

Qualitative aspects of quantitative metrics in the process of Assessment and Accreditation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Any outcome is measured using two yardsticks- **qualitative enhancement** and **quantitative growth**. In fact quantitative growth helps to determine the quality of the outcome. In the pursuit towards global standards/world-class achievement, emphasis has been on **quality, efficiency** and **accountability** of the Higher Education Institutions. The most important method to execute these in HEI is by the **Assessment and Accreditation**. Accreditation bodies have vividly analysed and deduced methods to find out how effective the system is working and subsequently would help to promote quality improvement. Quality improvement should facilitate innovation and continual upgradation.

Quantitative is a piece of evidence of actual activities in numbers which are highly reliable but without the qualitative aspects it cannot be justified though quantitative aspects are measurable and verifiable with evidence.

The qualitative aspects help to understand the aim of the institution, the strategic planning of the institution, the journey of the institution, learning experiences towards development of institutions, methodology adopted for continuous growing scale and the challenges mitigated to sustain the quality of the institution. In spite of Qualitative being subjective, it plays an essential role in the Assessment and Accreditation.

Focus areas of the qualitative aspects in the quantitative metrics

- Syllabi and curriculum implementation-Initiatives/strategies for sustainable growth.
- Creative Teaching – Learning Process cultivating ICT enabled ecosystem
- Variegated examinations methods– MCQ, ICT enabled-innovative examination, open book, case-study evaluation, adaptive testing, exam on demand, proctored on-line.
- Knowledge based, funded, high quality funded Research outputs; Collaboration; Innovation project; Incubation; Quality publications and Consultancy services.
- Predetermined Co-Curricular and Extracurricular activities involving maximum number of students.
- Academic infrastructure facilities like classrooms, laboratories, physical book stacked library, digital library, facilities for sports and games, students' wellness facilities, up gradation facilities like classrooms, laboratories, techno classroom facilities, state of art research labs. Learning resources technology enabled classrooms (smart rooms), online teaching facilities, facilities to develop e-content/multimedia etc.
- Physical book stacked library, E books & journal, facilitating to develop curriculum content in e format.
- Student support systems like Scholarships, Fee waiver/concession, Peer tutoring, Placements, Academic and Personal Counseling, Opportunities for participation in Activities, Grievances redressal services, Facilities for Alumni engagement.
- Participatory Governance keen on introducing need based reforms, farsighted strategic development and Internal Quality Assurance system.
- Quality systems to facilitate training to the faculty members to expand use of multiple pedagogical methods, to develop professional capacity, to efficiently engage students, to instil leadership skills and proactive capacity of senior faculty members, to kindle the commitment and contribute to the institution and the community.
- Institutional sustainable Values in tune with the Vision and the Mission, Social Responsibilities/commitment, Effective and challenging Best Practices,
- Building up a brand value/perception of the institution by Accreditation, Accolades, Achievements and Awards.
- Mechanism adopted to collect feedback to improve the quality

Execution of the identified areas with special reference to Academics and Teaching-Learning Academics

*Syllabi and curriculum implementation-Initiatives/strategies for sustainable growth***Syllabi revision**

- As a prerequisite to syllabi revision, the Institutions are individually required to **collect feedbacks** in a structured format from all the **major stakeholders** like students, academic peers, alumni, parents and industrial experts, service sectors/employers especially about the relevance of the syllabi, its deficiency, the competency level of the students in the given syllabi, inculcated values and ethics through it, skill sets in students, environmental awareness incorporated and the integration of ICT in teaching-learning, to identify the global competencies of the students. The syllabi is more importantly to focus on the employability skill, entrepreneurship and developing the positive attitude of the graduate.
- The IQAC of every institution is to **analyse the feedback** and categorise the suggestive needs of the departments and communicate the same to the heads of the department of the University. They in turn, with peer deliberation, identify the lacunae in the present system to fulfill the global standards and organise workshops/seminars for inputs to incorporate **innovative and need based courses** in the syllabi with effective teaching pedagogies and assessment methods for the **recommendations** from the members of the Board of Studies.
- The syllabi is to be reviewed every three years so that the delay in the updation is curtailed.
- The approved syllabi is presented in the Academic council for approval and the same is communicated to the colleges to follow. The procedure becomes easier for colleges following autonomous syllabi.

Flexibility-Multidisciplinary opportunities- Elective courses/Add-on/Value added courses/Skill development vocational programs

- There is a lack of convergence between the HE syllabi and skill development component. As the present day learners have unstable characteristics and also because the employment requirements are rapidly changing, a broad-based education with flexibility for selection of courses from any discipline is the need of the hour. The changing learner characteristics and rapidly changing employment requirements demand expertise in thrust areas. Thus opportunities to specialize in more than one field is offered by flexibility in selecting courses. Therefore IQAC has to initiate relevant curriculum enrichment knowledge-based elective elective courses, skill development programs through vocational courses, Add-on and Value added courses. This can be done in collaboration with MSDE.

Monitoring the Implementation of Curriculum

- The IQAC of every institution needs to design the Academic calendar alongside the University calendar. This calendar should be a comprehensive one encompassing the date of admission, induction program for students, bridge course, regular lecture hours, laboratory sessions, teaching plan, internal and external examinations, activities of the department, workshop/seminar, remedial classes, mentoring plan, date for department courses, guest lectures, field visit/ industrial visit, vacation and holidays and declaration of results. The IQAC is expected to monitor the effective implementation of this process by annual academic audit.

