Reform Process in Higher Education and need of Assessment and Accreditation

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Abstract:

Higher education in India suffers from several systemic deficiencies. There is a need of continuous assessment and accreditation process in the universities and colleges. The western countries has made considerable efforts to change and sustain the quality assurance frame work as well as accreditation norms and got positive results. Assessing the quality aspects of higher education external and internal needs are to be considered and analyzed. Through IQAC (Internal quality assurance cell) institutions and universities themselves monitor and improve the quality of their education provision, while external body like NAAC assesses the institutes and university education system which results in quality assurance of institutional policies and practices in overall manner. The difficulties like different enrollment pattern, non availability of sufficient number of full time teachers, non teaching staff, ban on recruitment, poor funding from different sources and unemployment are crucial. Skill based courses should be introduced by HE Department of Government and special attention with financial aid is to be given for that to reduce unemployment.

Keywords: Reform, education, assessment, accreditation, quality, NAAC, IQAC

Introduction:

It is well-known that the higher education in India suffers from several systemic deficiencies. As a result, it provides graduates and post graduates that are unemployable despite emerging shortages of skilled manpower in an increasing number of sectors. Reform in higher education system is needed and the quality framework should be updated. Quality assurance is equally necessary for distance education in addition to traditional education. Present mechanism for testing quality aspects in both type of education is not up to the mark. It should be updated. There is a need of continuous assessment and accreditation process in the institutes and universities working in higher education.

Objectives of the study:

The objective of the study is to analyze the effect of various aspects or dimensions of higher education in India. To study the various steps required in Indian higher education by observing the experiences of other countries to tackle its various systemic deficiencies. To maintain the standard in higher education, convince the need of assessment and accreditation.

Significance of the study:

Academicians, Educationist and researchers should know the reform process in Indian Higher Education and necessity of continuous evaluation and accreditation process to compete with standard global education system.

Research Methodology:

The researcher has adopted observation and survey, questionnaire, analytical, comparative methodology for this paper, reliance has been placed on journals and online database. A questionnaire consists of 10 questions given to the institutions and academicians to meet the objectives of the research.

Review of Literature:

Many Educationists and authors have studied the impact of quality assessment on universities and institutes. Fred M. Hayward in his paper (2006) mentioned the concept of quality assurance activities of Africa. Paper traces the necessity of assessment, accreditation and audits in higher education institutions in Africa. From several case studies it recommends the new approaches towards quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. Proper balance between external demands for quality and the creation of the conditions and the freedoms that allow the genius of Africa to flower as it should.

Ikhfan Haris presented in his paper (2013) explains the result of assessment on the implementation of internal quality assurance at higher education in Indonesia. He studied the development and implementation of academic quality assurance system of State university of Gorontalo. To build the quality culture in higher education in Indonesia, he recommended the quality assurance from organization of the external evaluation towards internal systems. He suggested global orientation of higher education and for that, it is required to have accreditation from international institution such as Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE).

Huu Cuong Nguyen, Colin Evers and Stephen Marshall (2017) through a study tried to find out the efforts of Vietnam towards accreditation in higher education. They developed accreditation framework, then resulted in the establishment of accrediting agencies; completion of almost universities' self-assessment reports; implementation of external assessment exercise at some institutions.

In India, Pawan Agrawal (2006) conducted a study on 'Education system in India'. He analyzed data from different departments and agencies including NAAC, MHRD, UGC, AICTC. He mentioned the higher education system in India and its growth including the issues related to the financing to higher education, research and innovation, use of technology etc.

Hypothesis:

Maximum institutions in India not up to the mark in all manner compared to developed countries. The quality of education provided is not similar all over the country. The infrastructure provided is also poor due to lack of funds.

Results and Discussion:

The countries like the USA, UK, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, has made considerable efforts to change and sustain the quality assurance frame work as well as accreditation norms. Efforts of all these countries were directed towards upgrading higher education by having and implementing higher education.

India has an average to good level of setup of higher education. Education standard in India is of low quality as compare to developed countries. There is a need of improvement and the changes to be made in our higher education system. If the quality of education improves, it will be a strong backbone for the nation and then the standard will also improve. Indian Universities should attract foreign students by using the quality techniques and advanced methods of teaching. It is well known that in ancient time, India was the centre of education and Nalanda was famous university for standard education where the students and researchers came from different countries.

