INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Editors

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Bangalore, India

Proceedings of

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Preface

Quality is an elusive concept. The NAAC is viewing quality as "fitness for purpose', and quality assurance as 'continuous improvement'. The quality of higher education is a result of collective effort of all stakeholders in higher education, which includes the state, the society, the employer, parents, the management, teachers and students. Among the stakeholders the students are the primary stakeholders and all quality measures, which are to be benchmarked against the student interests. This is the student-centric approach to quality.

Student as a participant in learning

Student, a person studying at a university or other place of higher education, is viewed differently in relation to her/his role in learning. Broadly, for analytical purposes, we may identify three approaches. In paternalistic approach student is viewed as a receiver of knowledge. The focus is more on discipline and devotion. In the market approach student is viewed as a consumer of knowledge. The student is treated as a raw material and the learning process as a production process of conversion of this raw material into a finished product. The focus is on student satisfaction like consumer satisfaction and competition as a drive of excellence. The third one is *Democratic approach* Education is viewed as a social process and student is considered as a participant in the process of knowledge creation and use. The focus is more on student teacher -partnership in the learning process. We consider democratic approach is more appropriate to the present content.

NAAC initiatives

Taking note of the worldwide initiatives, NAAC has launched various initiatives to promote Student Participation In Quality Assurance.

A. NAAC is focusing on participation of all students in quality enhancement, not merely the representatives of students. This inclusive approach to participation may help in avoiding some of the limitations of student representative politics.

B. NAAC is encouraging institutions to put in place a system of student feedback particularly on teaching-learning, assessment and support services. The feedback from students will help in quality improvement of the processes and empower the student with a sense of participation.

C. Another initiative of NAAC is to encourage the institutions to have internal mechanisms for continuous participation of students in institutional quality improvement activities.

D. NAAC is also having a system of getting student inputs on assessment of institutional performance. This process makes assessment process more reliable and credible. NAAC believes and encourages more flexibility and diversity in the practice of student assessment of quality, depending on the context.

E. NAAC is organizing a number of programmes for quality awareness/quality literacy.

F. NAAC is engaged in developing guides of good practices of student participation in quality.

G. NAAC has developed the student character as a guide for action by institutions and students.

International Conference

To augment these efforts, the NAAC organized a two day International Conference on "Student Participation in Quality Enhancement" at Bangalore on 16-17 September 2006 to mark its 12th Foundation day. The Asia-Pacific Quality Network has supported the conference.

The conference marked the culmination of the "NAAC 2006 Year of Student Participation in Quality Assurance" and coincided with the ongoing work of APQN Project on Student Participation in Quality Assurance. The conference which aimed at contributing to exchange of good practices across countries in the region and creating awareness, among all stakeholders about the importance of student participation in quality enhancement received overwhelming response from all quarters.

With the overarching theme of 'Promoting Student Participation for Quality Enhancement' the conference deliberated on the various sub-themes in various sessions.

Ten international participants including resource persons from Student Participation in Quality Scotland (SPARQS), UK and AUQA, Australia besides students from Malaysia and Mongolia attended the conference. The Indian delegates include top Indian policy makers and thinkers in higher education from UGC, MHRD, AIU; about 10 Vice-chancellors; 40 principals, professors and experts from all over India besides 25 students from Karnataka.

Learning experience

A report on the conference on the following pages would give a complete picture of conference proceedings. But it would be apt to share in brief as to what this conference essentially meant for us at NAAC. It is a satisfying experience because of the intensity of the participants' enthusiasm, diversity of experiences, freshness of the student participants' responses and posters on the theme presented by them.

Three things are strikingly evident from the conference. Firstly, even though there is broad agreement on the desirability of student participation in quality enhancement, there is a lot of ambiguity and divergence of opinions on the intent, processes and methodologies of student participation. Everything looks agreeable at the rhetoric level, with wide perceptional differences when it comes to operational practices.

Secondly, there is a wide variance in the institutional practices of student participation in quality enhancement. Variations are not only evident among the higher education institutions across the countries, but even within the country, there are variations across the regions and across the types of higher education institutions.

In student involvement in quality assessment, variations range from active participation of students as full members of peer teams (Quality Assurance Agency, UK) to a minimal provision of obtaining student feedback on institutional performance (NAAC systems of peer team meeting with students). The presentations made in the conference on feedback systems in professional institutions like IIMs, IITs, Law school and general education institutions vividly brings out the variations in practices in Indian higher education institutions.

Thirdly, the active participation of students was a refreshing experience. Their excitement at the idea of being treated as equal participants is very heart-warming. The pre-conference workshops of students conducted by NAAC in different parts of the country with the collaboration of select Academic Staff Colleges has also brought out the students' enthusiasm for their participation on quality enhancement. In the conference and in the pre-conference workshops, students made many suggestions to make institutions accountable to their learning outcomes. Accountability is traditionally viewed as accountability to government or management.

The enthusiasm of students is not equally shared by all participants. There are many voices of caution expressed, particularly by educational administrators. One of the presentations on the findings of the study of opinions of teachers on student participation is very revealing. A majority of teachers, who participated in the survey, are skeptical of any positive contributions of student participation in quality enhancement. They expressed genuine fears of increasing 'politicization' of student activities in campuses. This reminds us of the complexity of the issues involved. It is true that some of the trends of student activism in Indian campuses is very disturbing. Prof. Mool Chand Sharma, Vice-Chairman, UGC, in his valedictory address, rightly emphasized the need to look at this question of student participation in a broader framework of context and goals of higher education. Here the appropriate institutional design we are visualizing, to serve the objective of student participation in quality enhancement, assumes importance.

The eclectic approach - deriving ideas and practices from a broad and diverse range of sources - may be the best way of addressing this problem. Indian higher education

institutions with different levels of quality and operating in different contexts may have to follow the eclectic approach, to make the practices appropriate to the real world situation. There is no one best way or one prescribed way. The only essential requirement is that every institution should ensure the participation of students in quality enhancement. How should it be done? Here lies the capacity of the institutions to learn from self and others' experiences, adapt and innovate the practices.

Action Points

The NAAC based on the feedback from this conference and from other sources would like to reiterate some broad action proposals for consideration and action at all higher education institutions. Some minimal steps suggested are:

A. Institutions should develop 'dedicated mechanisms' for student participation in quality enhancement. The Internal Quality Assurance Cell may take the responsibility of developing, operating and monitoring this 'dedicated mechanism'.

B. Across the board, participation of all students may be emphasized. The Internet technology may be used for student feedback, particularly on teaching learning, student evaluation and support services. Student satisfaction surveys may be conducted annually. The NAAC student feedback model proformas may be adapted suitably by all the institutions. On-line feedback system of BITS, Pilani and Shivaji University, Kolhapur and some other institutions are some of the good initiatives in this area. Institutions should also develop mechanisms for follow-up actions on student feedback. This is necessary to make the feedback system more credible and useful.

C. Institutions may organize awareness programmes for all stakeholders, particularly the management, teachers and students, on the approaches and mechanisms of student participation in quality enhancement and build consensus among all the stakeholders. The synergy between management, teachers and students at the institution level is a pre-condition for the successful implementation of student participation. Strong public reasoning is necessary to register the idea of students' role in quality, in the minds of all stakeholders in higher education.

D. The associational factors like transparency in operations, accountability of the system, teachers' competence and commitment, sufficient infrastructure, manageable student numbers and levels of student motivation greatly influence the systems and practices of student participation in quality enhancement. The institutions have a responsibility to create the required ''institutional ambience'' for student participation.

Action is the hallmark of success. In all the academic discourses there is always a possibility of analysis leading to paralysis. Analysis may frighten persons with weak

determination or with problems. We have to move forward step by step. Eclectic approach will enable us to have the flexibility to contextualize the practices.

Acknowledgements

The NAAC is indebted to many individuals and organization who contributed to the conference and publication of this volume. Prof. S. K. Thorat, UGC Chairman and Prof. Govardhan Mehta, Executive Committee Chairman extended valuable guidance for this international event. Active participation and guidance by Prof. M. C. Sharma, Vice-Chairman, UGC, Prof. Dayanand Dongaonkar, Secretary General, AIU, Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, Chairman, MIDS and veterans like octogenarian educationist Amrik Singh provided source of strength for this endeavor. We thank Asia Pacific Quality Network [APQN], which extended financial support to this activity.

As many as ten vice-chancellors and ex-Vice-chancellors, senior educationists including UGC members, quality assurance professional from India and abroad have contributed to the conference. We are grateful to all of them. The enthusiastic participation of about 40 students in the conference was a distinguishing feature of the conference. Inquisitive queries and comments based on first hand experience of the students gave much desired perspective to the proceedings of the conference. The conference was a splendid display of team spirit at NAAC with active participation of one and all in organizing this international event.

While the publication is bringing out only select papers presented in the conference, the lively discussions and interactions that took place in the conference was a unique learning experience for all. Lot of time and efforts have gone in to bring this publication. Some of the presentations could not be included, as we couldn't get them in appropriate time or format despite lot of persuasion. Nonetheless, the present volume comprises most of the contributions, which were highly appreciated during the conference.

We are grateful to all authors who spared valuable time to thoroughly revise the papers as per guidelines circulated by the editors to maintain uniformity and standard.

It is expected that this publication focused on very challenging and emerging area of quality assurance, would contribute to the on going efforts of quality assurance fraternity in bringing about transformation in higher education system.

Editors

NAAC Foundation Day International Conference on "Student Participation in Quality Enhancement"- A Report

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) organized a two day International Conference on "Student Participation in Quality Enhancement" at Bangalore on 16-17 September 2006 to mark its 12th Foundation day. The Asia-Pacific Quality Network has supported the conference.

The conference marked the culmination of the "NAAC 2006 Year of Student Participation in Quality Assurance" and coincided with the ongoing work of APQN Project on Student Participation in Quality Assurance. The conference which aimed at contributing to exchange of good practices across countries in the region and creating awareness, among all stakeholders about the importance of student participation in quality enhancement received overwhelming response from all quarters.

The conference was inaugurated by Dr. M. Anandakrishnan, Chairman, MIDS and former Vice-Chancellor, Anna University. While delivering his keynote address on "Imperatives of Student Involvement in Quality Enhancement" Dr. Anandakrishnan emphasized the need for institutions to make conscious efforts to associate students in their quality enhancement process going beyond a ritualistic approach. Prof. Anandakrishnan outlined the processes, domains and mechanisms of student involvement in quality enhancement. Emphasizing the importance of holistic approach and synergy between students, teachers and administration, Prof. Anandakrishnan identified three domains of student participation i.e. Academic domain, Infrastructure domain and Management domain. In his introductory speech, Prof. V. S. Prasad, Director, NAAC outlined the scope and objectives of NAACs initiative on student participation. Prof. Dayanand Dongaonkar, Secretary General of Association of Indian Universities (AIU) chaired inaugural session. He shared his experiences of student involvement while delivering presidential address. Dr. Latha Pillai, Adviser, NAAC proposed vote of thanks.

The inaugural session was followed by plenary and parallel sessions devoted to various sub-themes related to student participation. The first plenary on Student Participation in Quality Enhancement - "Stakeholders Perspectives " was presided over by the veteran educationist Prof. Amrik Singh. Prof.V.S. Prasad, Director, NAAC presented the NAAC perspectives and initiatives. While identifying different approaches of student participation like paternalistic approach and market approach Director emphasized the need of democratic approach, where focus is on student-teacher partnership in learning process. Prof. Yoginder Verma, Director, Academic Staff College (ASC), Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla made a presentation on "Teacher Perspective on Student Participation". The report on student perspective as received from workshops conducted at different ASCs was presented by Prof. Shakuntala Katre.

The next plenary session was aimed at sharing the experiences at various professional institutes like IIMs, IITs, Law School and also general education stream with regard to practices of student feedback and participation. Prof. Malati Somaiah, IIM, Bangalore shared salient features of IIMs across the country with regard to student involvement. Dr. G. Ajay who narrated experience of law school maintained that professional institutions tend to have better practices of student participation in place due to homogenous nature and clear objectives before students. Prof. S. Santakumar, IIT Madras, Chennai shared the experiences of various IITs. Fr. Francis Parmar, Principal, St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad shared reflections on some of the practices of student feedback systems for quality enhancement in general higher education sector. Prof. K. Ramamurthy Naidu, Commission Member of UGC chaired the session.

The plenary session on International Experiences in Student Participation included presentations from APQN delegates. Ms. Erica Hensense, Development Adviser, Sparqs, Scotland provided an insight into the unique initiative at Scotland called Student Participation in Quality Scotland (Sparqs). Ms. Mai Thi Quynh Lan, Researcher, Centre for Education Quality Assurance and Research Development from Vietnam presented experience of Student Evaluation at Vietnam National University. Dr. Jagannath Patil, Dy. Adviser, NAAC presented overview of mapping exercise undertaken by him as a project group leader of APQN project on Student Participation. Prof. Surabhi Banerjee, Vice-Chancellor, Netaji Subhas Open University chaired the session.

Dr. Antony Stella, Audit Director, AUQA delivered the second keynote address on "Student Participation in Quality Assessment". Narrating the experiences of student participation in Australia, she emphasized the need for caution while selecting the areas and levels for student involvement. Prof. G. Haragopal, Former Dean, Central University, Hyderabad chaired the session. Mr. B. S. Ponmudiraj, Asst. Adviser, NAAC, proposed vote of thanks.

