

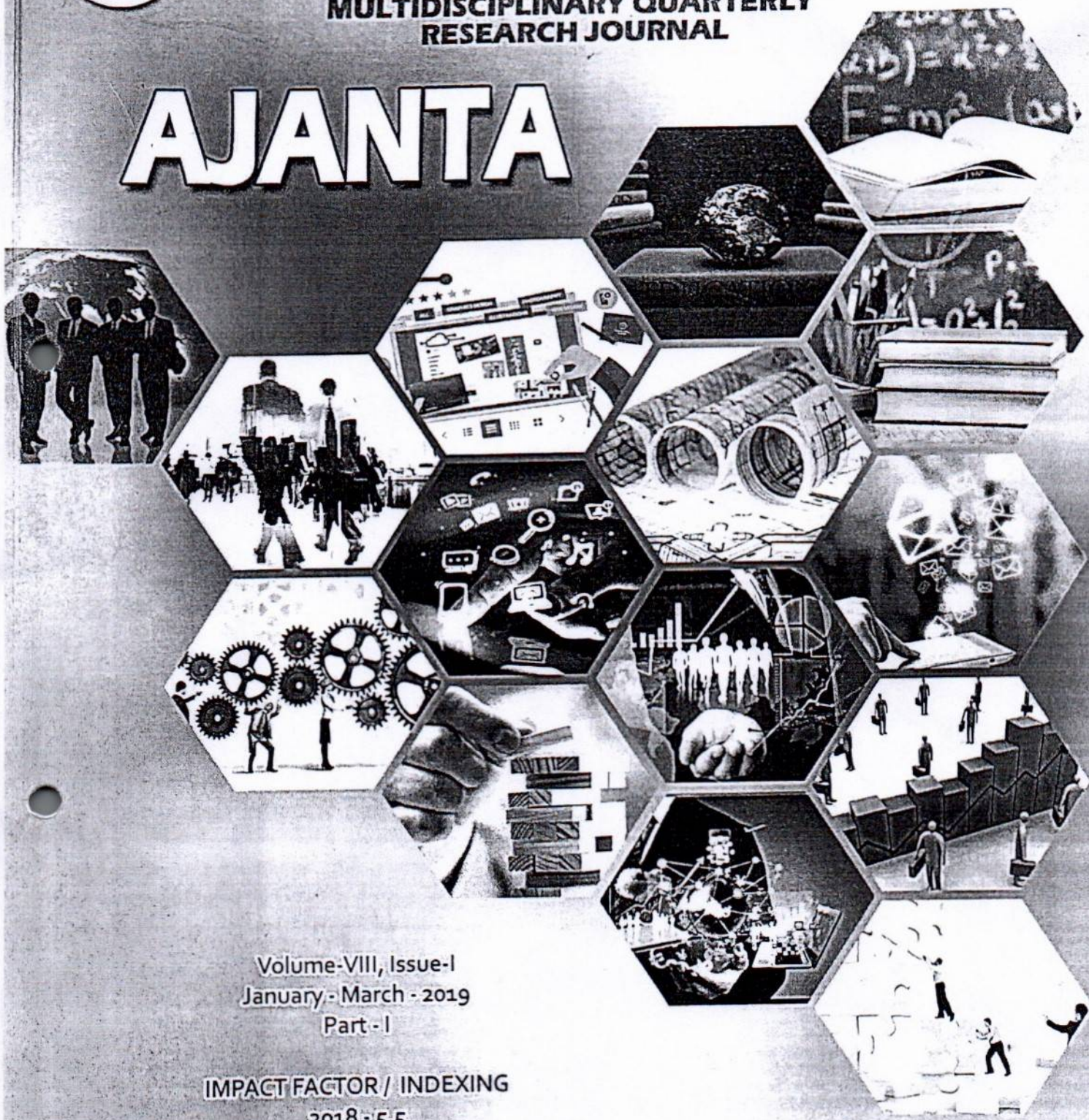


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18. A Study of Role and Importance of NAAC Assessment with Special Reference to Students Participation in Quality Enhancement

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Abstract

Quality assurance is the continuous process to achieve academic excellence. As we know that, India is the second largest educational system in the world. Its aim is to focus on quality to achieve the required social transformation for sustainable economic development. To assess the quality Higher Education Institute, University Grants Commission established NAAC. In this paper, researcher made an attempt to find out important aspects of Students Participation in Quality Enhancement. In the assessment and accreditation, participation of all stakeholders is essential. The involvement of Student participation in the institutional quality enhancement processes is crucial because Students are the main stakeholders who have much stronger voice than any other stakeholders. In fact new NAAC guidelines has given complete focus upon this aspect while assessment and accreditation process. Both primary and secondary data were collected while writing this research paper. Lastly, attempts were made to provide suggestion to the issues relating to quality enhancement of students and their involvement for quality assurance.

