Status of IQAC in Quality Improvement: A Review

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	With a view to enhancing quality in higher education institutions, Government of India established an assessment body i.e. National Assessment and Accreditation Council in the year 1994. The purpose of NAAC is not to discriminate the institutions but to address equality, quality, student satisfaction and provide need based education. Developing quality parameters and sustaining quality at the higher education institution is the top most challenge. As a result the NAAC prepared a framework for establishing Constitution called IQAC so that each and every aspect related to the institution can be addressed. Unfortunately, the ancient rigid system of leading institutions is still not ready to change. Consequently, IQAC becomes a second administrative body to collect and preserve documents. The role of IQAC is far behind this. In fact, the role of IQAC is widen as it has to track on each and every aspect like, Curricular aspect, teaching learning and evaluation, research, consultancy and extension, infrastructure and learning resources, governance, leadership and management, student support and progression and best practices. Talking about the status and role of IQAC, I don't mean to say that the coordinator has to work like head of the institute but to work as substitute or co-supporter. Therefore, NAAC mentioned very clearly a senior professor must be kept as coordinator for IQAC but most of the institutions keep the one whose specialization is English thinking that the role of coordinator is to write a report in English. The paper talks about the objectives, guidelines of IQAC, loopholes of IQAC at various institutions, challenges of IQAC and guidelines or role of IQAC in quality improvement.

1. Introduction

IQAC plays a vital role in bringing quality improvement programme. Looking at the pathetic condition of HEIs, it can be opined that the stakeholders should initiate for quality improvement programme. The major function of IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement for overall development of the institution.

2. Status of IQAC

The primary aim of IQAC is

- To develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the institution.
- To promote measures for institutional functioning towards quality enhancement through internalization of quality culture and institutionalization of best practices.

Strategies

IQAC shall evolve mechanisms and procedures for

a. Ensuring timely, efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial tasks;
b. Relevant and quality academic/ research programmes;
c. Equitable access to and affordability of academic programmes for various sections of society;
d. Optimization and integration of modern methods of teaching and learning;
e. The credibility of assessment and evaluation process;
f. Ensuring the adequacy, maintenance and proper allocation of support structure and services;
g. Sharing of research findings and networking with other institutions in India and abroad.

Functions

Some of the functions expected of the IQAC are:

a) Development and application of quality benchmarks
b) Parameters for various academic and administrative activities of the institution;
c) Facilitating the creation of a learner-centric environment conducive to quality education and faculty maturation to adopt the required knowledge and technology for participatory teaching and learning process;
d) Collection and analysis of feedback from all stakeholders on quality-related institutional processes;
e) Dissemination of information on various quality parameters to all stakeholders;
f) Organization of inter and intra institutional workshops, seminars on quality related themes and promotion of quality circles;
g) Documentation of the various programmes/activities leading to quality improvement;
h) Acting as a nodal agency of the Institution for coordinating quality-related activities, including adoption and dissemination of best practices;
i) Development and maintenance of institutional database through MIS for the purpose of maintaining /enhancing the institutional quality;
j) Periodical conduct of Academic and Administrative Audit and its follow-up
k) Preparation and submission of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) as per guidelines and

parameters of NAAC.

Benefits
IQAC will facilitate / contribute to

Ensure clarity and focus in institutional functioning towards quality enhancement;

a) Ensure internalization of the quality culture;
b) Ensure enhancement and coordination among various activities of the institution and institutionalize all good practices;
c) Provide a sound basis for decision-making to improve institutional functioning;
d) Act as a dynamic system for quality changes in HEIs;
e) Build an organised methodology of documentation and internal communication.

3. Challenges for IQAC

In most of the institutions, we have seen the IQAC gets activated only when there is a time to go for the accreditation. In fact, IQAC is considered as a body to collect and preserve the documents. In spite, having been accredited twice or thrice, the situation remains the same. The following are the issues, challenges or problems that most of the institutions are facing to bring quality improvement programmes at the institute. They are as below.

1. Academic Flexibility

More than 90% institutions are suffering with the problem of academic flexibility, they are suppressed by the principal/head of the department. As a result, stereotype teaching learning process goes on in the 21st century classroom. Not only the teaching learning but also the assessment and grading are also decided by the authority. Academic flexibility in terms of new innovations, autonomy in classroom execution and evaluation practices and so on.

2. Institutional Authority

The body is made to follow the system that is designed long ago. Though it is said every moment brings change. But unfortunately, the condition is opposite here; You become the property of the institute not only for 8 hours but sometimes 24*7. The IQAC is not given any kind of power; his duty is limited to documents collection and preparing reports for accreditation body.

3. Learning space

You are constantly observed by each of your academic and administrative work as a result the employees would simply follow what head says. In such cases, the democratic environment gets disturbed. Let every employee feel ease and enjoy the duty.

4. Faculty Support

Since, IQAC is placed on the boundary line no teacher or principal or management would value his/her words. If the authority does not support, it is obvious that the employees would not bother over your innovations. You could easily realise the status of IQAC while visiting A grade institutions.

5. Providing Feedback

To give and get the feedback is an inevitable part now a days. Customer's satisfaction is prioritized. Therefore, there should be open interaction over the feedback of the teachers and students for quality improvement programme.