The second keynote address was followed by Four parallel sessions. The first parallel session on Good Practices of Involving Students in Quality Enhancement in HEIs was chaired by Prof. Shashidar Prasad, Vice-Chancellor, University of Mysore. Dr. M. M. Salunkhe, Dr. Sr. Elsy George, Dr. Renu Gupta and Prof. T. K. S. Lakshmi, presented papers in this session.

The parallel session II on Promoting Quality Literacy among Students was chaired by Dr. Rajan Welukar, Vice-Chancellor, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik. Swami Suparnanda, Dr. C. V. S. Ranga Sai, Mr. B. S. Ponmudiraj, Dr. M. Kannan and Dr. (Sr.) Marlene made presentations in this session.

The third parallel session on Student Empowerment for Quality Enhancement was chaired by Dr. H. A. Ranganath, Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore University. Mrs. S. Sumayaa Dawood, Dr. Tilak Chatterjee, Dr. Vijaya Deshmukh, Ms. S. Bhargavi and Dr. S. R. Pujar were the presenters in the session.

The parallel session IV on Promoting Student Participation in Quality Assurance was chaired by Dr. M. M. Salunkhe, Vice-Chancellor, Shivaji University, Kolhapur. Dr. V. L. Dharurkar, Dr. Shankar Lal Gargh, Dr. M. G. Hegde, Dr. Vani Subramaniam and Mr. Ganesh Hegde contributed in this session.

The fourth plenary on "Student Voices" was one of the most interesting session, which gave opportunity to student delegates from other countries as well as Indian students who actively participated in the conference. A presentation from Mongolian Student Mr. Sainbayar Beeji narrated the experiences of Mongolian International University. The reflections of Indian Students on quality of learning experiences highlighted the complexity of Indian Higher Education context. Issues raised by students ranged from 'concerns on action taken on student feedback' to 'relevance of curricula and evaluation methods'. Session was chaired by Prof. A. Mariamma Varghese, Sr. Academic Consultant, NAAC.

Reflecting on the impression of the conference Ms. Zia Batool participant from Pakistan thanked NAAC and APQN for launching this unique initiative. Ms. Rhea Lobo, an Indian Student Delegate made a poetic presentation with a resolve to take forward the agenda set by the NAAC in promoting the student participation. Prof. Mool Chand Sharma, Vice-Chairman, UGC who delivered the valedictory address charged the atmosphere with his well-articulated and eloquent arguments in support of student participation in quality. He argued in favor of Teacher-Student relationship as a partnership in learning process and emphasized the broader vision of higher education. He also assured that UGC would take up issue on student participation while formulating the XI plan strategy. Offering his presidential remarks Prof. Prasad, Director, NAAC reiterated the resolve of NAAC to take forward the mission of student participation in quality enhancement and requested all the participant to initiate actions at their institution level. Dr. Jagannath Patil, Deputy Adviser, NAAC and convener of this activity proposed vote of thanks.

The conference was attended by about 150 delegates including ten APQN delegates and more than 120 Indian delegates which include 30 students. In response to NAAC's appeal 20 posters were presented by the students, from which four were selected for prizes.

A team comprising Dr. Jagannath Patil, Deputy Adviser, Mr. B S Ponmudiraj, Assistant Adviser, Mr. Wahidul Hasan, Communication & Publication Officer, Mr. V Lakshman, Facilitation and Liaison Officer took efforts for smooth conduct of organization under the guidance of Director, NAAC with active participation of all NAAC staff.

Some observations/ suggestions made in the conference

- NAAC is organizing a number of programmes for quality awareness/quality literacy.
- NAAC's initiative on *Student Participation in Quality Assurance in collaboration with APQN* is unique. It should continue to initiate more steps by involving all the stakeholders.

- Creating Quality culture in HEIs is pre-condition for effective student involvement.
- Lessons from other countries need to be drawn for creative adoption in Indian context.
- Old paradigms of teacher-student relationship need to be revisited in the wake of changing nature of education across the globe.
- Concept of student participation needs to be contextulised taking into consideration the complexity and diversity in which HEIs operate.
- Student feedback on teachers performance may be introduced in a phased manner.
- Awareness, motivation and training programmes are required for students and teachers to make the most from student feedback and participation.
- Series of programmes to promote student participation may be conducted/ sponsored countrywide.
- Dissemination of good practices in student participation may be taken up on priority basis.
- NAAC may act as a nodal resource centre on "Student Participation in Quality Enhancement"
- Mechanism of collecting student's feedback on nationwide scale need to be introduced.

-Editors

Special Address

Prof. Mool Chand Sharma, Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission, India

The expansion and globalisation of Higher Education has made tremendous impact in the market as well as in the student community. There is a growing need for certification and recognition as diversification in higher education takes place. As an outcome, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of the Government of India, has been established primarily to assess and accredit institutions of higher learning in this country.

In a country like India with such diverse nature - 'Unity in Diversity' the higher education should cater to the needs of the student community by way of access & relevance, and availability & utility. In addition to the above said, quality education to be given to the students by all higher education institutions.

Students are the core in any higher education institutions. The issue of quality, quality sustenance and quality enhancement is highly deliberated in the recent decade across many nations including the third world countries - underdeveloped and developing countries. Though all along all quality assurance mechanisms are in place in most of the advanced and developed countries, the issue of student participation is a heated topic.

The exact role of students in quality enhancement processes may be looked at different levels. Students merely giving feedback regarding the curriculum in various fora are one way of participative mechanism for quality improvement. Participation of students in the decision-making bodies of the governance, management, including curriculum is a healthy sign. Involvement of the student community in the curriculum development process by getting feed back would be highly essential for quality improvement.

The role of student participation in the quality especially in the teaching-learning and evaluation processes takes care of quality sustenance and quality enhancement measures in higher education institutions. The institutions in addition to the technological support should incorporate innovative participative teaching-learning methods. This in turn may enhance quality in the higher education institutions. The declaration of the student's charter in institutions and dissemination of information in appropriate times helps the institutions in the right direction.

As far as quality improvement is concerned there is dire need to change in the Higher Education Institutions in respect of teaching and learning evaluation process. The entire concept of teacher- taught (Guru Sheeshya Parampara) is gone, today's world of Higher Education Institution strongly believed in Joint Exercises, Discourses, Partnerships and Dialogues.

In the era of globalization, the access to information through internet is so enormous that there is subtle difference between teacher-taught. The ambit of wisdom and knowledge is not only with the teachers but also high with students. The students are able to accept the changes whereas the teaching community takes its own time. Today teaching and learning and evaluation process is a win-win situation, if a teacher fails, students also fails and vice-verse.

The experience that takes place during the teaching and learning process has to be taken care of during evaluation processes, in fact this determines quality measures. The role of students and the role of teachers in the transparency of evaluation process are highly critical. For any quality mechanism of the academic experiences/classroom situation is extremely challenging. The major emphasis for quality in the teaching learning process is the methodology of teaching used by the teachers in the classrooms. This determines quality first of all and then quality sustenance and quality enhancement measures.

The professional development of the teaching community is one of the measures of quality sustenance. The faculty as a constant learner and faculty continuously making efforts to develop the students in a participatory environment gives a clear signal of quality. Teaching methodology and faculty development along with a transparent evaluation system makes the students more appreciative to the quality measures taken by the Higher Education Institutions.

Regarding evaluation / assessment of students there is a dire need for examination reforms. Transparency is required in the evaluation processes in terms of teaching the subject, setting the question papers and evaluation of the answer scripts. Online examination for some of the subjects may also be explored as a means to quality enhancement.

The UGC is very keen in bringing quality improvement to all the Higher Education Institutions in our country and the UGC appreciate the efforts taken by NAAC in this enormous task of quality enhancement and student participation.

[Transcript of speech delivered in the Valedictory Function of the NAAC Foundation Day - International Conference on SPQE held on 17th September 2006 at 15.30 hrs in Hotel Atria, Bangalore, India]

A * * * A

Stakeholder Perspectives & International Experiences
(Planery Session Papers)

Imperatives of Student Involvement in Quality Enhancement*

Dr. M Anandakrishnan
Chairman, MIDS and former VC, Anna University,
Chennai, TN, India

Abstract

Involvement of students in the quality enhancement processes of their academic life yields substantial personal returns on their investment of time and effort during their learning phase, besides creating an enduring bond with their institutions in later life. It is of immense value in the maturation process of young minds, leading to leadership traits and responsible behaviour. The prestige of the institution is continuously advanced, by the quality of its graduates. The prospects and constraints in involving students in quality enhancement need deeper examination in the Indian context.

Students as Stakeholders

When we speak of the stakeholders of the education system, the students hold the highest stake in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning processes. Their entire future will be at stake if the education system does not prepare them adequately for the emerging situation in life. Starting as learners, they continue to sustain an emotional bond with their institutions, provided their experiences during the learning phase were fulfilling. They would cherish the fond memories of their teachers, facilities and support systems. On the other hand, they would like to forget their experiences in a poor quality institution as a bad dream.

Students as National Assets

The national goals in establishing and nurturing educational institutions are directed towards creating human resource assets capable of generating national wealth and serving as instruments of social change. Molding the attitudes and competence of the students during their formative years becomes the key responsibility of academic institutions. Students coming from high quality institutions would become performing assets in the progress of the nation.

A Holistic Process

Enhancing quality is a holistic process. The synergistic relationship among the students, teachers, management, parents, public, government and the production system essential to achieve an enduring multiplier effect on quality enhancement. Isolated efforts in improving the quality of a few selected components of the education system such as the

infrastructure, teacher training, research funding or industry participation would be of limited value. Quite often the wholesome participation of student is neglected in favour of other components. Bringing students to the core of the quality enhancement process would stimulate the synergy with all other components.

Approaches

During my involvement with the Academic and Administrative Audit as well as NAAC Assessment of several institutions, it is my unmistakable conclusion that all high quality institutions had genuine student participation in improving the key institutional processes. In such cases the students were found to be responsible and pro-active agents of change, through participation in the policy organs, academic council, board of studies, internal quality audit cell, residential management committees and so on. Many of them accept that such involvement contributed significantly to their maturation process and helped to develop a true sense of partnership with others in the institutional progress.

We do encounter an understandable sense of reluctance on the part of some faculty or managements to involve students in the institutional processes for reasons such as their assumed immaturity, diversion of their attention away from studies, scope for external interferences especially the politics, and fear of unionization. These have been overcome by better institution by having explicit guidelines and codes for student involvement, evolved with student participation and improved through further experiences.

During the academic audit, it was gratifying to observe that wherever there was a structured feed back from students on the performance of teachers, deficiencies in the academic and physical infrastructures and short coming in the student services the institution has benefited by efforts to improve the quality. Ignoring the feedbacks from students has resulted in a sense of despondency and loss of pride about their institutions. In many cases student feedbacks have served as eye-openers to the faculty and management to shake them out of their complacency.

Student-Faculty Synergy

The synergy between the students and faculty has been developed in very many ways. Academic advice on course options, counseling on academic and personal life, guidance on career options, suggestions for further studies, assistance in tidying over personal financial predicaments, etc. have contributed a great deal in promoting the emotional bonds of the students with the institutions. In several instances, the students after graduation have reciprocated these gestures with substantial support. Over the years, these features become traditions rooted in the institutional life. The new entrants to such institution become voluntary and willing partners in maintaining and enhancing the quality of the institutions.

Negative Perceptions

The scope for developing negative perception of the institutions by the students exists. Unfortunately in a significantly large part of the Indian Education system. The negative perception arises due to many different reasons. The rigidity of the curricular framework, contents pedagogy and examination system is one of the dominant reasons for negative perceptions among students who have healthy aspirations and who can easily compare their experiences with better institutions in India and abroad. They feel frustrated by their inability to improve the quality of the academic framework.

Students are not unaware of the unhealthy external influences on their institutions. These occur in very many forms ranging from student admissions, teachers appointments and promotions, financial managements and so on and become topics of gossips. Involuntarily it sends wrong signals in the character formation of students.

A disturbing factor in the formation of values of ethics and fair practices is the dominant practices of commercialization of education. Extortion and exploitation of students for unjustifiable huge payments by many, if not all, managements of private institution and several aided and even government institutions either generate a sense of anger and disgust among some students or succumbing by many of them to immoral behavior as a normal way of life in India thereby damaging the civil society.

Hopeful Trends

There are several hopeful trends in the course, which support the student involvement in quality enhancement. Firstly the employers prefer institutional that have demonstrable academic quality along with value adding activities involving the students. Secondly, those students who have participated in the institutional quality processes are able to make rational career choices; and thirdly the performance of such student in facing up to the job interviews and placement exhibit higher degree of self-confidence and maturity. Therefore it is imperative that every institution makes conscious efforts to associate students in their quality enhancement process going beyond a ritualistic approach.

(* Key Note Address)

Student Participation In Quality Assurance*

Dr. Antony Stella
Audit Director,
AUQA, Australia

Abstract

The world over, there is an acknowledgement that all stakeholders should participate in shaping the quality assurance developments. In relation to the participation of students, the question is not 'why' but the questions are about 'how' and 'at what levels'. What is the appropriate level of involvement for students? The answer depends on the national and institutional contexts as well as the interpretation of the term 'participation'.

Some countries have a culture of student involvement in institutional activities in a significant way. Students find a place in various management and academic committees such as the Governing Boards and Academic Boards. There are institutional structures that facilitate the collective student body to make its voice heard. Students who belong to this context are usually involved in consultations and activities that shape the QA developments.

