a college implement such systems any time without large expenditure outlays.

Quality systems are considered as per the seven parameters of NAAC assessment. Those systems which are keys to quality are discussed here. Care has been taken to indicate only such systems that are not capital intensive, yet yield desirable output.

The quality systems are accordingly classified as those, which do not need any expenditure outlays, systems that need extensive human inputs and those systems that need a modest budget. It can be seen that all these systems are equally important irrespective of expenditure outlays.

Systems without additional capital outlays

Systems which can be developed without additional expenditure outlays are like staff academy, alumni association, feedback from students, peers and society, identification and awarding excellence among staff, training administrative staff, student development programmes, skill enhancement programmes, internal newsletter and self-study courses that can be implemented. These systems help in enhancing quality in a big way.

Staff academy is looked upon as a regular meeting of the teaching staff where the faculty can present papers on topical issues or skill oriented issues for the benefit of the faculty as well as the non-teaching staff. This will form part of faculty research as well as extension programme. The staff academy will have papers presented by faculty. The faculty can participation simple book reviews from among the new arrivals in the library can be useful information for common dispensation.

Alumni association is an important appendage of an institution. Younger colleges, in the absence of such associations, can generate database out of its annual records. Each year from the terminal year, the student records can provide a directory of fresh alumni. A day can be declared as a Reunion Day on which the past students can assemble and discuss the prospects of an association. In the running of an alumni association, information and communication is the key to efficiency.

Feedback and evaluation of the institution from academic students, parents of students, alumni neighbouring institutions and industry is an integral part of continual development and review process. Student feedback can be on the institution as well as the faculty. Faculty evaluation by students has an immense potential of making subtle changes in curriculum administration.

Peer evaluation of the institution provides the community impressions on the standing of the college. Such evaluation will give valuable inputs for review and fine tune the existing systems. The evaluation by peers can include the visitors neighbouring institutions, industry, etc. Feedback from parents of students will provide impressions of an important segment that constitute major stakeholder in the institutions. Felicitating excellence among teachers/ students is an incentive, which will promote competitive endeavours in improving quality. The college can identity best student or the students can identify best teacher, and felicitate. Administrative staffs are the unsung heroes of any educational institution. Their contribution is significant yet latent. Formally, the present system has no provision for training, motivation or orientation of administrative staff. The in house faculty can train the non-teaching staff in minor

skill-oriented activities. E.g. Communication skills computer application, leadership programmes, yoga, stress management and similar programmes are useful. Such efforts will instil confidence among administrative staff in the movement called quality education

The faculty, alumni or students themselves can conduct student development programmes. High utility programmes can be self- financing. College can finance one-day programmes. E.g. Personality development programmes Tax planning, Film appreciation. Horticulture, Remedial courses / Intensive coaching, Photography, Mehandi, Music, Aquarium maintenance, Bird-watching etc. Skill enhancement programmes can be conducted by collecting moderate fee and employing extern faculty. These programmes can include Beautician course, Fashion design, Embroidery, Portfolio management, Mushroom cultivation etc. an internal newsletter is a simple instrument, which can be developed into a powerful system of communication and motivation. The newsletter can have Government and university circulars on a regular basis.

The concept of self-study courses as co- curriculum is visualized as an effective alternative with attributes of simplicity and efficiency. In times to come when the education system will be overhauled radically towards effectiveness, these self- study courses will still continue as cost effective and flexible curricular option A student will select, voluntarily, a course for study, in the beginning of the academic year or before vacation as per his academic plan. The student may select a course as per his career plan or sheer interest and curiosity.

Systems with moderate Budget

Some systems need moderate budget yet they can be managed without non-plan expenditure. Alumni can finance the outlays on these heads or the user can pay to cover the cost. Any sponsorship from among the neighbouring industry or NGOS can augment the. Expenses on these quality systems can be great extent. These systems include counselling facilities to students and staff, medical facilities student insurance schemes, women welfare centre and consultation activates.

The institution can provide counselling facilities to the students. Visiting counsellors offering emotional counselling facilities to students is highly essential. In the present social situation and system full of tensions, the students often need counselling to restore emotional balance. Counselling is an invaluable aid. A part-time counsellor can be appointed. If available, the psychology department can take up the activity or the faculty for the job to make it more cost effective can be trained Medical facilities are essential to an institution in addition to periodical medical check-up. Visiting medical personnel can provide basic health facilities to students. The same visiting consultants can be used for medical awareness programmes.

The college can coordinate with NGOS in mobilizing professional manpower for such programmes Experience shows that student's insurance schemes are becoming popular and useful. Students can be provided nominal insurance cover. The college through its own resources can subsidize the premium. The provision of such insurance cover is considered a cherished welfare measure Women welfare centres will be highly relevant in women's colleges

institutions. In both cases the college can be an agent of change. The college can also undertake the task of empowering needy women in the neighbourhood by undertaking relevant projects as well as co-education Such a centre can have activities, which will cater to the needs of the students and also the community For the college students it can take up awareness programmes on issues of gender justice in the college campus and awareness programmes on issues of women empowerment in the community. Coordinating with NSS for extension activities, the centre can conduct training programmes for women in the community towards vocation leading independence to economic. The centre can generate resources and take up community service. The centre can develop resources for college and community use through poster competitions, printed material, training leadership for community work, conducting exhibitions, street plays on relevant issues.

Conclusion Remarks

Undergraduate research on issues of women's empowerment can be promoted in institution. Programmes on population education and premarital counselling can be important activities, which will greatly help college students both boys and girls The quality management systems in higher education can be developed specific to the location objectives of the institution, social environment, expectations of the students and locally available resources. Importantly, more can be learned from each other's experience. Upgradation of quality education in colleges is a universal need. If average colleges feel the need to adopt new initiatives, the better colleges need to create new systems. Prominent institutions in the society need to compete with their own ambitious goal of total quality education. This is the basic purpose of the mass movement towards quality education initiated by assessment and accreditation exercise.

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