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QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SUSTENANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Quality assurance and sustenance in the educational institutions is the order of the talk. because of this phenomenon, educational Institutions have been rejuvenated otherwise it will remain as stagnant as it was in the beginning. It should take the form of internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, which are vital for enhancing quality. Due attention should be paid to the specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity. Quality makes education socially and individually relevant. Quality doesn't mean only the quality of teachings and infrastructure but it includes many things, Such as quality academic leadership, quality learners, quality learning, quality content teacher efficiency and competence, accountability, student's assessment and infrastructure. This paper explains the various quality measures for quality assurance and sustenance in higher educational institutions.

Keywords: *Quality, assurance, institution, academic leadership.*

1. Introduction

Quality assurance and sustenance in the educational institutions is the order of the talk. Because of this phenomenon, educational Institutions have been rejuvenated otherwise it will remain as stagnant as it was in the beginning. The term Quality Assurance has been used originally in business but now it is used in education and other public service sectors. Quality remains the most important attribute that creates value about the product/service for the receiver. It also the means by which service providers differentiate themselves from their

competitors. Article 11 of the World Declaration on Higher Education published by the United Nations defines Quality in higher education, is a multi-dimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, faculties, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment. It should take the form of internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, which are vital for enhancing quality. Due attention should be paid to the specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity. Stakeholders should be an integral part of the institutional evaluation process. Quality also requires that higher education should be characterised by its international dimension: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students, and international research projects, while taking into account the national cultural values and circumstances. The quality of knowledge in a society depends upon the quality of education it provides. Quality makes the knowledge relevant in individual and social needs. Quality makes education socially and individually relevant, but if the quality of education is not assured then the education, which is advocated as a solution to social problems, may itself become a problem. Quality education thus is required to enable persons, societies and nations to acquire the skills and competencies that are necessary to live a meaningful life in a competitive, global world.

Our educational bodies like UGC , NAAC and our competitors like foreign educational institutions challenge us to assure quality and sustain that quality in our institution. Quality doesn't mean only the quality of teachings and infrastructure but it includes many things. They are quality academic leadership, quality learners, quality learning, quality content teacher efficiency and competence, accountability, student's assessment and infrastructure.

2. Quality Academic Leadership

The development of quality education first and foremost will depend upon the quality academic leadership provided within an institution. It is the quality

of leadership that determines the quality of an organisation. Accordingly leaders must create an environment which enforces performance of every one. Educational Institution should promote a transformative leadership which is capable of translating intentions into actions and actions into quality.

3. Quality Learners

Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Adequate nutrition is critical for normal brain development in the early years. To make our students quality learners we have to teach well in addition we have to consider their problems their family background and take effort to make our students shine well in the society. It is a highly challenging task but at the same time a worth rewarding task. It demands more commitment and sacrifice on our part. Because we are admitting very raw students from poor family background and their parents level of education is very minimum, most of them are first generation learners and moreover the school education systems is not supportive to us. In this situation Let us resolve to challenge these entire scenarios to make our students quality learners.

Another essential ingredient for quality assurance in educational system is a **quality learning environment**. Learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally demanded by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements. Within the college campus and classrooms, a welcoming and non-discriminatory climate is critical to create a quality learning environment. The threats that come in the form of unequal treatment, harassment, favouritism, bullying and undervaluing girls harm them in profound and long-lasting ways. Teachers' behaviours affect the quality of the learning environment since learning cannot take place when the basic needs of survival and-self-protection are threatened. Well-managed colleges and classrooms contribute to educational quality. Students, teachers and administrators should agree upon college and classroom rules and policies, and these should be clear and understandable.

4. Quality content

Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of colleges. In our curriculum we have to give space for life skills. In UNICEF, however, life skills are defined as “psycho-social and interpersonal skills used in every day interactions...not specific to getting a job or earning an income”. Life skills curriculum focuses on attitudes, values and behavioural change, rather than seeking to provide young people with a body of knowledge about a set of topics. This process of learning may be facilitated by “instilling the certain capabilities in an efficient, effective and excellent manner: our curriculum should make the students.