There are systems where student involvement may be limited to organising student activities. For students of this context, what is required first is 'capacity development' to use quality related data. Enhanced ability of the stakeholders especially students to be aware of the quality related data, understand the data, and use quality related data in a meaningful way in the choice of institutions will steer the QA developments of the country in the right direction. Before venturing into major changes in the way students are involved, it is very important to prepare the student body for that responsibility.

This paper highlights some of the areas that need attention to develop this capacity among students. It also presents how student participation works in the Australian context and what cautions are required while adapting some of those strategies in other national contexts.

External Quality Assurance (EQA) in higher education is still evolving. In regions like the Asia-Pacific, external quality assurance is of relatively recent origin. There are about 20 major national quality assurance efforts currently operating in the region, with about two-thirds of these initiatives having been established in the last decade. In these initiatives, the term quality assurance is used to denote different practices and modes such as Accreditation, Assessment and Academic Audit. The definitions of the various modes are not sharp and their functions sometimes overlap within a national system.

In most countries EQA developed either as an overlay to strengthen the existing mechanisms or as a system to bridge the gaps in the existing QA arrangements. In this still evolving system, the objectives of the QA system, the active players of the system, the stakeholders and their expectations, etc vary from country to country. Especially in a complex and diverse region such as the Asia-Pacific, with linguistic, political, economic and cultural diversities, the quality assurance mechanisms are very diverse. Consequently, the stakeholders, including students, participate in and shape the QA developments in different ways.

Amidst this variation in national contexts and diversity in practices, there is consensus that stakeholder participation in QA needs to be enhanced. Especially in relation to students, there is one strategy that applies to all country contexts. That relates to empowering students and their families to use the quality assurance data to make informed decisions; this could be the foremost strategy to ensure that student voices are considered seriously in the QA developments of the country. This paper tries to explore how that strategy could be conceived and implemented in various contexts and what precautions have to be taken for optimum results.

Making an informed choice

Realizing the fact that quality assurance outcomes can be helpful to make an informed choice of an institution/program itself is a step towards shaping the quality assurance developments of a country. Promoting this awareness among students and their families could be task number one for the QA agencies. But what happens in reality?

There are criticisms that student choices are not always dependent on quality of the institution/program. It may depend on a variety of other factors like locale, type of institution, fee structure and even the freedom on campus. In the USA when the popular media publishes league tables of HEIs, aspects like nightlife in the campus and the football team find a place. In most cases, what the students do is shopping — looking for an institution that will fit into their expectations in as many criteria as possible, both academic and otherwise. For the shopping decisions, the students need comparative data with respect to their shopping criteria. If quality is not one of the shopping criteria, the QA agency does not have a significant role there; the institutions are the better ones to provide all this information as they have been doing it all along through their information brochures and advertisements. To help students sieve the information provided by the institution and discriminate gloss from reality, the QA outcome should be helpful. But how much do we know about the information needs of the students? Here comes task number two for the QA agencies - understanding the information needs of the students. But what are the ground realities?

Information Needs of Students

The study conducted by the QA agency in Chile about the information needs of the stakeholders is worth noting here. The study revealed the following:

All stakeholders, (with the exception of job recruiting agencies) show a high level of interest in the existence of a public information system on higher education. Nevertheless, they have difficulties in prioritizing their information needs.

- Existing sources of information are scarcely used, and when they are, users are not those whom the producers of the publications had in mind.
- Students and teachers say that what would be useful to them would be descriptive information, organised with flexibility and with multiple points of entry (such as location, area of knowledge, particular talents or skills needed for specific courses of study, tuition costs).

Among the main factors that influence the decisions on choosing an institution of higher education, the Chilean study found out that quality and standards are not the main criteria, and neither applicants nor their parents, teachers or vocational guides have an image of what quality would look like. General institutional reputation and prestige seemed to be enough for their choices. The study concluded that the public has to be educated about the use of information sources. The implication is that what the real information needs of the stakeholders are and how far the QA outcomes will be used by them is a grey area.

A study carried out in 1999 by the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) found out that there was low level of awareness of quality related information and even where there was awareness, the process and outputs were not fully understood by some important groups. In fact QAA prints the assessment reports and makes them available in the web site. It had undertaken extensive mailing of reports to various groups of stakeholders.

A telephone survey conducted by CHEA in 1999 among the public found out that the largest group of respondents did not know who performed accreditation in the USA. The next largest group said it was performed by the government. Only a minority — 12% knew that private organisations were responsible for accreditation. The same survey revealed that a good number of respondents did not have a clear idea about accreditation and were ready to take educational decisions not based on the accreditation status. Consequently, paying more attention to the public's understanding of accreditation has become a part of the quality discussion.

The studies discussed above indicate a lesson of experience. Creating awareness about the use of quality related data among the stakeholders, understanding the information needs of the stakeholders and ensuring that the stakeholders actually have the capacity to

use QA data have to go hand in hand. The latter has come to be known as 'quality literacy'.

Quality Literacy

Quality literacy is geared towards accessing, evaluating and using information related to quality of provisions. Knowledge of quality related information and ability to evaluate its usefulness can go a long way to ensuring that even the data with limited validity are used appropriately.

With improving family finances, increasing social aspirations and greater awareness that investment in education will lead to personal benefits in many-fold, parents and students today do not hesitate to invest resources for access to quality education. As the investment in terms of finance, efforts and time increases, an increasing percentage of students and parents now look for quality institutions and begin to consult the wide variety of available sources. Enhancing quality literacy for this population and providing them tools to become 'quality literates' is the next task of the QA agency. Through appropriate strategies, quality literacy - capacity to use quality related information to make an informed decision - of the stakeholders has to be raised. It is worth mentioning here the recent undue attention to media ranking of HEIs, which is a mockery on quality literacy. Undoing the damage being done by these ranking games may be the first step in promoting quality literacy.

Students and parents have to be made to realize that they have to investigate institutions carefully in terms of their own needs and goals. It should be a much more rewarding experience if the choice of institution is based on more substantive and relevant factors than some ranking based on arbitrary criteria developed by or for journalists. Students and families need to do their investigations rather than allowing someone else to define the criteria to rank institutions.

Public and students should also be made to realise that no single program or institution is best for everyone, and almost every program or institution is best for someone. The match has to be individualized. Students and parents should keep in mind that one institution really cannot be best for every type of student. To buy a vehicle one doesn't just look for the best in the market but rather for the one that best fits one's needs. Each search and purchase is designed by many individualistic needs such as capacity to invest. Since higher education is the second most expensive investment many families make, it requires the same kind of personal fine-tuning. Every student is an individual with individual needs with regard to curricula, communication skills, active learning, and diversity. When evaluating institutions, students need to find that best-fit and not the one that is the best. The quality assurance agencies and the HEIs have a major role in educating the public and students in this regard and a multi-prong approach is essential.

Strategies to Promote Quality Literacy

Information campaigns by the quality assurance agencies as well as HEIs on appropriate dissemination and use of quality related data is one of the potential strategies. In South Africa, the HEQC conducts a number of such campaigns and distributes posters and supplements nationally, targeting first-time entrants. The distribution of the supplements is supported by radio interviews in various official languages, which are conducted during periods when youth listening is the highest. It also monitors advertisements given by the HEIs. It has developed good practice guides and protocols for advertising. Workshops have been conducted to help HEIs improve their ethical practice in advertising.

In the USA, deliberate attempts have been made by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to target first-time entrants/prospective students and the general public and inform them about quality assurance in higher education. CHEA has also developed guidelines for institutions and national accreditation agencies about information that could be used by first-time entrants, employers and the general public. The CHEA Institutional Database contains information about more than 6,500 colleges and universities in the USA. Links to the websites of these colleges and universities are also available. Several brief documents that describe accreditation and how it operates have been published by the CHEA, to various stakeholders. Two documents deserve a mention. "Twelve Important Questions about External Quality Review" provides key questions for students and the public to ask about the quality of an institution or program. "Diploma Mills and Accreditation Mills" provides key questions to help identify dubious providers of higher education and accreditation so that students and the public can be protected from low quality provisions. Recently CHEA produced two important publications in the area of student quality literacy and information, viz. "Informing the public about accreditation" and "Balancing Competing Goods: Accreditation and Information to the Public About Quality".

In some developed countries, student feedback is becoming more important in assessing quality, but there is little standardisation in the way it is collected or, perhaps more significantly, what is done with it. Strengthening this aspect will send positive signal to all stakeholders. In Britain student feedback has been recognised by the QAA as a central pillar on which to build any future quality assurance policy. Australia has national surveys of students integrated well into its quality improvement strategy.

There are systems where the students have the right to quality education supported by legal frameworks. The student rights approach regards the involvement of students in quality issues as part of their legal rights. For example, the legal framework in the USA entitles students to claim back fees from the fidelity fund if programs are de-accredited. The rights of students cannot be recognised without them recognizing their responsibilities as well. Some institutions have adopted a student rights and responsibilities charter and

have used information campaigns and workshops to embed the charter within the institution. Through such strategies, the quality literacy may be raised.

If the quality literacy is raised, then comes the next issue to be addressed. The quality-literate person would need multidimensional or multilevel view of institutional data to personalize the choice. But is this data available in a form that will allow the user to search the quality related data and find a solution matching the needs? Exploring ways to support this need of the stakeholders can be the next task for QA agencies and HEIs.

Empowering the Quality Literate

What is required for a quality literate society is a dependable well orchestrated quality related database with multiple entry and exit points. It should be user friendly, searchable and be an information tool. Characteristics of such a database could be understood if one looks at the database developed by the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHE) in partnership with the Stern magazine in Germany. Ranking of HEIs has been a controversial move in Germany also because many people have argued that university education across Germany cannot be standardised like other consumer goods. In 2002 the most serious attempt to put a German university ranking system in place came to fruition. The Centre for University Development (CHE) compiled the study with the German weekly magazine "Stern". CHE and Stern looked at 242 nationally recognized universities and professional schools. More than 100,000 students and 10,000 professors took part in the process. Around 30 indicators were measured. Some variable data such as student numbers, the average study duration and the number of graduations were also considered. But judgments on the quality of teaching and specialist areas played a more decisive role than factors such as the atmosphere at the university or the library equipment. This system personalizes the ranking according to the criteria selected by the students. It has undergone a few revisions.

In the USA, US News and World Report uses a format called the Common Data Set (CDS) to collect data for its ranking. The universities are responsible for collecting the information for the CDS and the questions in the CDS are standardized to ensure comparable data. Many HEIs provide institutional data on the *Common Data Set*, to the public also. Institutions like Auburn University, Montana State University, Stanford University and University of California have web pages based on Common Data Set information. This would greatly facilitate a quality literate to construct personalised searches and sieve the institutional data to find the best fit with respect to those constructs.

National databases are well organized in countries that have a well-developed higher education system and have strategies in place to attract international students. The UK, USA, Australia, Germany and Canada are good examples. As student mobility increases national databases become all the more important in both developing as well as developed

countries to facilitate international databases. The efforts of UNESCO and OECD to support these developments deserve a mention here.

International Database of Quality HEIs

During the past few years, as the need to protect students and other stakeholders from low quality provisions especially the ones that cross the national borders emerged as issues of concern, inter governmental bodies such as UNESCO and OECD have taken steps to support quality literacy. The UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Higher Education recognises students and student bodies as key players and encourages them to take action to promote quality provisions. Although the Guidelines deal with cross-border education, they are applicable to any educational service. The Guidelines encourage students and student bodies to bear the responsibility of helping students and potential students to carefully scrutinize the information available and giving sufficient consideration in their decision-making process. They recognise the need for students to take active part in promoting quality provision, by increasing the awareness of the students of the potential risks such as misleading guidance and information, low quality provision leading to qualifications of limited validity, and disreputable providers. The Guidelines encourage students and potential students to ask appropriate questions such as whether the institution is recognized or accredited by a trustworthy body and whether the qualifications delivered by the institution are recognized for academic and/or professional purposes.

As a part of this initiative, UNESCO and OECD have launched a pilot project to develop an international database of quality institutions and programs. In 2004, an expert committee was constituted to work on the guidelines to develop such a database. It was agreed that the existing databases wherever possible will be integrated but the issue of compatibility would require newer ways of collecting and updating data. This initiative has reached the piloting stage and 10 countries are involved in the pilot.

The OECD's preliminary research on the internet indicates that around 50 countries have some kind of database of recognized HEIs freely available on the internet and around 12 countries have a database with search engine. At the international level, the International Association of Universities (IAU) has brought out a CD-ROM with information on about 17,000 nationally recognized higher education institutions from about 180 countries collected from national sources. This is the most comprehensive list of higher education institutions globally. It is available for a fee in the form of a CD-ROM. The ENIC/NARIC Network has in its website information about recognition of HEIs in 52 countries in the enlarged Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United States. The information is classified by country with a link to national sources of data. Of the 52 countries listed, 36 countries have established some kind of list of "recognized higher education institutions". Discrepancy in data and non-comparability of national systems often emerge as issues in

the existing databases, calling for an international database that will provide searchable data and supplement it with country specific additional information.

With this background on the need to enhance quality literacy, the various initiatives that might facilitate that effort, it is important to understand how things could work at the national level and what cautions are to be noted to ensure optimum results. To examine how the interplay between the various forces works in the national context, the following pages explain the system that prevails in Australia.

