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Role of IQAC in Planning and Execution of Quality Enhancement in Education

Abstract:

The University Grant Commission (UGC) established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 at Bangalore. The prime agenda of NAAC is to Assess and Accredite institutions of higher learning with an objective of helping them to work continuously to improve the quality of education. Part A of guidelines of XI Plan of University Grants Commission directs all the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to have an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). The motive behind setting up of IQAC is to maintain the momentum of quality consciousness which is crucial in HEIs. IQAC is a mechanism to build and ensure a quality culture at the institutional level, and is meant for planning, guiding and monitoring Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) activities of the HEIs.

Plan of Action

- 1. To review the performance of the entire array of academic programmes encompassing the faculty, research scholars and students
- 2. To promote research in new and advancing fields of relevance. For this Research and Development Cell and University Research board were instituted.
- 3. Dissemination of information on the activities of the University for the benefit of general public and elite of the society.
- 4. Constitution of Quality Circles at all the levels of University to involve the entire cross section of University for the quality improvement.
- 5. Adoption of a Student Charter in the University to bring awareness among the students of their own responsibilities and the functions of the institution
- 6. Obtaining Feedback from the alumni, retired staff and students, and making the analytical data available to the concerned teaching staff and administration.
- 7. To ameliorate the issues concerning the welfare of student community.
- 8. It was recognized that the academic activities in the University need to be improved keeping the global perspective in view
- 9. Restoration of Academic year and early publication of results.

Quality Enhancement Activities in education:

(i) Academic Activities:

Semester System, Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), several new courses at PG level and ridge Courses have been introduced.. 5-year Integrated P.G. courses in Physics and Chemistry have been introduced. Language labs have been established to impart training to students in communication and soft skill, modernizing the class rooms and laboratory facilities. An Academic Calendar provides the entire academic schedule including the dates for internal tests and external examinations. Examination results published within 2-3 weeks. Implemented the teachers' evaluation by the students which served the teachers to enhance their performance.

(ii) Research Activities:

University provided functional autonomy to the faculty by way of simplifying the administrative procedures concerning the execution of research projects. Research in thrust areas like Bio pesticides, for Rural Development. The faculty, who secure major research projects, are provided an incentive. Faculty is encouraged to participate in or organize seminars / conferences/ workshops in India and abroad. Qualified faculty in the affiliated colleges are encouraged to guide the candidates pursuing Ph.D. and M.Phil. programmes. University Research Board has been constituted to

periodically monitor the quality of research work carried out by the research scholars and encourage them to undertake research in potential areas. University has embarked on a proactive strategy of forging collaboration with the industries and research organizations all over the world, keeping in view the challenges of globalization demands of the society. University is bringing out research journals in areas of specialization encompassing major disciplines.

(iii) Extension Activities:

University has organized seminars/conferences/workshops to elicit the views of various sections of the society in the form of University-Community interaction, University – Industry Partnership and University-Farming Community meet. Students have been actively involved in the community development programmes in the villages adopted by the University. Among various programmes undertaken by the University include health awareness, child labour I seminar eradication, family planning drive, environmental protection and literacy campaign. A Viral Diagnostic Centre was established in the University (Department of Virology) to diagnose plant, animal and human viral diseases. All the students are actively involved in the "Clean and Tidy Programme" in the campus on fourth Saturday of every month. Under the "Open House" concept and Exhibition, University has showcased the activities and potentialities of the University in various fronts for developing awareness among the public and creating interest among students in pursuing higher education. University Law Department offers counselling to the public on legal issues; Psychology department on Psychiatric problems and Home Science on health and Nutrition.