Key Words: Quality, Quality enhancement, Stakeholders, HEI's, NAAC.

Introduction

Quality is the value addition at personal, social and national level. Quality is an inseparable and main factor of human life which directs performance in the most superior form. We interpret quality as the condition that promotes all round development of personality. It is the standards of the institution which is judged by its curriculum, infrastructure, teaching-learning method and student support & progression. As we know that, India is the second largest educational system in the world. Its aim is to focus on quality to achieve the required social transformation for sustainable economic development. For this purpose to assess the quality Higher Education Institute, University Grants Commission established NAAC in the year 1994.

Quality assurance is the continuous process to achieve academic excellence. In the assessment and accreditation, participation of all stakeholders is essential. The involvement of Student participation in the institutional quality enhancement processes is crucial because students are the main stakeholders who have much stronger voice than any other stakeholders. In fact, students are the driving force behind ambitious and far reaching Higher Education reforms.

Higher Educational Institutes are responsible for communicating its goals and objectives to students. They offer programmes those are consistent with its goals and objectives. They try to offer a wide range of programmes with adequate academic flexibility. For this purpose, HET's obtain feedback from students on many occasions. HET's are expected to facilitate effective teaching-learning programmes and promote healthy practices. Students are also responsible to undertake regular and deep study of learning. They shall make optimum use of learning resources and other support services available in the institution. While going through the study, they give real feedback for the system improvement. For the purpose of quality enhancement, NAAC Peer Team in its visit understands the important areas from students. NAAC Peer team understand the various reasons for choosing the course/institution, flexibility in curriculum, Prospective career and opportunity, range of teaching and learning methods experienced, views on quality teaching, guidance of independent study, assessment and evaluation method, feedback system, access to computers, Sports and Physical facilities, Hostels and Canteen facilities, Grievance redressal mechanism, financial aid, academic and Personal Counseling etc.

Need and Importance of the Study

Stakeholder is person or group that has an interest in the activities of an institution. The teachers, the students, and the alumni, the parents and the non teaching staff etc are various stakeholders of any educational institutions. Students are the domain element of any higher education institution. Therefore, role of students is main stakeholder in quality enhancement processes which need to be looked at different angles. It is expected that today's students must be well informed, committed, participative etc. In fact their scope of study must be beyond the four walls of the institution. Thus students are the driving force for far reaching higher education reforms. Considering this fact into account, researcher would like to focus light upon participation of students in quality enhancement.

Objective of the Study

1. To study the existing participation of Students in quality enhancement in the era of NAAC assessment.
2. To find out various views/opinions of students relating to quality enhancement in general and NAAC Assessment and Accreditation in particular.
3. To provide suggestions for improving quality enhancement of students.

Research Methodology

In this paper, researcher made an attempt to find out new important aspects of Students Participation in Quality Enhancement. NAAC has also given more importance for students' quality enhancement. In fact new NAAC guidelines has shown complete light upon this aspect while assessment and accreditation process. Both primary and secondary data were collected while writing this research paper. Secondary data was collected from NAAC & UGC Web site. Primary data was collected through the questionnaire from students and alumni of affiliated colleges in Pune city. A sample of 50 students and 50 alumni of affiliated colleges were taken to find out the views on participation on quality enhancement. Thus, detailed information on various aspects was collected. Findings of the data relating to it are summarized in the form of important findings.

Findings of the Study

Expectations/views of students relating to quality of education and participation in quality enhancement:

- a) Sample students are of the opinion that education is an investment. It should focus on the academic development as well as the social and cultural development of the individual.
- b) Alumni are of the opinion that education is the development of a complete person with the right attitude, with exposure to society. Updated education helps to improve knowledge skills, competency, to give the right attitude to serve the society. They are of the opinion that employability of its graduates is an important benchmark for the quality of education being provided by an institution. Higher education is needed to emphasize the practical aspects of learning and encourage critical and creative thinking.
- c) Quality of education depends on the overall academic environment of the institution. A well-stocked library, adequate computer facilities, and well-equipped labs are the

infrastructural priorities mentioned. Sample respondents were clear about the need for education to relate to the real world. Students have critically expressed their views on libraries with stocked only text books, depriving the students of a varied choice for reading. They are of the view that students as well as teachers are not aware of new developments.