Australian Context

Australia is a federation of six States and two Territories. The Federal Government has significant financial and policy responsibility for higher education, while State and Territory Governments retain legislative responsibilities. Higher education in Australia is currently provided by:

- 37 universities and higher education institutions (self-accrediting institutions - SAIs - similar to universities in India) in Australia established by State or Territory legislation;
- the Australian National University (ANU established under Australian Government legislation;
- three other self-accrediting institutions - the Australian Maritime College (AMC), the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) and the Australian Catholic University (ACU), established under Australian Government legislation; (similar to university level institutions in India)
- two private universities (Bond University and University of Notre Dame Australia) which have been recognised through State Acts;
- over 100, mainly private, higher education institutions which include theological colleges and providers with specialised interest in particular vocational or artistic fields; and (similar to the colleges in India)
- one approved branch of an overseas university (US based Carnegie Mellon University in Adelaide, South Australia)

In Australia, students are recognised as having an interest in and contribution to make to the governance of the university. Most Australian universities have at least one student representative on the governing body. In some institutions the student representative(s) is elected to the governing body while in the others they are appointed from the students' association. All the institutions have students represented on the next level decision-making through bodies such as the academic board, faculty boards, and various advisory committees. However the source of that representation varies. As in the case of the

governing body, in some cases the student representatives are elected to these committees while in the others the student union or guild appoints them.

It is true that in most cases this only involves a few students directly. But one should take note of the way the Australian universities function as a community of students, academics, support staff, and management. Each group interacts with each other in a variety of ways. These relationships begin to develop from the first contact with the institution. Every student comes into contact with a member of the institution in some form or another and there are pastoral support, and guidance and other support mechanisms that take care of this. In then case of students, most likely the greatest relationship develops with the academic staff teaching them or supervising their research. While this cannot be considered as student representation in terms of direct involvement in the decision-making process of the institution, it can happen in an indirect way and work really well if the focus of the institution is on the learning environment. Issues can arise in class or individual discussion and these can be passed on to heads of departments and so on up the decision-making chain.

One more strategy followed by the Australian institutions for involving the community of students in decision-making is through focus groups and surveys. These are important tools for listening to stakeholders. Institutions create a 'listening strategy' and create their own strategic mix of tactics for capturing the voice of the stakeholder. Such methods are adopted for receiving student feedback and can be one of the vital ingredients to influence the decision-making process. Students also receive feedback that their comments and opinions have been heard. As a part of the quality management system and feedback mechanism a sophisticated evaluation system for courses and the quality of teaching could be observed in Australian universities. These surveys are completed for every course or subject each year/semester. The results are recorded, synthesised and used in a number of ways to improve the quality, content and relevance of courses, and inform teaching. These could be considered as very indirect ways to influence decision-making within an institution but they are none the less valid. It is not a question of direct or indirect involvement. It is a question of the organisational culture, the total learning ambience and the place given to student expectations in that environment that determines how well the student participation works - direct or indirect.

It is against this background that the QA model of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) has been developed.

The QA Model of AUQA

Of the three basic models of quality assurance AUQA follows the audit model. AUQA emphasises self-audit, which may be a specific activity carried out in preparation for external audit, or may be a standard part of the auditee's own quality processes.

AUQA then investigates the extent to which the institutions and agencies are achieving their missions and objectives. For any given objective, AUQA is interested in:

- the institution's intended Approach;
- how the approach is Deployed;
- the Results that are obtained; and
- the Improvements being made in response to the results.

While looking at this quality model, one should remember that Australia has a mature HE sector with a strong culture of involving all the campus community in major actions. Students have always been involved in the planning of institutional activities. One could observe a strong emphasis on internal QA processes, which again has resulted in a consultative way of planning and development in the institution including student participation.

The country has well-established national surveys on student experience and institutions consider the outcome of these surveys for their own quality improvement. The Federal government has funding links and special schemes (HEIs) based on indicators that are derived from these national surveys. HEIs take the student survey results seriously. Resource crunch in the HE sector, need to attract students (International & Domestic) and the funding schemes that are sensitive to student satisfaction results have made institutions monitor the survey results carefully.

Till recently, the country had strong student organizations with full time office bearers and funding schemes. These associations still have a strong voice although joining student unions has become voluntary now. For example, the National Union of Students ranks HEIs for student support. Student representation in governance and in academic structures is well in place. The student associations ensure that their voice is heard by the institutions.

AUQA's audit model has been developed recognizing this dynamic relationship between the HEIs and the students. AUQA considers national survey results, pays attention to issues that emerge from the surveys, examines trend data, checks action taken on issues identified, and examines feedback given to students about the action taken. During the audit process, there are scheduled meetings with students and student representatives in academic structures and other collective bodies. The Panel uses sessions to talk to any one who records an interest in talking to them and many students take advantage of this. The way the Appeals and Grievance Committee functions is an important area of investigation.

Consequently, the audit reports have many audit conclusions and observations on student related issues. The Good Practice Database of AUQA that is drawn from the

commendations of the audit reports with high transferability has many entries on student experience. For example, there are 35 good practice entries on support services, 32 on students and 35 on teaching-learning. Students are involved in the quality enhancement activities of AUQA as well. For example, the Australian Universities Quality Forum organised by AUQA is steered by a Joint Steering Group and it has a student representative in its membership. Most of the workshops of the 2006 Forum were on student experiences and student feedback.

What more can be done?

AUQA underwent an external review in 2006 by an international review team against its own objectives as well as the good practices of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). One of the recommendations in the review report is to increase student participation in the review process without necessarily including student representation on audit panels.

Although the audit practices of AUQA give due attention to students in informing the audits, to address this recommendation in the review report, AUQA has taken a number of initiatives to engage with the student bodies. Board of AUQA is aware that HEIs are our direct clients. In general QA agencies have no existence of their own, but they exist to service the HEIs. Similarly, HEIs exist for students and QA agencies should be facilitators to strengthen the services of HEIs to students and not become intruders to breed mistrust. HEIs-students relationship is on-going whereas audits are once-in-five-year activities. Keeping this in mind, as a part of the Implementation Plan to address the recommendations of the review report, AUQA has initiated the following:

- Meetings with student structures
- Encourage HEIs to increase student participation
- QA managers are briefed about student involvement
- QA-Contact List includes student organizations
- Institution wise or audit wise strategy to involve the relevant student bodies of the institution being audited is another strategy under consideration.

Further, the change in emphasis in the Cycle 2 audits has given a momentum to student related issues. In Cycle 1 audits, that have the 'whole of institution' approach, the audit reports have significant sections on student experiences and student support. Reports do not indicate any major problems. There are many commendations for the innovative strategies followed by HEIs to involve students holistically. Student participation in self assessment and campus briefing is significant. Given that audit in Australia is not a stage managed process, this is a good indicator of student

participation in QA developments. In Cycle 2 audits, instead of the 'whole of institution' approach, AUQA will have a theme-based approach and the themes have a bearing on student related issues.

In Cycle 2 launched in December 2006, the Owners of AUQA - States and Territories and the Australian Government - want AUQA to focus on standards and learning outcomes. This has intensified AUQA's approach to student experiences and AUQA will look at more effective ways of interacting with student structures during the audit visit. A policy on seeking student submissions for the audit is under consideration.

In other words, in the Australian context, student participation in QA is well in place. The culture of campus community, involvement of students in campus decision-making, standardised national surveys, use of the survey results, QA agency's focus on student experience, institutional attention to learning outcomes etc have contributed to this. But there is always room for improvement and more initiatives are under consideration. While exploring the benefits of some of these strategies in other national contexts, we need to apply cautions on interpreting the appropriate level of involvement of students depending on the national and institutional contexts.

Cautions

National context

Some countries have a culture of student involvement in institutional activities in a significant way. Students find a place in various management and academic committees such as the Governing Boards and Academic Boards. There are institutional structures that facilitate the collective student body to make its voice heard. Students who belong to this context are usually involved in consultations and activities that shape the internal and external QA developments. There are systems where student involvement may be limited to organising student activities. The profiles of the student groups and the capacity of the HEIs to absorb student involvement in QA developments also vary among countries. Considering these variations, what is the optimum level of involvement in QA developments? What type of involvement are we propagating - direct or indirect? What type of student groups will be able to contribute through direct participation? What do we consider as appropriate and effective indirect ways of involving students?

Optimum involvement

Interpretation of the term 'participation' has become a contentious issue similar to 'Evaluation Vs Feedback' that was a fashion a few years ago but now it seems to have settled down. In the evaluation vs feedback debate, all groups of the argument

agreed that it would be good to get feedback from students about their educational experience and consider the feedback while planning further learner experiences. But when it came to evaluation, one group argued that students are not fit enough to evaluate the teachers and courses and that students cannot decide what was good for their future. This was based on a large number of assumptions about the capabilities and profiles of student groups which need not be true in some contexts. The assumptions on 'who our students are' has implications for the questions raised above.

Who are our students?

Studies and surveys have shown that the general student characteristics are changing. The assumption that students are in the 17-22 years bracket, not sure of their future goals, dependent on their parents, unsure of why they are taking a particular course, and doing fulltime campus study is no longer valid. Two things have contributed to this.

Firstly, students and their families have become more concerned about their investments in education and what they get in return. The developments in ICT and the amazing information processing skills of the school leavers add momentum to this situation. Secondly, the percentage of mature learners is increasing. Distance education, flexi study, on-line courses etc have become mainstream modes of offering educational programs. Many employed skilled professionals who come back to the educational institutions to upgrade their skills have a preference for these new modes.

The profile of many of these flexi study learners is a combination of several features: adult, employed, in-charge of families, home-bound, travel-prone, variously prepared or unprepared for advanced study with some substantial prior formal learning, motivated, self-disciplined, clear about future directions, ready to take responsibility for outcomes. Understandably, the needs of these adult learners are significantly different from those of traditional teenage students. Many simply cannot be on campus or study full time. For some, a typical classroom feels inappropriate, with its students inexperienced in life, its teacher authoritative and sometimes equally inexperienced. In contrast to the average age of 17+ of students who enter the on-campus post-secondary education, the average age of students enrolled in flexi education is between 30 to 35 years all over the world.

One is not sure whether this group would like to be or will have the time to be involved in the quality assurance developments of the educational institutions directly. The optimistic point of view is that the mature learners have the capacity to contribute to the quality enhancement of the institution/program. On the downside, these are the students who already have a high demand on their time - from the job and may be from families as well - and they have specific expectations on what they want from

the institution/program when they make a choice of the institution/program for study. For these students, direct participation in QA is not going to work. But they can contribute through their feedback and in many indirect ways.

Thus, we have two very different groups of learners. What can work with mature learners may not suit the sort of late adolescents who go to college to learn life skills. It will suit them 10 years later, when they become adults and when life has taught them to know what they want and how to work to get it. We need to keep this in mind when we talk about strategies for student participation in QA. We also need to look at the bigger picture while identifying strategies to promote student participation.

Balancing the role of other stakeholders

While strengthening the role of the students in QA developments, we need to be careful about the roles of other stakeholders. With higher education becoming increasingly competitive, HEIs are required to be accountable to many stakeholders and demonstrate tangible student learning outcomes. Probably there are stronger forces in the system than students such as funding links that ensure that student welfare is given its due priority. Everyone associated with the higher education sector - HEIs, parents, students, employers, funding bodies and the governments - is interested in the quality of the sector. The stakeholders have one or more interests of the following interests: students for choice of institution; parents for worth of personal investment in the education of their wards; governments for accountability and policy-making; funding agencies for funding decisions; society for value of tax payers' money; industry for institution-industry partnership; and employers for graduate recruitment. To optimize the potential impact of these stakeholders we should be careful to balance the roles of the various stakeholders appropriately.

We also need to remind ourselves that in the final analysis we wish to strike a balance in the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. In India, those who were involved in the curriculum revision especially the teaching materials, a decade ago, would remember how there were expert groups to look into various emphasises such as gender equity, value education, and environmental awareness. The group on gender balance in Mathematics would look for plug points to induce an enhanced role and visibility for women and reword the mathematics problem to reflect that. Similarly the other groups worked on their respective themes. The final product, in some instances, was a lifeless teaching material. The plug points used by one group to induce gender equity would be tinkered by yet another group to induce another focus and too many cooks did spoil the dish! Drawing from that experience, we should know where to draw the line and how to ensure student participation without undermining the appropriate impact the other forces can have in the QA developments.

Next Steps

There is no debate about the merits of student involvement in any institutional activity since the HEIs exist for the students. But the question is 'to what extent?' and 'what is optimum?' The answer depends on the awareness level of the students in making informed choices, capacity of HEIs to absorb student involvement, and the pre requisites available in the country to support quality literacy. What is required first is 'capacity development'. Enhanced ability of the stakeholders especially students to be aware of the quality related data, understand the data, and use quality related data in a meaningful way in the choice of institutions will steer the QA developments of the country in the right direction. But many countries lack the pre requisites necessary to empower students to use the QA outcomes. Creating an environment conducive to empower quality literates has to become the priority of the QA agencies and the HEIs. Before venturing into major changes in the way students are involved, it is very important to prepare the student body for that responsibility. It is also important to develop the capacity of the institutions to absorb student involvement.

(*Key Note Address - 2)

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Teachers Perceptions About Ensuring Students Participation In Enhancing Quality In Higher Education

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Abstract

A venture to maintain and enhance the quality of education cannot bear fruit without active participation of the students. In the recent years, the quality consciousness, as a result of NAAC's efforts, has set the ripples for pondering on the issue of sustaining quality with the active participation of students along with other stakeholders. On the one hand, we are to understand students perspective of how to participate and contribute significantly in the education process while on the other hand, it is teachers who are to ensure student participation not only in learning process but also organization and management of education enterprise. The teachers must understand what are student's expectations and requirements and accordingly involve them in the whole process. But then their perceptions must be realistic and match with the student's expectations. In this paper, an effort has been made to critically examine the teachers' perceptions and view point about how to ensure students participation in quality enhancement. The findings are based on the responses collected during five workshops conducted by Academic Staff College, Shimla. In these workshops, teachers teaching in colleges and universities of various states of India participated. It is observed that teachers differ in their perceptions depending upon the nature of institutions, educational culture, experience etc. They feel students' participation is essential for quality assurance.