Quality of Education now offered in many institutions of higher education, both general and technical, requires a thorough review and correction by the agencies concerned like NAAC of UGC, NBA of AICTE. Many Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), specially technical and professional colleges offering Engineering, Pharmacy, MBA and MCA are almost forced to shut down as there are no takers. Higher education in India is undergoing a transformation. The reason for transformation is mainly due to the expansion of higher education in India and the new demand on system. Education has always been recognised as a major instrument to achieve the objective of social, economic and political development of a nation. Higher education provides leadership by supplying a well developed human resource which ultimately takes the responsibility of operating the systemic developments in India. There have been a number of good human beings, eminent personalities in many fields who have contributed to the inventions, project, developments, arts and culture, science and technology, socio economic and other areas.

The University Grant Commission (UGC) established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 at Bangalore. NAAC vision and mission statement clearly specifies its functioning highlighting quality assurance mechanism in higher education institutions with the combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance activities and initiatives. The prime agenda of NAAC is to Assess and Accredite institutions of higher learning with an objective of helping them to work continuously to improve the quality of education.

Maintaining the momentum of quality consciousness is of crucial importance. Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), in fact, is conceived as a body which ensures maintenance of momentum created by the accreditation at the institutional level. The NAAC's advocacy of establishment of IQAC by every accredited institution as a post-accreditation measure is thus the first step towards institutionalization and internalization of quality culture. NAAC has given guidelines to all the accredited institutions to establish an internal quality assurance cell (IQAC) to ensure qualitative growth of the institution. The composition of the cell has been clearly defined so as to be representative of all the constituents of the institution

Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is established as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC has become a part of the institution's system and work towards realizing the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance. The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the performance of institutions. The IQAC has made a significant and meaningful contribution in the post-accreditation phase. During the post-accreditation period, the IQAC has channelized the efforts and measures of an institution towards academic excellence.

The basic purposes of the IQAC

- a) To ensure continuous improvement in the entire operations of the institution, and

- b) To assure stakeholders connected with higher education – namely, students, parents, teachers, staff, would-be employers, funding agencies and society in general - of the accountability of the institution for its own quality and probity

Functions of IQAC

As highlighted in the UGC Guidelines, the goals of IQAC shall be: 1). To develop a quality system for conscious, consistent and catalytic programmed action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the HEIs; and, 2). To promote measures for institutional functioning towards quality enhancement through internalization of quality culture and institutionalization of best practices. To attain these goals, the functions of IQAC shall be:

- Development and application of quality benchmarks/parameters for the various academic and administrative activities of the HEI;
- Facilitating the creation of a learner-centric environment conducive for quality education and faculty maturation to adopt the required knowledge and technology for participatory teaching and learning process;
- Arrangement for feedback responses from students, parents and other stakeholders on quality-related institutional processes;
- Dissemination of information on the various quality parameters of higher education;
- Organization of inter and intra institutional workshops, seminars on quality related themes and promotion of quality circles;
- Documentation of the various programmes/activities of the HEI, leading to quality improvement;
- Acting as a nodal agency of the HEI for coordinating quality-related activities, including adoption and dissemination of good practices;
- Development and maintenance of Institutional database through MIS for the purpose of maintaining /enhancing the institutional quality;
- Development of Quality Culture in HEI;
- Preparation of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) of the HEI based on the quality parameters/assessment criteria developed by the relevant quality assurance body (like NAAC, NBA, AB) in the prescribed format;
- Bi-annual development of Quality Radars (QRs) and Ranking of Integral Units of HEIs based on the AQAR;
- Interaction with SQACs in the pre and post accreditation quality assessment, sustenance and enhancement endeavours.

The IQAC has evolved mechanisms and procedures for ensuring the following:

- Timely, efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial tasks.
- The relevance and quality of academic and research programmes.
- Equitable access to and affordability of academic programmes for various sections of society.
- Optimization and integration of modern methods of teaching and learning.
- The credibility of evaluation procedures.
- The adequacy, maintenance and proper allocation of support structure and services.
- Research sharing and networking with other institutions in India and abroad.

Benefits of IQAC

- Ensure heightened level of clarity and focus in institutional functioning towards quality enhancement
- Ensure internalization of the quality culture;
- Ensure enhancement and integration among the various activities of the institution and institutionalize good practices;
- Provide a sound basis for decision-making to improve institutional functioning;
- Act as a dynamic system for quality changes in the HEIs;
- Build an organized methodology of documentation and internal communication.