Creative and effective Teaching – Learning Process, cultivating ICT enabled ecosystem

The admission policy of the institutions must enhance access to vulnerable communities and also cater to geographically backward areas giving rise to inclusivity. Thus an effort is required by the institutions to identify the learning levels of the admitted students

- At the institution level a common aptitude test is administered by the IQAC to all the students inducted into the institution.
- Thus identified, Special workshops, training programs, opportunities to represent the institution at the national and international levels, encouraged to be members of committees, clubs and professional bodies, also encouraged to take up research projects are extended to **advanced learners** in general to upscale their efficiency.
- Methods are to be used to identify the **deficiency** of the learners and provide workshops to improve memory skills, communication skills, to boost their self-esteem, special lectures to motivate and to wider positive benefits, offer courses to impart employable skills like digital literacy etc. for **learners who are facing challenges**.
- At the department level, the performance of the students at the class and the marks of the first two internal examinations would help the teachers of the departments to identify the weak and advanced learners.
- Advanced learners are motivated to do class level seminars, attend seminars and workshops, participate in inter-collegiate level competitions, participate in creative literary activities, encouraged to become members of committees and professional bodies, have group discussion, motivated to take up online courses, encouraged to prepare for top class competitive examinations and involve them in organising intercollegiate competitions and technical seminars.

- The slow learners are driven with a mentor-mentee system. Bridge course is offered to address the inadequacy of the learners. Remedial tutorial classes aided with audio-visual material help to disrupt distractions. Small group activities and special lectures on subject and peer tutoring help students to progress and focus well. Special attention to clarify doubts and boost the morale of the students. Remedial tutorial helps them to improve their performance.
- Reformation in teaching- learning process to fulfill the expectations of the present day student's community, and to enhance their learning experience is the need of the hour. Flipped classroom approach, in-depth discussion, interrogation, peer group discussion, open air learning experience, practical application of the theory content//real world relevance of the subject material, experiential learning, project based learning, Internship, Industrial/field visit, are the identified overhauling methods of teaching.
- Technology integrated programmed learning aims at blended learning pedagogy (creating podcasts combining audio, text, images and video). Provision for video conferencing to enhance cross curricular studies, online learning/distance learning, learning with MOOC are some of the methods to be adopted to enable the students globally competent.

II. DISCUSSION

Quantitative growth embedded with qualitative enhancement in any given field is an initiative that befalls strategic planning of a particular activity. Definite achievable goal sets which are time bound is the key to success of the institution. Therefore, common methodology will not hold good to be followed by all the institutions. It is tailor made according to the kinds of the programs offered, teachers' quality, facilities provided in the institution, teaching methods adopted, the type of students, the skill sets imparted, the expected demand in the employment market, that the individual institution needs to act.

The **requisite** to achieve the above are-

- Formation of working committees
- Visionary planning
- Execution of the plans
- Monitoring methods
- Feedbacks
- Analysis to make necessary changes
- Subsequent implementation

Committees are generally formed in all the institutions, but in most cases it remains inactive. While forming a committee, earnest effort is to be taken to select members who would be prophesying the welfare and upliftment of the institution, its stakeholders and the country at large. They should be looking out and vocalising whatever best ideas that they get to know from other institutions, to implement on their own in possible ways. Meetings to be scheduled with members to discuss the need of the institution to strategize planning in the existing context and set the goal to achieve within a particular period from the listed action plan. The potential plan is to be implemented to adopt ideas in the areas where it is required. Successful implementation process involves proper communication of the set goals and its desired results to members who are involved in executing the same for transparent working mode. Mechanism is thought off to evaluate the progress of the set target in the given time. Generated results helps to indicate the sustainability of the old goals and the achievement of newly set targets. Analysis of evaluation helps to measure the quantum of achievement of the set goals.

To explain one of the identified areas -Syllabi/Curriculum implementation

Curriculum development committee (CDC) is a need for every institution. Members are to be selected with care, considering the vision and mission of the institution, having a Visionary planning, positive attitude, knowledge in the set process and committed to the incremental growth of the institution.

First and foremost a view of the present status of existing syllabi/curriculum is to be learnt through structured feedback. To understand the overall view of the implemented syllabi/curriculum, it is essential to draw feedback from all the stakeholders connected with the syllabi/curriculum. Thus, students, teaching peers, parents, alumni and employers are required to render their earnest feedback. An analysis of the obtained feedback separately from each category is consolidated. The generated report along with the recommendation from the heads of department of the institution is sent to the affiliated university. Considering the recommendation on the reports from all the institutions, the head of the university department needs to take necessary action, considering the welfare of the generation of students who would be benefited by the decision made on their side. Thus a collective, brainstormed **qualitative upscaling methodology** is deduced. This can form the **outline structure/adjective** in measuring the quantitative aspect of any activity.

Furthermore, it is beneficial to adopt a rigorous **Process Audit Method** at institution level to check and balance the working of the process, identifying its pitfalls and pave way for improvement. This method would be favourable in checking the **qualitative aspect** of the **quantitative metrics**.

III. CONCLUSION

Various measures have been advocated to enhance the quality of education from time to time. Accreditation and Assessment & Ranking system have all the more increased the conscious effort of the institutions to improve their quality standards. The major efforts to bring in all the institutions into the fold of ranking and accreditation is paving way for the institutions to act effectively and efficiently. It appeared a big challenge to achieve quantitative growth embedded with qualitative enhancement in higher education. Decision making bodies have wisely strategized the objectives of expanding the growth of the activities steadily and systematically. Realising the fact that quality and quantity are the two scales of a balanced education system, accreditation and ranking bodies are slowly arriving at standards. In due course of time, it is expected that all higher educational institutions arrive at a uniform standard, thus helping the country to get back its lost glory.

IV. REFERENCES

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