- d) The present education system stresses much on theoretical knowledge rather than applications. Today's education system is imparting a knowledge but present knowledge based economy requires a magic mantra in the form of knowledge application. The curriculum is obsolete and what is taught is different from what the industry demands. Furthermore there is lack of infrastructure in terms of competent teachers. The quality education should provide realistic job oriented education. It should also give importance to ethical aspects. It should be innovative, flexible and adaptable to new global phenomenon. In the present system, percentage of marks is the sole criteria of judging a student and his overall understanding and practical knowledge has no place in the system.
- e) Both sample respondents were of the opinion that quality education could come only if there were quality teachers who were good communicators, who could win students away from private tuitions and who were approachable and available for students.
- f) From the response the students it was evident that in many colleges, even if there was an IQAC, the students were unaware of its existence.
- g) Present system of education is lacking in a areas namely career orientation, students' participation, technical aids and well-defined goals.
- h) The management of academic institutions is more inclined towards quantity instead of quality.
- i) The present system of appointing teachers to a large extent is not up to the mark.
- j) Most of the sample respondents are of the opinion that Institutions put up a show for the NAAC visit and nothing is sustained once the visit is over. Just before NAAC visit, there was a lot of activity with career guidance cells, health care cells etc.,. Being set up but all these initiatives have since petered out.
- k) Students want clear desire about the quality of higher education, teaching and learning research and community engagement are core functions of higher education.

- l) Sample respondents were of the opinion that separate reports should be prepared and the student representative of a committee should directly place that report before the NAAC team when it visits the institution.
- m) NAAC team should be accessible to students' representative. Who can be contacted at regular intervals of time to make NAAC aware of the facilities being provided any improvement/degeneration in a particular field and the grievances of students?
- n) There should be feedback from all the students and it should not be limited to a few.
- o) A majority of the participants opined that the formation Alumni Associations could effectively participate in Institutional Quality Assessment by NAAC rather than students participating in it either collectively or severally.

Suggestions

To improve the quality of education following suggestions are provided in the paper

- a) Full time teachers must be appointed instead of Clock Hour Basis teachers. Political interference in the selection of teachers, election of Board of Studies must be avoided.
- b) Along with traditional education, Vocational education must be introduced with the degree levels. Quality starts from lower classes and students should be motivated to apply the theories into the practical field. For this purpose there is need of continuous improvement of syllabus along with necessary skills.
- c) Students be provided with better access to information In addition to this, co-curricular activities needed to facilitate the all round development of students, which was being ignored at the moment in many colleges.
- d) To built creativity of the students, teachers must not dictate notes in the class. In fact they should guide for search of knowledge with the help of various different sources. Emphasis should be more on practical knowledge than on theoretical knowledge. Students should be encouraged to participate in cultural and social activities which would make them more confident and improve their communication skill.
- e) Feedback should be a regular feature. It should not be done anonymously but through a face-to face dialogue. Feedback should cover all aspects – course content, classroom environment, infrastructure, administration, and institution. Student's unions, students' socio-cultural groups, seminars, debates, open-sessions etc. provide excellent mechanisms to interact with teachers and management for quality improvement.

Feedback approach has to be encouraged to consider the student rights at the institutional level as part of codes of best practice. In addition to this, there should be a student body to interact with the management and staff.

- f) Feedback should also be taken from students on their needs, aims and aspirations. Students should also be encouraged to give their feedback on important developments in the society which affect their lives or agitate their minds. There should be a regular feedback cell in every institution to collect, analyze and suggest action to be taken.
- g) Feedback need not have a single format. While some kinds of feedback may be collected through student-teacher interaction, others may be taken in the form of questionnaires, and even anonymous submissions through suggestion boxes. Alumni association is an important source of feedback. The alumni, with their experience in the real world outside the academia, will be able to give a genuine status report of the course and the institution.
- h) Students can give their suggestions/ views through their college/institution bulletin magazine. A copy of the same should be regularly forwarded to NAAC.
- i) Sample respondents were of the view that quality of education should not be tied to examination marks that students score. Emphasis should be more on assessing the all round development of students for which reforms in the assessment procedures were necessary.
- j) Student must be given an education of his choice. Education must not be forced upon by somebody else. It must be career oriented interesting and should make a student capable of achieving his goals in life.
- k) Social activities should be promoted in the academic institutions. In order to have personality development of students, group discussions, seminars and interaction with icons/successful persons should be promoted. Technology cell and subject societies should be formulated in the colleges.
- l) Student should be made aware of NAAC quality assessment parameters. There should be open debates about the validity, relevance, and applicability of the parameters in the institution.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is found that Quality education is better than quantity education. For this purpose there is a need to improve the quality of education by participation of students. Awareness and training is required for students to make the student feedback and participation effective. If possible feedback result may be published to encourage transparency. Institution must develop mechanisms for follow-up actions on student feedback. Researcher strongly felt that every institute can improve the quality of their education by more participation of teachers and students. Along with traditional education, Vocational education must be introduced with the degree levels. Maintenance of high quality in the Higher Education System depends on the intake quality control, infrastructural facilities including library and the quality of faculty. Thus, emphasis should be more on practical knowledge than on theoretical knowledge. Students should be encouraged to participate in cultural and social activities which would make them more confident and improve their communication skill.

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