Reform in education system is a continuous process. Changes in higher education of India are always necessary as per upcoming trends. Assessing the quality aspects of higher education external and internal needs are to be considered and analyzed. As per Higher Education Department and NAAC guidelines Internal quality assurance cell is compulsory in all universities and colleges. Through IQAC academic institutions and universities themselves monitor and improve the quality of their education provision, while external body like NAAC

assesses the institutes and university education system which results in quality assurance of institutional policies and practices in overall manner.

Higher education sector has experienced progress, development due to measures initiated by the Government as well as private managements and NGOs. Some researchers suspect these measures. As per their opinion these initiatives are half cooked, substandard, exploitative and lowering the overall academic merit.

We have to accept that the higher education in India has some problems like different affiliating system, inflexible academic structure, different syllabus, work load and capacity rules with various subjects in different universities. Low level funding from Government and public is also a major problem in improving quality of education. Other than this we provide graduates that are unemployable despite emerging shortages of skilled manpower in an increasing number of sectors.

Higher education means which uplifts the understanding and in-depth knowledge to enables students to have knowledge based learning as well as the applications based learning. Central and state governments share the responsibility for Higher Education with the help of UGC. The Government provides grants to the UGC or RUSA and UGC or RUSA provides to universities and colleges.

No doubt, India has one of the largest and diverse education systems in the world. To address quality and relevance of the higher education, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) and the Programme of Action (PoA, 1992) spelt out strategic plans for the policies, advocated the establishment of an independent National accreditation agency. Consequently, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 as an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The department of Higher Education, MHRD is responsible for the overall development of the policy and planning of Higher Education sector. There are around 800 universities and near about 40000 colleges are in our country. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is 24.5%.

In the year 1994, UGC established the agency named National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) for purpose of assessing and accrediting Universities and colleges. Other agencies like National Board of Accreditation (NBA), Accreditation Board (BA), Distance Educational Council (DEC) also performs similar functions. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been attempted as a continuance of the NAAC's concern for ensuring that its processes are in tune with regional and global changes in higher education sector. The process is revised from July 2017 to enhance the redeeming features of the accreditation process and make them more robust, objective, transparent and scalable as well as make it ICT based.

NAAC has formulated 3 stages accreditation process. At first it receives self-study report from the institutions (SSR), second it inspects the institution for validation of the self-study report and finally it makes recommendation on the basis of reports and inspection. Assessment is required for quality evaluation and standards. There are the parameters for skill development, programme enhancement, institutional network, collaborative learning, outbound hands on experience, workshops, conferences and seminars, curricular and co-curricular academic programs, graduation rates etc. Effectiveness of reviewing the quality assurance schemes is required to have the idea about the actual impact and implementation of all standards related to quality check. Like other quality assurance processes, the 'effectiveness' review provides an opportunity for an institution to undertake a broad, corporate reflection on overall development. It contributes to continue development and embedding of a quality culture within the institution. So, assessment is necessary to improve quality. Quality assurance enables educational institutions to be at par. Students can understand the difference between information and knowledge. Quality assurance is equally necessary for distance education in addition to traditional education.

Still there are few difficulties to achieve the standard for a higher education institute. The issues like different fields of education, different enrollment pattern, non availability of

sufficient number of full time teachers, non teaching staff, ban on recruitment, poor funding from Government or from other sources are crucial. All these issues and governance practice; quality control mechanism has been studied. Government should take positive steps to improve our quality of higher education by increasing financial support to universities and colleges. Recruitment of teaching and non teaching staff should be regular. Assessment of quality and accreditation in higher education should be compulsory to make a change in HE sector. Skill based courses should be introduced and special attention with financial aid is to be given for that to reduce unemployment.

Conclusion:

As the objective of the study was to analyze the effect of various aspects or dimensions of higher education in India and finding out for a need for improving it, the discussion shows that the different aspects and the remedies to standardize the higher education. The paper has examined the role of higher education to meet the global demand for qualified manpower and agreed with the fact that the education standard in India is behind that of developed nations. India has an average to good level of setup of higher education.

The other objective was to maintain the standard in higher education convince the need of assessment and accreditation. There should be a regular check in higher education through the agencies like NAAC, NBA, AISHE etc. If the quality of the system improves the standard will also improve. To achieve this, Government needs to allocate more of the budget. The other issues, such as good governance, standard academic profession, use of new technology, deep research are also important to improve the quality of education in colleges and universities.

Funding or investment in technology infrastructure in higher education is priority. As skilled manpower is the necessity of Nation today, with a view to resolve the paradox of high graduate and post graduate unemployment and shortage of skilled labour availability, the skill based courses should be introduced.

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