Higher education empowers the human resource of a nation with knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for its development. Among all the resources meant for accelerating the development process, human resource is the real wealth, which adds value to other resources such as physical and capital resources. Hence capacity building in human beings is akin to creating wealth. His Excellency the President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam (2003) rightly said that National Development, is a collective process, and has to be accomplished through the constructive efforts of enlightened citizens. The evolution of enlightened human beings is indeed a big challenge for the world community. He further added that education can contribute to building capacities instrumental for national development.

Education needs to be proactive not only to fulfill the expectations of society but also responsive to the global trends. Education is a qualitative concept understood by people

in different ways. Quality education seeks to transmit, generate, preserve and upgrade knowledge. It is the potent instrument for effecting change in any society.

Defining 'quality', especially when the intention is to use the definition as a definitive framework for benchmarking quality in higher education, is problematic (Ratcliff, 2003; Watty, 2003). Stephenson (2003, p. 2) summarised the central problem when he noted that 'Many people have commented that they are able to recognise quality when they see it, but find it almost impossible to define'. This difficulty, Harvey and Newton (2004, p. 121) suggested, is because conceptions of quality are personal and social constructs. They argue that each stakeholder constructs a view of quality based on a select few attributes and that these selected attributes vary from stakeholder to stakeholder (Harvey & Newton, 2004, p. 119).

Quality evaluation, the assessing and enhancing of teaching and learning in higher education, has been placed squarely on the contemporary agenda in higher education (Newton, 2002). Evaluation of the quality of mentoring programmes in higher education is no exception in this regard (Miller, 2002, pp. 237-59). However, such evaluation is not unproblematic. As Watty (2003) highlighted, there are different ways of conceptualizing quality in the context of higher education. These conceptualizations, according to Vroeijenstijn (1992), come about because a variety of stakeholders have an interest in the quality of higher education but not everyone has the same idea about exactly what constitutes that quality.

Quality in higher education can be understood in terms of satisfaction level of stakeholders viz. students, teachers, parents, politicians, potential employers, promoters, funding agencies and the public. In the absence of definite standards valid to all situations, it is well construed as an institution's movement toward its mission in diverse settings, and change taking place in the outlook of all the stakeholders. Quality is obviously difficult to quantify. The students may be seeking career-making education and for that the facilities required for effective teaching/learning process. Management and parents may be looking toward good scores while prospective employers expect competent manpower. Even then better way of understanding the quality is how far education is able to satisfy the needs and expectations of various segments of society, to be more specific the stakeholders of education.

Main stakeholders of education include students, parents, teachers, and management of the institution, prospective employers, government and politicians. Among these stakeholders, students form the focal group which should determine what should be taught and how. In fact all other stakeholders exist to bring about transformation in the students. Quality education focuses at fulfilling the expectations of the students and nurturing their potential. All educational interventions and ventures should be directed towards this

objective. But unfortunately in the present education system it is the parents, teachers and educational managers who determine the contents and nature of courses. Students have hardly any say in defining the contents and having the education of their choice. This will require acceptance of the sovereignty of learners by the higher education system.

In the Indian situation where the consumer (here the student) is not sufficiently demanding on quality, the providers of higher education can manipulate the context for non-quality goals. The alternative is to rely on a cultural/social approach, to move towards a culture of quality. So when the NAAC is talking about students' participation, it is not 'demand by consumer' approach. We (NAAC) are advocating neither the right approach nor the discipline approach, but the participatory approach. Student participation envisages total participation of students rather than participation of their representatives. The focus is to be on knowledge-mediated participation rather than on student electoral activity (Prasad, 2006).

In the NAAC's effort to enhance quality in higher education, year 2006 has been declared as the year for student participation in quality assurance with certain objectives. Besides other tasks, we are to understand students' perspective of their participation in quality enhancement and teachers perspective of student participation as well. In this paper an effort has been made to study teachers' perspective about student participation in quality enhancement.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To understand teachers perception about quality education and measures for enhancing it.
2. To examine teachers perspective toward the extent and nature of students participation in quality enhancement.
3. To identify the activities, perceived by the teachers, through which higher education institutions can seek student participation in quality enhancement.

Methodology

In order to understand teachers perspective about student participation in quality enhancement, seven workshops (each of three hours duration), six at Academic Staff College, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla and one at Panjab University, Chandigarh were conducted. In these workshops 280 college/university teachers belonging to 19 states of India participated (Table-1a and 1b).

Table-1a *Number of Participants -Workshop Wise*

Workshop	Male	Female	Total
I	24	14	38
II	19	24	43
III	26	12	38
IV	27	8	35
V	24	12	36
VI	37	12	49
VII	25	16	41
Total	**182**	**98**	**280**

Table-1b *State-wise Distribution of Participants*

State	No. of Teachers	State	No. of Teachers
Assam	18	Madhya Pradesh	6
Chandigarh	12	Maharashtra	19
Goa	4	Mizoram	4
Gujarat	10	Orissa	12
Himachal Pradesh	73	Punjab	44
Haryana	36	New Delhi	2
J & K	4	Rajasthan	7
Jharkhand	3	Uttar Pradesh	17
Kerala	3	Uttaranchal	4
		West Bengal	2
		Total Participants	**280**

In each workshop, a brain storming session was conducted to know the understanding of teachers about the quality education and how to enhance it. Focus group discussions were held to get teachers view about their perception about the concept of student participation in quality assurance. Besides, a questionnaire was given to the teachers to solicit information on various aspects of student participation in enhancing quality in higher education. The main questions addressed in the questionnaire were related to:

- Concept of quality education
- Perception about quality in higher education
- Opinion about improving quality in higher education
- Measures adopted for student participation
- The focal areas of students' preference for participation
- The extent of teachers satisfaction with the existing level of student participation
- Important areas and activities where student participation can be assured.

Information was also collected by way of observations and informational discussions with the teachers. The findings of the study are as under:

Indicators of Quality Education

Teachers expressed varied views about their understanding about quality education. The responses of teachers have been presented in Table - 2. Analysis of responses show that quality education mainly indicates satisfaction to stakeholders (90%) holistic development of students personality (72.5%), career oriented education (77.5%), politics free institutions (72.5%), education with values (62.8%) and preparing students for future challenges (58.2%). Other indicators include, compatibility with contemporary trends, optimum teacher-students ratio, etc.

Table - 2 *Indicators of Quality Education as Perceived by Teachers*

Sr.No	Indicators	Responses	%age
1.	Education with Values	176	62.8
2.	Holistic Development of Students' Personality	203	72.5
3.	Preparing Students to Meet Future Challenges	163	58.2
4.	Creative and Innovative	122	43.6
5.	Adequate Infrastructure and Learning Facilities	108	38.6

6.	Optimum Students-Teacher Ratio	54	19.3
7.	No Political and Government Interference	203	72.5
8.	Career- oriented Education	252	77.5
10.	Satisfaction to Stakeholders	134	90
11.	Compatibility with Contemporary Trends	14	47.8

Factors Adversely Effecting Quality in Higher Education

74% teachers held the view that the contemporary educational institutions are not providing quality education. They identified a number of factors, which adversely affect quality in higher education. Prominent factors which were found responsible for deterioration in quality of higher education were poor infrastructure & financial crisis (90%), political interference (90%), lack of stakeholders participation (69%), apathy of society (69%), non-professional management (62.5%), commercialization of education (43.6%), outdated educational policy (37%), defective admission criteria (42.5%), inadequate teachers (47.8%) (Table - 3).

Table - 3 *Prominent Factors Adversely Affecting Quality in Higher Education*

Sr.	**FACTORS**	**No.**	**%age**
1.	Political Interference	252	90
2.	Outdated Educational Policy	104	37
3.	Poor Infrastructure and Financial Crisis	252	90
4.	Apathy of Society	193	69
5.	Lack of Stakeholders' Participation	193	69
6.	Commercialization of Education	122	43.6
7.	Defective Admission Criteria	119	42.5
8.	Inadequate Teachers	134	47.8
9.	Non- Professional Management	175	62.5

Teachers Satisfaction with Student Participation

During focus group discussions, it was found that the teachers had very narrow conception of student participation. Majority of them perceived student participation' as political activism. When they were educated about the participatory approach, most of them came forward with numerous ideas for making student participation as integral part of every activity of the educational enterprise. When asked about their opinion about the level of their satisfaction with the present status of student participation, they were not very happy with the extent and nature of participation. Majority of them reported satisfaction to moderate and to some extent. 20% teachers were not satisfied with the present level of student participation. Only 15% teachers were satisfied to a great extent, 31% to a moderate extent and 33% to some extent (Table - 4).

Table - 4 *Teachers' Level of Satisfaction with Student Participation*

Sr. No.	Particulars	No. of Responses	%age
1.	To Great Extent	42	15
2.	To Moderate Extent	86	31
3.	To Some Extent	92	33
4.	Not satisfied	56	20
5.	Can not Say	4	1
	Total	**280**	**100**

Prevalent Activities in which Teachers Encourage Participation

Responding to the question in what way the teachers encourage student participation, the teachers mentioned a number of activities. The details of which are given in Table - 5. The main practices adopted by the teachers to make students participate are NSS, awareness campaigns, cultural activities, sports activities, activities of subject societies - clubs, participation in students' bodies, tutorials, etc.

Table - 5 *Practices prevalent for Students Participation*

Sl.	Activities	No.	%age
1.	Class seminars and discussions	152	54
2.	Activities of Subject Societies/Clubs	89	31.8
3.	Sports	188	67
4.	Cultural Activities	175	62.5
5.	Inter-college Competitions	150	53.6
6.	NSS	210	75
7.	NCC	175	62.5
8.	Freshers / Farewell Functions	123	44
9.	Committees Formed for Discipline, Cleanliness etc.	236	84.3
10.	Participation in Political Activities and Student Bodies	270	96.4
11.	Participation in Fairs and Festivals	120	43
12.	Representation on other Committees	119	42.5
13.	Awareness Campaigns	200	71.4
14.	Tutorials	160	57
15.	House activities in the institution	110	39.3

Mechanism for Student Participation as Proposed by Teachers

Responding to the question whether students should participate for the enhancement of quality, more than 90% teachers responded positively. They opined that since education was meant for improving the students' competence, they had the right to ask for right type of education which ensured them better future. They also expressed that it was true to a certain extent that students were not as mature to decide about the contents of a course but if they were provided alternatives along with the expected outcomes, they would be more judicious and own their choices. Even if the learning environment created by the educational institutions is more conducive and enabling, the students may not accept it. The acceptance will be more when the students are involved in the process of creating the learning experience.

The teachers identified a number of activities in which students should participate. These activities were grouped mainly under 13 categories. Attempt was made to find out further the mechanism and the measures for students participation under these categories (Table 6).

Table 6 *Activities that Assure Student Participation*

	Parameters	**Activities**
1	Curriculum Development	Feedback Surveys of Students Class room Discussions Market Surveys by Students Seminars Workshops/Symposia,etc. Identification of Career Opportunities Associated with various Subjects Tutorials Information interactions
2	Co-curricular Activities	Formation of Sports/Cultural Clubs Organizing Inter-faculty Competitions Participation in Inter-Institutional Competition Holding Workshops for Developing Skills Suiting to Students Aptitudes
3	Teaching-Learning Process in the Class Room	Interactions through Group Discussion, Quiz, Seminars, Role Plays, etc. Question-Answer Sessions Sharing of Reading Materials Classroom Monitoring by Students Involvement
4	Outreach Programmes - Social Welfare and Extension	Compulsory Part of Syllabus Village/Slum areas Adoption by Students Field Visits Holding Camps such as Blood Donation, Environment Awareness, Skill Development in various fields, etc. • Skill/Leadership Development for Extension Activities

	Parameters	Activities
5	Organization and Management	Members/ Office-bearers of Societies and Clubs Compulsory Participation in coordination and organizing activities Provision for awards and incentives Teachers Participation as Role Models Representation on Administrative/ Academic Bodies Self- imposed Discipline Training/Education in Participative Management
6	Knowledge Generation	Inviting Ideas Involvement in Data Collection/ Experiments Project Work Seminars on Social Issues Competitions in Writing, Performances, New Readings, etc.
7	Career Guidance and Counselling	Participation in the Counselling Cell Passing the Responsibility of Identification of Career Opportunities Industrial Visits Holding Extension Lectures/ Interactions Institution-Industry Partnership
8	Maintenance of Infrastructure	Committees/ Task Groups Monitoring Activities Physical/ Monetary Contribution Cleanliness Skill Development in Repairs & Maintenance
9	Maintenance and Utilization of Learning Resources such as Laboratories,Museums,Computer Labs., Library, etc.	Committees/Groups Passing on Responsibility to Students Earn while Learn Scheme

	Parameters	Activities
10	Examination and Evaluation	• Self Evaluation • Peer Evaluation • Control of Copying by Students Participation • Motivation for Copying -free Examination
11	Healthy Campus Life	• Participation in Committees meant for Utilizing Free-time in Campus/ Hostel • Encourage Innovative Ideas Activities • Develop linkages with other Institutions • Hold various Educational/ Entertainment Activities in the Campus
12	Handling of Complaints and Grievances	• Committees/ Groups for Redressel of Complaints • Faculty Advisors • Maintenance of Complaint Cell • Channels for Information Gathering
13	Organization of Institutional Events	• Committees/Groups meant for Effective Management • Discipline/Decorum Activities • Leadership Role for Teachers • Dignity of Labour

1. Curriculum Development

The teachers were of the view that student participation in curriculum development can be sought by way of feedback survey of students' aspirations, classroom discussions, market surveys by students, identification of career opportunities associated with various subjects, tutorials, conducting seminars/workshops/symposia, etc. Informal discussion with students may provide understanding about their educational needs. These activities would help the development of relevant curriculum and its effective implementation.

2. Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities develop the inner potential of the students. They get equipped with virtues such as confidence, leadership, communication, teamwork, enthusiasm, etc. Attitudes and values are imbibed only through effective participation. Students, according to teachers can be effectively involved through various competitions, formation of sports/cultural clubs and holding workshops for developing skills suiting to their aptitudes.

3. Teaching-Learning Process in the Classroom

Effective learning is possible only when the students are keen and have the ability to learn. If students share the responsibility of learning, they would learn better. But the whole process is to be monitored by teachers who can ensure students' active participation in teaching-learning process through various activities. The teachers vehemently stated that fruitful participation would be possible by way of interactions through group discussions, quizzes, seminars, role plays, question-answer sessions, sharing of reading materials and classroom monitoring by students involvement.

4. Outreach Programmes - Social Welfare and Extension

As is being emphasized by the President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam that the educational institutions have an important role to play in realizing the vision 2020. The students should be involved in various social welfare and extension activities. According to the teachers this can be possible by way of making extension activities an integral/ compulsory part of syllabus, adopting nearby villages/slum areas, field visits, holding educational and skill development camps for the benefit of society.

5. Organization and Management

The students should be involved in the Organisation and management of various activities leading to high effectiveness of the institutions. This participation can be possible by way of constituting different functional groups, societies and clubs, and students associations. The students may be required to participate in at least one activity related to organizational management. Participation can be further encouraged by way of instituting some awards and incentives. The teachers may guide and develop necessary capacity among the students to effectively perform management function while working in different groups. The teachers emphasized that here the teachers have to take the leading role and lead students from the front.

6. Knowledge Generation

Students being the keen learners have the potential to contribute in the construction of new knowledge. The teachers have to change their attitude and involve students in their venture for knowledge generation. Teachers were of the view that students may be

involved in enriching the research role of teachers by way of inviting ideas, undertaking project work, data collection, experiments, seminars on social issues, competitions in writing, performances, new reading, etc.

7. Career Guidance and Counselling

The teachers were of strong view that students be given career guidance and counseling. In this process, the involvement of students will be of a great help and also a learning experience to them. Student participation can be made possible by way of constituting counseling cell with students representatives, passing the responsibility of identification of career opportunities to the students, industrial visits, holding extension lectures and developing institution-industry partnership.

8. Maintenance of Infrastructure

The teachers were concerned about poor maintenance of campuses and wastage and underutilization of the facilities. The optimum utilization of infrastructure and its maintenance can be made possible by students' participation. It may be ensured by way of constituting task groups, laying out monitoring mechanism, physical/monitory contribution, cleanliness, skill development in repairs and maintenance of facilities. Good practices developed once will become integral part of institutional culture.

9. Maintenance and Utilization of Learning Resources

For the effective use and maintenance of scientific laboratories, computer laboratories, library, museum, etc. students participation should be made compulsory through various measures such as constitution of committees, passing responsibility to students, and introduction of scheme such as earn while learn.

10. Examination and Evaluation

Teachers felt that Indian education system is examination oriented. Mostly students study to pass a course and attempt to secure high marks. Many institutions face the menace of copying which raises many questions about the quality of education and validity of the degree. The students may participate in this activity by way of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, controlling cheating by students' participation, etc.

11. Healthy Campus Life

The students studying in an excellent institution would always have high morale and satisfaction. They feel rewarded and enthusiastic of being the part of the campus. Students should have leisure time facilities for utilizing free time in the campus and the hostels. It is possible by involving students in looking for some innovative activities, linkages with other institutions and holding various educational & entertainment activities in the campus.

12. Handling of Complaints and Grievances

It is observed that most of the time students' complaints and grievances arise out of communication gap between various groups. This can be handled by way of constituting redressal cells, involvement of faculty advisors and utilizing students for channelising relevant information for decision-making.

13. Organisation of Institutional Events

Every institution organizes events where the entire institutional community participates. In these events students' involvement adds glory to the events and also provide students the opportunity to learn how to organize various events. They get opportunity to harness their skills and enrich their experience. The students may participate in the activities such as discipline, organization, heading the task groups and practicing the principle of dignity of labour.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has marked out, after analyzing the opinion of teachers regarding students' participation in quality assurance, certain areas and activities in which conscious and deliberate interventions can lead to fruitful participation. By and large teachers realize that the quality of education is determined by the involvement of prominent stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers and the government. The field of student participation in quality assurance is very delicate and requires a lot of caution and meticulous planning. The nature and scope of participation, of course, depends upon the type of institution and the contents of education.

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Student Participation In Quality Enhancement - Students' Perspective

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Abstract

Assessment and accreditation is significant to the quality enhancement of HEIs and therefore the process of assessment must take into cognizance, the participation of students in any manner that is befitting, to make the process more reliable and acceptable. Towards achieving this goal, the National Assessment and Accreditation council, apart from creating an opportunity for the students of every HEI to interact with the Peer Team members (during the visit), declared the NAAC year 2006 as the year of 'Students participation in quality enhancement'. As a sequel to this, NAAC sponsored ten, one-day seminars through the UGC-Academic Staff Colleges of select universities, during July-September 2006.

This presentation highlights the student responses to the three themes, namely:

1) *My understanding of quality*
2) *Students' views matter - Feedback mechanisms for quality enhancement and*
3) *How can students participate in the Institutional quality assessment by NAAC?*

If the accreditation process is expected to be a learning experience for education institutions, that supports an organization's ability to sustain quality, foster assessment and improvement, and demonstrate integrity and accountability, the student responses as gathered from these seminars, endorse the NAAC's view that student participation is imperative to the quality assurance, sustenance and enhancement of the higher education institutions.

Introduction

Students are central to any educational endeavor. Their main objective and expectation from Higher Educational Institutions is to broaden their intellectual horizons and to attain a strong foundation of knowledge and skills. Towards this end, HEIs are meant to offer virtually unlimited educational opportunities by designing a broad base of knowledge and help the students to develop the ability to reason, think critically, and communicate effectively. The students are expected to take advantage of the wide range of learning experiences that are available to them at the chosen HEI, so that they can customize and enhance their academic experience. Along their academic journey, the HEIs are expected to make available, countless resources to the students, which are intended to help them to have a fulfilling institutional experience.

Collegiate years are also a time for personal growth and enrichment for students, for making life-forming decisions and creating life-long friendships. HEIs have the challenge to offer holistic experience to students by exposing them to abundant extracurricular and cultural offerings. Apart from formal educational experience, providing a congenial ambience to the students to meet new people, join a student organization, participate in a sport, attend a play or lecture, or volunteer to outreach a service organization, all this and more, would enrich the experiences of students, to help them to build memories that will last a lifetime, and transform them into laudable citizens of the coming generations.

Rights and responsibilities of students are not to be viewed as a final accomplishment of a complete institution, but rather as themes of a direction for a growing and changing educational environment. Students enjoy the same basic rights and are bound by the same responsibilities to respect the rights of others, as are all citizens The student as a citizen has the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of political beliefs and freedom from personal force and violence, threats of violence and personal abuse. The student as a citizen has a right to be considered equally for admission to, employment by and promotion within the campus in accordance with the provisions against discrimination in the general law. While any HEI is no sanctuary from the general law, the campus is a community meant for the growth and fulfillment of all the wards.

In the context of the challenges of the 21st century learning, the needs of the learners, not the preference of the institution, should guide the priorities of academic planning, policies and programs of HEIs. To render quality enhancement a reality for all, HEIs need to create opportunities for students to be involved in the quality culture and quality movement of the institution. If one regards students as the ultimate consumers of educational offerings of any HEI, then they must be regarded as equally responsible for their learning experience within the institution. If this is accepted, it would mean that students' participation in all the processes of the institutional development, including institutional quality enhancement, is invaluable and is to be promoted with all sincerity.

NAAC's initiatives to promote student participation in A/A activities

Since Assessment and Accreditation of HEIs, is meant to recognize the level of performance of quality of the institution, especially related to the educational experiences they offer to the students, in all fairness, the assessment process must also involve participation of students. Recognizing this, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), which is the premier Quality Assurance Agency set up by the University Grants Commission (New Delhi), to assess and accredit all higher educational institutions of the India, has been creating opportunities for students to voice their thoughts to the people that matter. Towards this, hitherto, NAAC has undertaken several initiatives:

- Peer Team Members who visit the HEIs for assessing and accrediting them as per the NAAC norms, essentially interact and get first hand responses regarding their perception of, and expectations from the educational institution chosen by them, for their formal tertiary education.

- During 2005, NAAC provided one session each, during the six state-level quality workshops held in Karnataka (Bangalore, Mysore, Dharwad, Gulbarga, Shimoga, & Belgaum). Proceedings of these workshops would also have been helpful.

- Apart from establishing a student Charter, NAAC intentionally declared the year 2006 as the year of *'Students participation in quality enhancement'*, and creatively put forth the slogan *'Nothing for us without us',* to bring about an awareness of the importance of student participation in quality assurance mechanisms of institutions.

- As a sequel to this, NAAC sponsored ten, one-day seminars through select UGC-Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) of Universities, during July-September 2006.

This article summarizes the students' perspective on their participation in the quality enhancement of their institution, as voiced during the seminar held at ASC, Pune University.

Material and methods

Ten Academic Staff colleges of ten universities were selected and given the responsibility of organizing the one-day seminars. The Director of each ASC was nominated as the convener of the respective seminar, and it was expected that he/she would invite a random group of fifty students across the institutions coming under the jurisdiction of their respective universities, to yield a meaningful sample size of five hundred student participants. The conveners were also requested to invite students, giving due representations to equity, gender, social status, UG/ PG streams and research students of the university. Each student participant was also asked to document her/his profile in the structured questionnaire prepared by NAAC and after the seminar, the participants were also asked to give a feedback on the seminar, to the organizers. Since freedom was given to the Directors of the respective ASCs, to adopt other organizational procedures in their own wisdom, the process of seeking voluntary participation from the student community and the modus of the organization of the workshops varied to some extent.

All the ten seminars had distinguished academicians, including academic staff of the NAAC, to observe, guide, facilitate and moderate the discussion proceedings of the interactions with the students.

Each student participant was asked to voice her/his responses to the following three themes:

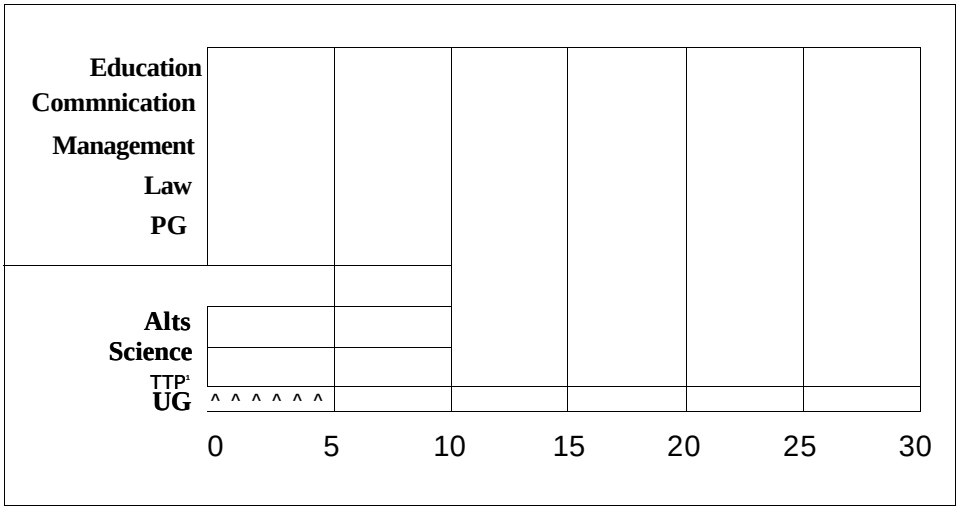
1. My understanding of 'Quality'
2. Students' views matter - Feedback mechanisms for Quality Enhancement
3. Students' participation in institutional Quality Assessment by NAAC

To elicit bold and frank responses from the student participants, and to render the discussions more focused and meaningful, students were also given a choice to respond without any reservations of disclosure of names to the authorities. At all the ten seminars, students were assured of their freedom of democratic participation and they were also given the choice to speak not necessarily in English but also in any other Indian language in which they were more confident and comfortable of communicating fluently. Therefore, it was also to be assumed that the translations into the English report submitted by the organizers are true reflections of what transpired during the oral presentation of the students.

After each seminar, the Director of each ASC was asked to compile the proceedings and send a detailed report to the NAAC. Since these reports were compiled by organizers, it is assumed that the contents of the report, (especially the responses reflecting the student's opinions, were essentially those of the students and not those of the people who had compiled the report). A case study of the responses received from student participants at the Academic Staff College of the Pune University is presented in this article. (For more details the Readers may consult the NAAC publication titled Student participation in Quality Enhancement.