Quality assurance (QA) refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled. Two principles included in QA are: "Fit for purpose", the product should be suitable for the intended purpose; and "Right first time", mistakes should be eliminated. QA includes management of the quality of raw materials,

assemblies, products and components, services related to production, and management, production and inspection processes.

Internal Quality Assurance Cell

Part A of guidelines of XI Plan of University Grants Commission directs all the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to have an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). The motive behind setting up of IQAC is to maintain the momentum of quality consciousness which is crucial in HEIs. IQAC is a mechanism to build and ensure a quality culture at the institutional level, and is meant for planning, guiding and monitoring Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) activities of the HEIs. Complying with the aim of UGC, IQAC has been constituted in the University to review the performance for the entire gamut of academic programmes encompassing the faculty, research scholars and students. IQAC was constituted strictly as per the guidelines of UGC, and Prof. K.V.S. Sharma was given the responsibility to act as the coordinator the cell. IQAC started to function immediately with clarity of vision and plan of action.

Plan of Action

- To review the performance of the entire array of academic programmes encompassing the faculty, research scholars and students. For this Academic Monitoring Cell was constituted with a senior faculty member as its special officer. It has been involved in the collection of the quarterly self-appraisal reports from the faculty. On the basis of the feedback, Vice-Chancellor used to have interaction with the individual faculty members.
- To promote research in new and advancing fields of relevance. For this Research and Development Cell and University Research board were instituted. These bodies identified the potential research areas in tune with the current trends. Besides initiating measures for developing basic infrastructure, Vice-Chancellor permitted the Principal Investigators of research projects to utilize 20% of overhead charges for the development of laboratories and other infrastructure facilities.
- Dissemination of information on the activities of the University for the benefit of general public and elite of the society. For this SVU Newsletter is published regularly which is a mirror of the activities and initiatives taken by the University.
- Constitution of Quality Circles at all the levels of University to involve the entire cross section of University for the quality improvement.
- Adoption of a Student Charter in the University to bring awareness among the students of their own responsibilities and the functions of the institution. The charter has been displayed in all the departments of constituent colleges of the University to enlighten the students on the goals and programmes and their role in the process of teaching-learning programme, monitoring & assessment, and other support services provided by University.
- Obtaining Feedback from the alumni, retired staff and students, and making the analytical data available to the concerned teaching staff and administration.
- To ameliorate the issues concerning the welfare of student community.
- It was recognized that the academic activities in the University need to be improved keeping the global perspective in view. For this a set of Academic Reforms were Initiated.
- Restoration of Academic year and early publication of results.

Quality Enhancement Activities in education:

Academic Activities:

- Semester System with internal assessment component was introduced in 2002-03. Unlike the annual examination pattern, Semester system has made the students more attentive towards the academic programme and studies right from their admission into the courses. Further this system facilitated the departments to revise the curriculum as to include the several topics of current relevance.
- From the year 2006-07, Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) has been introduced. This cafeteria approach provides flexibility in the choice of courses that enables the students to broaden the interdisciplinary knowledge through opting external electives offered by other departments and thus enhance their career opportunities.
- University has introduced several new courses in the emerging areas like Bioinformatics, Nano-materials & Technologies, Instrumentation, Pharmacy, Industrial Microbiology, Cine & Television Arts, Women Studies, Financial Management, Business Economics and Social Work.