1. Think logically, analytically, critically and laterally;
2. Make a healthy and honorable living, employing learning/occupational skills and work experience;
3. Realize one’s potential for self-development in terms of physical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and moral attainment through education and experience; and
4. Acquire a discriminatory capability to appreciate, imbibe and balance emerging values concerning areas of sustainability, ecosystems, development with equity and civility, harmony and cultural pluralism

5. Quality learning process

“The learner is taught what to learn and how to learn, he becomes a lifelong learner. A person who is helped to climb a coconut tree will require someone to help him climb another coconut tree. But a person who is taught how to climb a tree will climb any tree anytime without assistance from others. Therefore a learner who underwent learner oriented education is fully equipped to face newer challenges; hence he is likely to be highly successful in his life. Learning process being the central activity of any educational institute the same old syllabi and teaching methods must be replaced by new updated method of teaching and learner centered methods of teaching such as group work, role play, project work, field visit, case study, debates etc., to supplement classroom teaching so that students could translate this knowledge into practical implications.

6. Teacher competence and efficiency

It is said that the destiny of India is dependent upon the talent, skills, hard work, commitment, foresight, patriotism, missionary zeal, quest for knowledge of the teachers. And "We the Teachers of World" can shape the destiny of our country and the world. No educational institution thus can maintain and sustain the quality if the teaching faculty does not believe in the importance of quality in higher education. Teachers should be convinced intensely within themselves that teaching is not a profession or occupation rather a distinctive mission. Like William Lyon (1970) every teacher should say that "In my mind, teaching is not merely a life work, a profession, an occupation or a struggle, but a passion. I love to teach as a painter loves to paint, as a musician loves to play, and as a singer loves to sing, A lamp cannot burn another lamp unless it continues itself to burn." One has to acknowledge about the fact that teacher's role is highly sophisticated professional mission which requires adequate know-how with regard to all programmes of social engineering. It is imperative therefore the teachers have to play a vital, active and decisive role in fostering universal education and promoting and developing the values and vision in the society. Whether a teacher uses traditional or more current methods of instruction, efficient use of college time has a significant impact on student learning. Teachers' presence in the classroom represents the starting point. Good teachers are skilled not only in instructional methods, but also in evaluation and assessment practices that allow them to gauge individual student learning and adapt activities according to student needs. This process should include both performance assessment and assessment of factual knowledge.

7. Accountability

This requires accountability among teachers. What is accountability in the educational institutions? In very ordinary terms, "it means being punctual, taking all lectures teaching well, reading the latest books and journals, sharing knowledge freely, kindling the interest of the students in the subject completing the portion on time, helping students to learn, evaluating student answer scripts

fairly and returning them on time. Accountability also means being approachable and helpful to one's stakeholders. It does not prevent one from being firm with them when required." Accountability also means willingness to accept moral obligations and continually strive to improve the quality of the educational situation in the institution. One cannot expect the government to enforce accountability from the teachers rather it must be based on a system that confronts teachers more directly with their successes and failures. In other words, quality assurance can come through teachers who are willing to accept their responsibility to their students, to their institution, to society and to their mission. This will require dedicated staff, committed to quality assurance. For this teachers in higher educational institutions must come from the best brains in the society. Only teachers with high intellectual capacities, self-confidence and good communication skills alone should be taken to ensure quality. These teachers should be exposed to emerging frontiers of knowledge so that they can update their teaching abilities and skills.

8. Assessment of students

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education.

The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support. In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

9. Learning resources and student support

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

10. Research Pursuits

Research is the ultimate aim of higher education. That is to find out solution to the problems afflicting the country - socio economic environment - to improve the human life on the earth. Improving the human life is the ultimate aim of higher education and that is through research. So creating research culture should be one of the prime elements of curriculum. If we imbibe all these elements in our education system, we can assure quality in our institution and sustain that quality.

11. Conclusion

Students, teachers and administrators should agree upon college and classroom rules and policies, and these should be clear and understandable to maintain quality in the institutions. Quality academic leadership, quality learners, quality learning, quality content teacher efficiency and competence, accountability, student's assessment and infrastructure are very important to meet the challenges in today's educational system. Quality education thus is required to enable persons, societies and nations to acquire the skills and competencies that are necessary to live a meaningful life in a competitive, global world.

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