The Pune experience

There were a total of 41 participants The participants represented different study backgrounds (See Figure below):



Participants were well prepared (some with OHP and power point presentations). Since they had unique ways of presenting (for eg. two or three students of one institution presented together), a total of only 34 response sheets were received. Out of the 34 respondents, 18 (=52.5%) responded to all the three themes. 7(=20.6%) responded to the first two aspects only and 9 (=26.5%) responded to the first theme only. Participants were more at ease to respond to the first two aspects than the third!.

Theme 1: Concept of Quality (as quoted from Student Responses).

"QUALITY IS THE STANDARD OF MEASUREMENT, OF HOW GOOD SOMETHING IS AS AGAINST OTHER SIMILAR THINGS"

'Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of High intention, Sincere effort, Intelligent Direction and Skillful Execution. 'It is a pursuit of Excellence with No finishing line'.

Students Also Related Quality With Their Expectations of:

1. A Quality Institution

- TO PRODUCE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE, GLOBALLY AWARE AND CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS USEFUL TO THE NATION

2. Curriculum

- Should be modernized
- Should be practical application- oriented
- Suitable for developing communication skills
- Include value education
- Life-related assignments must be included

3. Faculty

- Well-versed in their area of work
- Amiable personality
- Fair and impartial
- Using updated tools and techniques
- Working as a team
- Interested in molding student's total personality
- Tapping and encouraging individual talent

4. Evaluation

- Present system outmoded - needs radical change
- Need more objective type questions
- More weightage necessary for practical work and projects
- Introduce semester system
- Should be fair and unbiased

5. Infrastructure

- Clean, convenient, useful, welcoming environment
- Well equipped up to date Library with guidance facilities and suitable hours of working
- Up-dated laboratories in tune with global developmental needs
- Internet facilities and up to date teaching devices.
- Well-furnished clean class rooms.

6. Students

- Punctual and regular
- Having enthusiasm to study
- Joyful and disciplined in their activities
- Have respect for rules and faculty
- Have a sense of belonging to the Institution

7. Human environment

- Helpful non-teaching staff
- Competent Teaching faculty
- Dynamic Principal
- Students-Teachers Council
- Students grievance redressal mechanism

Theme 2: Feedback mechanism for quality enhancement (from Student Responses).

- Students held that their views are very important and may be obtained in various ways:
- Through discussions

- Through appropriate questionnaires
- Through individual contact (formal or informal)
- Through opinions of select representatives (student union)
- Through suggestion boxes etc.
- Direct e-mail contact with NAAC

Other Issues of responses

- Education needs liberalization
- Significant role of privatization
- Experiment with autonomy to institutions
- Faculty must do both: Teaching and Research
- Importance of recruiting best teachers
- Curriculum should be used for human capital building
- Easy access to and availability of student loans

Theme 3: Student participation in institutional assessment by NAAC (From Student Responses)

- Some practical methods have been suggested by respondents:
- Frequent meetings with faculty and management, to become fully aware of the parameters of A/A
- Opinion polls to be conducted for students by NAAC
- Responses through structured questionnaires.
- Faculty performance assessment by students
- Opportunity for students to generate new ideas.
- Student representatives to be participants in decision making by managements
- Self evaluation of learning by students
- Constant review by student-teacher councils

Pointers of Student Responses

Data confirmed that students were more comfortable with the I and II themes rather than the III.. Highest areas of expectations were in quality of teaching and teachers, quality of learning ambience and quality of curriculum (including inclusion of interdisciplinary areas).

It was rather surprising to note that NAAC' s mission and role are hardly known to the students. It was evident that NAAC's role, purpose, and need for A/A of institutions was hardly known to the students indicating that more awareness is needed on these aspects.

Conclusions

Student voices (through documented feedback or oral responses) are significant inputs to

- Understand the quality status of the institution
- Improve educational services for students
- Make the institution to accept the social responsibility of ensuring quick and effective corrective measures (internalization of quality may be through the establishment of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell-IQAC), as it moves through the twenty-first century challenges in higher education.
- Structured feedback questionnaires are more useful than oral responses
- It is necessary for NAAC to now work out strategies to utilize the useful responses of students towards fine-tuning the instrument of assessment so that the student voices (which are always the loudest!!!) get addressed appropriately in the process and product of A/A.
- This will transform the A/A exercise into a more meaningful activity, to realize the expectations of the 21st century learning paradigm.

Student Feedback Systems For Quality Enhancement In Higher Education: IIMs' Experience

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Abstract

This paper looks at the basic philosophy of student participation in the academic governance of Indian Institute of Managements(IIMs) in order to enhance quality in the learning process. The paper looks at the need for student participation, lists the areas and activities of student participation and finally discusses the knowledge and skills gained by students as a result of their experiences of participation. The paper also examines the advantages of the process of participation to the institutions, the faculty and the students.

In any educational program that believes in creating open systems, also consider students as an important sub systems and stakeholders in the educational process. This is a salient feature of IIMs across the country and many institutions and universities look upon IIMs for the best practices in implementing student participation both in the academic and non-academic learning processes. Such participation is based on the principle that the students bring in their viewpoints, opinions, suggestions and comments in to the existing practices of a number of learning processes.

These activities bring in enormous learning, which is outside the competencies acquired in the formal classroom. Such skills include leadership qualities, working with teams, harnessing interpersonal skill, ability to communicate with others, skills of persuasion, mobilization of manpower and other resources and many such advantages. This will prepare students to a life after IIMs and go a long way in shaping the total personality of the students. Some of the areas of improvement in modifying and fine-tuning such best practices are also discussed in the paper.

Introduction

This paper looks at the basic philosophy of student participation in the academic governance of IIMs in order to enhance quality in the learning process. The paper looks at the need for student participation, lists the areas and activities of student participation and finally discusses the knowledge and skills gained by students as a result of their experiences of participation. The paper also examines the advantages of the process of participation to the institutions, the faculty and the students.

In most of the classroom and out of classroom experiences a number of adult learners look for opportunities in the system to provide their comments and suggestions for constant improvement and evaluation of the teaching-learning process. In this endeavor to learn, students do look at their participation more as a stakeholder than as a user or beneficiary

at the end of the outcome. This constantly brings the students to center stage in eliciting their requirements and modify the educational programs without compromising on the basic objective and philosophy of teaching.

Learning in Open Systems

In any educational program that believes in creating open systems, also consider students as an important sub systems and stakeholders in the educational process. This is a salient feature of IIMs across the country and many institutions and universities look upon IIMs for the best practices in implementing student participation both in the academic and non-academic learning processes. Such participation is based on the principle that the students bring in their viewpoints, opinions, suggestions and comments in to the existing practices of a number of learning processes. The participation in academic activities includes the postgraduate program committee encompassing scheduling of courses, offering of electives, submission of assignments, grading and evaluation process and disciplinary issues. The second and the most important one is the student participation as representatives of students in the placement committee. The representatives of the final year would also co-opt the representative from the first year and carry on a process of mentoring so that the same students are equipped to actively participate in the placement process. Their input includes both the summer and the final placement. They directly involve themselves in organizing pre-placement talks, scheduling of final placements, working with the institute administration in listing the companies for final placement and developing the necessary internal norms and rules for student participation in the placement. Besides, their participation also extends to other co-curricular activities including cultural committees, sports committees and other such efforts.

One of the specific inputs in participation comes in the form of student participation in enhancing the quality of teaching. Many research initiatives have been carried out in several institutions of higher education and some of those efforts and their outcomes are summarized in this paragraph. The higher education academy carried out a project called Student Enhanced Learning through effective feedback. The objective of this project was to develop a resource for practionnaires aspiring to improve their feedback practice to students and get some new ideas on how to improve and enhance the current practices. The project team explored feedback issues with higher education institutions across Scotland. The outcome of the project included a series of case studies, seven principles for good effective practice and a manual to conduct workshops using the project materials. (Source: The Higher Education Academy, Enhancing student learning through effective formative feedback by Charles Juwah, et.al. Page 2).

The seven principles are listed below:

1. Facilitates the development of self assessment (reflection) in learning
2. Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning

3. Helps clarify what good performance is
4. Provides opportunities to reduce the gap between current and desired levels
5. Delivers high quality information to students
6. Encourages positive motivation
7. Provides information to teachers to improve teaching.

Historical Perspective to Student feedback

A number of higher educational institutions in India have operated under a closed system model for several decades. The main education philosophy practiced was that a teacher was a unquestionable authority and he is a learned scholar. When once he has acquired the scholarship in a given discipline / field of study, how he delivers was not of great concern. On the contrary, a student or learner was expected to carefully listen to a teacher and look for those pieces of information and learning experiences and make out his own points to remember and assimilate. Besides, a teacher placed himself at a pedestal and assumed his role as a 'giver' of information and could not perceive the learner as a stakeholder in the partnership effort of teaching and learning. Given the authoritative role played by a teacher, students had to collaborate lecture with reading of additional books and journals in order to fill the gaps in the learning process. There was no concept of 'team learning' guided by a teacher in a formal classroom.

This changed over a period of time with the influence of well-known western universities making its impact on Indian Higher Education. Another important factor that changed the scenario was technical and management education, which emphasized on the skills in learning rather than mere knowledge. In these situations the teacher was forced to provide immediate feed back to the learner, as it is an integral part of skill based learning. As a result of immediate feed back, learning disabilities and hindrances also came to the knowledge of the teachers and it opened an important area of dialogue between the teachers and the learners. While the emphasis and need for curriculum change and modification made a significant difference between prestigious and mediocre institution in the west, it brought several influences on Indian Higher Education. Whenever the need for bringing about specific modification in the curriculum, there was a rather crude effort to get the views of the student community. Many a times this student community was not really representative in the sense that students who are shy to express their views or who had learning difficulties were not included. On the other hand, students who were high performers and highly articulate expressed their views more in a informal manner rather than through any formal mechanisms of providing feedback on curriculum.

A teacher who assumed a role of a scholar rather than a facilitator of learning found it below his self esteem to accept student feedback let alone solicit feedback. Therefore, the modifications brought about in the curriculum were either a duplication of effort by

esteemed institutions either in India or outside India. This took several decades for policy makers in India to bring about curricular changes with any sincere and meaningful dialogue with the student community. When experts on education demanded that such a feed back should be formally sought both from students and employers who are the ultimate users of the products of educational systems, it was opposed by everyone at the institution and the system level.

With these limitations on curriculum there was no question of obtaining student feedback at the class room teaching level or at an individual teacher's performance level. When institutions moved from this 'closed system' approach to 'open system' approach of identifying various stakeholders and involving them in providing knowledge and skills, it was, basically due to changes in the larger society than any awakening by teachers or policy makers. The factors that contributed to this change were basically, the inter institutional competition to attract better students, the incentives to highly motivated teachers to join esteemed institutions and the need for survival to create institutional image and be more relevant to the fast changing social needs.

A number of training programs were offered by universities and academic staff colleges in order to bring about the attitudinal changes among the teachers to accept the student as one of the important stakeholder in the educational effort. Even though it met with a lot of resistance to begin with, market forces have, to a considerable extent changed this for the better. Another milestone that contributed was the increased presence of private sector participation in higher education. A number of private educational institutions opened up several innovative practices to attract better students and teachers and obtaining student feedback came as one such innovation or rather a change of mindset in a number of institutions.

The inhibitions on the part of the students is still existing in a number of institutions, they are: any fair and transparent feedback system would harm the students by the respective teachers whose performance is not upto the mark, there are a number of avenues or opportunities available to the teachers and principals to punish students or use the feedback as a disincentive in evaluating student performance. Several mechanisms to deal with it evolved out of necessity in a number of forward-looking institutions, which has brought about tremendous changes. Contrary to research studies carried out in the west, Indian Higher Education still restricts itself to obtaining formal student feedback at the end of a course. A number of strategies adopted to obtain feedback during the delivery of a course with opportunities for improvement are still a rare phenomenon in Indian Higher Education.

A study by Carnegie Melton on Education and Assessment (Source: www.emu.edu/ teaching/assessment/feedback_teaching.html 'Enhancing Education @ Camegie Mellon,

15 common beliefs and misconception') identified some of the common myths or misconceptions about student ratings and the research findings that were contrary to these myths. They are:

1. **Students cannot make consistent judgments about the instructors and instruction because of their immaturity, lack of experience, and capriciousness.**
   Many studies indicate that the correlation between student ratings of the same instructors and courses range from 0.70 to 0.89.

2. **Only colleagues with excellent publication records and expertise are qualified to teach and evaluate their peers' instruction.**
   Research is divided: some have found weak positive correlations between research productivity and teaching effectiveness, while others have found no significant relationship.

3. **Most student rating schemes are nothing more than a popularity contest, with the warm, friendly, humorous instructor emerging as the winner every time.**\ Much of the research indicates that students are discriminating judges of instructional effectiveness: Aleamoni (1976) found that students frankly praised instructors for their warm, friendly, humorous manner, but if their courses were not well organized or their methods of stimulating students to learn were poor, students equally frankly criticized them in those areas.

4. **Students are not able to make accurate judgments until they have been away from the course, or away from the university, for several years.**
   Conducting research on this belief is difficult because it is hard to obtain a comparative and representative sample in longitudinal follow-up studies. The few studies done show those alumni who have been out of school 5 to 10 years rate instructors much the same as students currently enrolled.

5. **Student rating forms are both unreliable and invalid.**
   True for most of the student rating forms used today, which are "home-made" and thus haven't followed the rigorous psychometric and statistical procedures required to produce a well developed instrument. Well-developed instruments have been shown to be both reliable and valid.