6. Proposing Innovations

In most of the institutions, the IQAC is treated like inattentive student which is considered as good for nothing. It is very hard to bring innovations and change the system in a very stereotype culture.

7. Demanding Quality work

Expecting quality work from the employers and employees is must, unfortunately, the expectation remains a momentary fact.

8. Feeling of Positivism

Establishment of IQAC is done in most of the institutions for the sake of doing. Its very sad to share that 80 % of the institutions are not having active or powerful IQAC.

9. Infrastructural Facility

Infrastructure facility is an inevitable part for effective functioning of IQAC. IQAC requires a cabin, stationeries, computer, techno-assistant and many more thing more effective functioning.

10. Financial Support

In the era of privatization, it increases financial burden for establishment of IQAC at the institutions. Government provides honorarium for planning and organizing various activities but private institutions could not carry out various activities because of fund.

11. Technical assistance

There is no facility or a need of techno-assistance in most of the institutions for collecting and maintaining soft copy of the data.

12. Leadership, Governance and Management: Meetings and Follow up

Some guidelines of the NAAC/ Accreditation bodies are difficult to manage for most of the institutions because there is less learned human resources. As a result discussion for planning and executing becomes difficult.

4. Qualities/ Roles of IQAC

1. Being Sensitive to Sensitize the Stakeholders

It is expected that the members of the IQAC body must be sensitive to sensitize the other stakeholders for quality education. As we know now a days burning challenges like employment, concept of earning while learning, reservation system for evaluation and many more disturb the attitude of students and teachers. Therefore, the authority must be sensitive. They must possess the components of sensitivity they are self awareness, self esteem, self inspiration, impulse control and people skills.

2. Multi-skilled and Techno-savy

Coordinator of the IQAC must be multi-skilled person and techno-savy, because he/she should be exemplary for the followers. If the coordinator possesses limited knowledge then

it doesn't motivate the others to follow the same. Multi-skilled means skills construct knowledge, practice and reconstruct the knowledge through the technological knowledge.

3. Life Skills & Value System

Members of the IQAC must possess the life skills. If the leader of the quality assurance cell could not execute the proper life skills then, the other teachers would not join their hands for the quality improvement programmes. Coordinator must possess effective communication skills, problem solving skill, empathy, sympathy, critical and creative thinking and so on.

4. Visionary and Proactive

The most visionary and proactive person of the institute should be the IQAC coordinator because s/he has to constantly work on quality improvement programme from admission to results of the students. There are many institutions whose vision, mission and goals are as it is since so many years. Therefore, every after five years, an exercise to decide new goals should be carried out. Quality of pro-activeness should be instilled in other faculty members too.

5. Resourcefulness

An IQAC body must be resourceful in terms of any problems, issues or challenge with varieties of opinions, suggestions and rationale. It has been observed in many institutions where IQAC has been kept as an office to record the academic documents. And the duty fo the IQAC coordinator is just to preserve the documents in the hard and soft copies. While resourcefulness of IQAC, I don't mean only the data but also the knowledge, ideas, policies and rationale thinking.

6. Global Competence

Being in a developing country, it is necessary develop global competence to compete with the developed nations. This will surely bring improvement in Indian higher education system.   Best practices of higher education should be communicated to foreign countries but unfortunately we follow the western culture blindly as a result the values like respect, dedication, appreciation etc are out form the educational system.

7. Sense of Accountability & Feeling of Belongingness

It is observed that unless you consider your institute as your own precious gift of god, you will not care. Therefore, the major role of IQAC is to establish a feeling of belongingness

and a sense of accountability among all the employees. John Dewey has rightly said, you cannot learn from the person whom you don't love, similarly if you don't love your institute you and your institute will not grow.

8. Establishing Links for Effective Academic and Administrative Communication

In Choice based Credit System, it is expected to establish positive relationship with other academic institutions. If you are connected to many institutions across the state, it will surely develop your knowledge and provide wide range of exposures.

9. Persevering to Preserve the Quality

If the performance of the IQAC is not up to the mark, at least IQAC should put attempt for damage control. In the era of westernization, instilling values among the young students is a challenge. Further, the new generation of teachers is quite young and similar to students beliefs. There would be the time when technology would replace the human being. We will see after a few years all the learned scholars will be out and so called responsible young teachers would place ICT in place of teachers. If there is no innovation, at least there should be no damage.

10. Technique of SQ3R in Practice

IQAC body should make the frequent use of SQ3R technique given by Robinson in 1994 ie. Survey, Question, Read, Recall and Review. It means the IQAC should continuously get the feedback over the academic and administrative practices of the institution. The ultimate objective of the education is to satiate the needs of the learners. If the IQAC frequently carries out survey on various issues, challenges or problems then it would help the institute to grow professionally.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, it can be learnt that IQAC plays a role of a support system or a backbone for quality education of the institution. Therefore, each institute must value IQAC and provide necessary requirements for its effective functioning. Government and Grant in aids colleges are supported by the central government for sustaining quality whereas private institutions are having challenge for its effective functioning and communication. Generating ideas becomes more easy than executing ideas as execution requires more physical and administrative support.

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