- Bridge Courses with job-market potentialities have been offered to equip the students with necessary skills meeting the requirements of industry.
- With the objective of nurturing basic sciences and imparting special training, 5-year Integrated P.G. courses in Physics and Chemistry have been introduced.
- Under Distance Education mode, new P.G. courses in science subjects like Physics, Zoology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, and also M.Phil programmes in various disciplines have been offered.
- Language labs have been established to impart training to students in communication and soft skills.
- University has initiated measures for modernizing the class rooms and laboratory facilities by providing glass black boards, over head projectors, LCD projectors, computers with internet connectivity.
- Scholars and scientists of repute were invited to various departments as visiting professors/fellows for delivering lectures that enabled the students to deeper knowledge in the latest trends and developments of the disciplines concerned.
- An Academic Calendar, brought out well at the beginning of academic year, provides the entire academic schedule including the dates for internal tests and external examinations. This enabled the University to streamline the derelict academic schedule of an academic year.
- By revamping the entire academic system, it could become possible to get the examination results published within 2-3 weeks after the completion of last semester-end examination.
- University has implemented the teachers' evaluation by the students which served the teachers to enhance their performance.
- Vice-Chancellor's interaction with the students of each department fostered the commitment of students to accrue the benefits of academic reforms being implemented by the University.

Research Activities:

- University provided functional autonomy to the faculty by way of simplifying the administrative procedures concerning the execution of research projects.
- The Vice-Chancellor's one-to-one interaction with the faculty led them to apply for project funding from different organizations and enthused some Departments to apply for special assistance programmes. The research projects have fetched grants to a tune of about Rs. 20.0 crores during the period of 2002-2007. Many departments have also received funding under special assistance programmes like COSIST, FIST, DSA and TEQUIP, besides UGC-SAP.
- University has allocated Rs. 15 lakhs for research in thrust areas like Bio pesticides, Cellulose Bio-technology and Appropriate Technology for Rural Development.
- The faculty, who secure major research projects, are provided an incentive to the tune of 20% of the overhead charges which shall be utilized for infrastructure development in the department concerned.
- Faculty is encouraged to participate in or organize seminars / conferences/ workshops in India and abroad.
- Qualified faculty in the affiliated colleges are encouraged to guide the candidates pursuing Ph.D. and M.Phil. programmes.
- University has recognized the scientists and faculty from other institutions to guide the research candidates for the award of Ph.D. degrees by S.V. University.
- University Research Board has been constituted to periodically monitor the quality of research work carried out by the research scholars and encourage them to undertake research in potential areas.
- University has embarked on a proactive strategy of forging collaboration with the industries and research organizations all over the world, keeping in view the challenges of globalization demands of the society.
- The admission procedures for Ph.D. and M.Phil courses have been liberalized to enable large member of students to take up research. The adjudication process has also been rationalized in order to avoid the undue delay in the award of research degrees.
- University is bringing out research journals in areas of specialization encompassing major disciplines.
- University Library which has been modernized and digitized, provides special access to about 4000 research journals under UGC – INFONET to the scholars and faculty.

Extension Activities:

- University has organized seminars/conferences/workshops to elicit the views of various sections

of the society in the form of University-Community interaction, University – Industry Partnership and University-Farming Community meet.

- As a sequel to these interfaces, a Directorate of Community Development has come into existence with the objective of undertaking a gamut of extension and community development programmes.
- University has incorporated the component of community development as part of CBCS syllabus. Students have been actively involved in the community development programmes in the villages adopted by the University. Among various programmes undertaken by the University include health awareness, child labour eradication, family planning drive, environmental protection and literacy campaign.
- C-eRDAT, provides training to the rural people in technical skills like domestic wiring, rewinding and repair of pump-sets.
- Under the aegis of NSS, University has organized the student- camps to undertake service activities like blood donation, medical service, pulse-polio eradication, HIV/AIDS Awareness drive, roads formation, plantation and tank bund repairs.
- A Viral Diagnostic Centre was established in the University (Department of Virology) to diagnose plant, animal and human viral diseases.
- All the students are actively involved in the "Clean and Tidy Programme" in the campus on fourth Saturday of every month.
- Under the "Open House" concept and Exhibition, University has showcased the activities and potentialities of the University in various fronts for developing awareness among the public and creating interest among students in pursuing higher education.
- University Law Department offers counselling to the public on legal issues; Psychology department on Psychiatric problems and Home Science on health and Nutrition.

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