6. **The size of the class affects student ratings.**
   The research literature does not support the belief that a consistent relationship between class size and student ratings of any sort exists.

7. **Students tend to rate higher those faculty who are of their same gender.**
   No consistent relationship between gender of the student and the instructor in student ratings has emerged in the literature.

8. **The time of the day the course is offered affects student ratings.**
   The limited research in this area indicates that the time of day the course is offered does not influence student ratings.

9. **Whether students take the course as a requirement or as an elective affects their ratings.**
   The bulk of the literature supports this belief; students who are required to take a course tend to rate it lower than students who elect to take it.

10. **The level of course affects student ratings.**
    The majority of studies on this issue tend to support this belief. Some investigators report that graduate students and/or upper division students tend to rate instructors more favorably than did lower division students.

11. **The rank of the instructor affects student ratings.**
    The literature does not support this belief because no consistent relationship between faculty rank and student ratings has been found.

12. **The grades students receive in a course are highly correlated with their ratings of the course and the instructor.**
    This is the single most frequently researched issue on student ratings. Correlation studies have reported widely inconsistent grade-rating relationships.

13. **Student ratings on single general items are accurate measures of instructional effectiveness.**
    The limited amount of research suggests that the use of single general items should be avoided, especially for tenure, promotion or salary considerations.

14. **Student ratings cannot meaningfully be used to improve instruction.**
    The key finding is that ratings can be used to improve instruction if used as part of a personal consultation between the faculty member and a resource person.

Current practices in IIMs and other educational institutions

In order to elicit student feedback on a course or program of study, the fundamental principle is to share the course outline and the objectives of a course with the students. This provides a clear perspective to the students in terms of what are the explicit objectives of a given course of study as envisaged by a teacher. Following those objectives a teacher decides on a sequence of learning experiences. The quantum or volume of information to be shared and the number of meaningful units the total course is divided into, should also be based on fundamental principles of learning as envisaged by studies in pedagogical research. The next question is how to provide these learning experiences such as, selection of reading materials, carefully selected text book for the course, number of cases selected, exercises and group learning experiences. The teacher will normally take 15-20 minutes

to explain to the learners the relationship between the goals and objectives, the course content, the quantum and depth of information to be provided and the related learning experiences to be offered by the teacher. Besides, the teacher also provides a model of evaluation in which he explicitly states the mid-term and the end-term evaluation process, the group presentations, book reviews and projects if any. It is to be understood that even though the teacher if very competent to prepare this plan for learning, he certainly has to share this with the students. It is possible especially in higher education and postgraduate learning, students have valuable and useful comments and suggestions to offer. A teacher normally receives such comments and suggestions and evaluates its relevance to the plan created and accommodates them to the extent possible. Such a course outline well articulated and communicated to the students becomes a contract between the teacher and the learner. Besides, it provides a terms of reference both for the performance of students and the performance of teachers. In higher educational institutions, which have developed an organistional culture over a period of time to create and share this contract with the students are also in a position to implement an objective and transparent student feedback. In such cases, students provide feedback within the framework created in a course outline. In other words, a student expectation of a teacher cannot be outside the course outline that was articulated to the students. Therefore, a student is able to evaluate teaching performance within the boundaries and limitations if any of the course outline and the stated course objectives.

Mechanisms of obtaining student feedback

As detailed above a number of innovative institutions started feedback mechanism almost three decades ago and these practices have continued with needed modifications. As a result the leaders in this field have been the IITs and the IIMs. It must be mentioned here that the demand for obtaining feedback basically came from two sources namely, the demand from students for better quality of teaching, the need of the institution to identify quality teachers and make provision for improving qualitative inputs in teaching and constantly updating curriculum. This is also perhaps closely associated with the institutional autonomy as a very desirable organizational structure. When autonomy helps institutions to bring about curricular changes, it also brings in responsibility to be continuously relevant and useful to two stakeholders namely the students and the employers. Given the keen competition across these institutions to sell their products in the employment market, the urge for constant improvement and modification becomes an integral part of the institutional structure.

Higher educational institutions all over the world practice several techniques or mechanisms of obtaining student feedback. They can be broadly classified into three categories, namely, obtaining informal oral feedback, obtaining mid term feedback and obtaining a formal end-term feed back to a checklist or a questionnaire. There are again institutions, which follow one or a combination of these methods. These methods are closely co-related with the organizational culture of the institutions. If teachers and

institutions believe in informal, trust based open culture, teachers do solicit feedback from students. Many a times the informal feedback helps the teachers to bring about the needed modifications in curriculum, teaching and evaluation. If teachers individually are feedback sensitive and are willing to respond to student needs, they even look for non verbal feedback from the class collectively and from students individually. On the contrary there might be a small number of teachers who are not very sensitive to the feedback mechanisms and continue to carry on their tasks irrespective of the nature and quality of feedback received.

Most of the institutions have made deliberate efforts to de-link student feedback from grading. In other words, student feedback is collected by the administration and tabulated by them without access to this information by faculty. Only after the grades are released to the students, the feedback is made available to the concerned faculty. Especially in institutions like the IITs and IIMs where the same teaching faculty is also involved in evaluation of student learning, such a system becomes very important and desirable. This will make the students feel free to express their views without the fear of the comments affecting their grades. The format for feedback used in IIMB is enclosed in annexure-1. As one can see in the format, in addition to the ranking that the students provide to various parameters of teaching, there are also open-ended questions at the end of the format. This provides ample opportunities to students to express their views as a comprehensive input in addition to the ranking. While the ranking obtained is tabulated by the administration and supplied to the faculty, open-ended responses are reported to faculty without any sort of tabulation. Besides, since who said what is not revealed, it helps to maintain a high level of anonymity. In addition, the average grade for the class is also provided, so that a teacher is able to place the feedback for his course in relation to the mean for all the courses by the same students.

Many of the premier educational institutions are trying to make the feedback extremely transparent to everyone involved in the system. To illustrate, faculty A receives a set of feedback and this can be made available to faculty B or to a group of faculty if desired. This would help the young and upcoming faculty to compare the level and complexity of feedback to that of well established faculty in the same institution and helps them to set their own benchmark and work towards achieving the same. Besides, it is possible that some of the highly ranked faculty may be inadequate on certain specific parameters. To illustrate, high level of scholarship in content area and poor communication skills or extremely organized teacher but lacking in content expertise. The ranking of students on individual parameters helps the faculty to narrow down the specific areas where improvement is needed.

Institutional response to faculty development

Higher educational institutions have seen a paradigm shift from a closed monopolistic role of a teacher to a open , feedback responsive situation. This paradigm shift brings in

more responsibilities on the part of the institutions concerned both in terms of how to use the feedback for faculty promotions and towards training and development of individual faculty. There have been instances where student feedback is used as a formal input in a selection process. The question is what should be the weightage for such a feedback given a number of other responsibilities carried out by a faculty. The second issue is the institutional response as a formal mechanism to provide opportunities for faculty to undergo training and to make available opportunities for professional development. This has two implications. Most of the autonomous institutions without financial constraint provide ample opportunities for the professional development of faculty and also building internal competitiveness so that a faculty is motivated to develop oneself. Many other institutions, which are governed by the rules of university or other regulatory bodies, do not have the same pressure to bring about curricular changes. They also do not have the necessary financial viability to look at various options of faculty development.

Benefits accrued

These activities bring in enormous learning, which is outside the competencies acquired in the formal classroom. Such skills include leadership qualities, working with teams, harnessing interpersonal skill, ability to communicate with others, skills of persuasion, mobilization of manpower and other resources and many such advantages. This will prepare students to a life after IIMs and go a long way in shaping the total personality of the students.

The advantages to the system are many. The students' views, their needs and perceptions will be easily implemented in the programs and activities carried out by the Institute. Besides, the well-streamlined feedback system enhances the quality of teaching at IIMs based on the formal feedback collected from the students. This feedback provides the needed insights to the faculty in terms of course content, delivery mechanisms, teacher competencies, over lapping of subject matter with other courses and the communication skills. The feedback also helps the system as a whole to improve the infrastructure facilities and enhance the quality of the support system. More than all these, it brings in a changed mindset among the faculty to receive both positive and negative feedback and work towards overcoming the negative comments. More importantly, institution as a whole will create a very conducive learning culture so that the best practices of using and implementing feedback will enhance the environment.

Conclusions

The paper has analyzed the growth and development of student feedback mechanism in institutions of higher education over the last three decades. While it has remained a ritual or a matter of routine in a significant number of institutions, it has made a remarkable impact on quality of teaching in a handful of institutions. On the contrary a large number of state owned private or public institutions have not even made a beginning in this direction.

A few institutions have developed checklist or questionnaire to obtain the feedback. However, the open culture required to make the students meaningfully participate in the feedback mechanism is yet to be implemented in many institutions. The question is what is the role of the regulatory bodies, administrators of the institutions and policy makers to bring about the most desirable work culture for implementing student feedback. Besides, the mindset of the faculty to solicit feedback by accepting students as an important stakeholder in the teaching learning process rather than being very reluctant to accept negative feedback is also equally important. By and large the employers, as users of educational output should be able to distinguish between positive development oriented institutions and the mediocre ones. Therefore, student feedback by itself is not the issue, in fact the total design, organization and management of the feedback process is more relevant in setting up and working towards global benchmarks in quality teaching.

Student Feedback Systems for Quality Enhancement in Higher Education: Emerging Practices for Quality Higher Education in Professional Institutions

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Abstract

University system is fraught with a feudal and archaic administration, as faculty itself is convinced that administrative work is more important than academics. How do we bring in the ideas of responsibility, obligation, without allowing for an arbitrary administration or interference from the Government? What sort of new norms can we reinvent to generate a healthy work culture that continuously engages in experimenting with new methods of pedagogy? This is where the new universities for professional education inform us about the possible experiments that need to be emulated.

We could at least partially make sense of these experiments if we attempt to analyse the contribution of the National Law schools, which are the latest addition to professional education alongside the IITs and the IIMs. There are already seven premier law schools in the country, in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Calcutta, Ahmedabad Bhopal, Jodhpur, Raipur and Cochin. They have undoubtedly transformed the quality and status of legal education. From being often the last career option, law became the first choice of some of the brightest students in India. How these institutions work and what do is it that they have contributed in the last decade or so? Having worked at the National University of Juridical Sciences (Calcutta) and then at the prestigious National Law School of India University, (Bangalore, which is otherwise referred to as the 'Harvard of the East'), these are some of the personal reflections and experiences the author had over the last few years.

Introduction

Higher education in India is undergoing a rapid transformation with an increasing professionalisation and privatisation of courses and an accompanying declining importance to conventional studies in social sciences and even natural sciences. There are optimists and votaries of some of these changes, but there are also skeptics and critics, cautioning us of the adverse impact of this transformation. How should we understand this change?

Conventional universities post independence were looked up as centers of generating socially relevant knowledge and institutes that would be repositories of democratic practices. They were given autonomy from the Government so that they could play the role of checking the State and maintaining a healthy and vibrant civil society. To realise these goals state under Nehru gave prominence to autonomy and security of the faculty working in the universities. They were also, undoubtedly political sites, which were sensitive to issues of social justice. During Nehruvian era there was a broad consensus to the idea that universities should play a progressive role. However, as the nature of the polity underwent a change and also due to lack of checks or even a debate on the responsibilities of the faculty in changing socio-political contexts the ideals of autonomy and security turned out to be founding stones for breeding a lethargic and unproductive work culture.

Teachers unions are active only with their pay related matters. I haven't witnessed a single event where teachers unions took open positions on any pressing social or political issue. Most of the time is spent on meaningless bickering within the faculty that makes petty personal issues public and important public issues trivial. Gossip and gratification from manipulated mobility have almost become the second nature of all universities without exception. Rules and norms are brazenly flaunted, and it in fact becomes a mark of how powerful one is. University system is fraught with a feudal and archaic administration, as faculty itself is convinced that administrative work is more important than academics. This new context leads us into a conjectural paradox wherein we need to undoubtedly protect the principles of security and more so autonomy but also rethink the kind of clauses we need to add[1]. How do we bring in the ideas of responsibility, obligation, without allowing for an arbitrary administration or interference from the Government? What sort of new norms can we reinvent to generate a healthy work culture that continuously engages in experimenting with new methods of pedagogy? This is where the new universities for professional education inform us about the possible experiments that need to be emulated.

We could at least partially make sense of these experiments if we attempt to analyse the contribution of the National Law schools, which are the latest addition to professional education alongside the IITs and the IIMs. There are already seven premier law schools in the country, in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Calcutta, Ahmedabad Bhopal, Jodhpur, Raipur and Cochin. They have undoubtedly transformed the quality and status of legal education. From being often the last career option, law became the first choice of some of the brightest students in India. How these institutions work and what do is it that they have contributed in the last decade or so? Having worked at the National University of Juridical Sciences (Calcutta) and then at the prestigious National Law School of India University, (Bangalore, which is otherwise referred to as the 'Harvard of the East'), these are some of the personal reflections and experiences I have had over the last couple of years.

Professional Institutions and New Practices

The first thing that struck me was the difference that these Law Schools had with the conventional universities in terms of the work culture, performance orientation, transparency, and freedom or autonomy with responsibility. In terms of the pedagogy and evaluation, Law schools have invented a unique set of mechanisms. The basis of this is transparency and equality in the teacher-student relationship. Students enjoy a lot of freedom in classrooms and most of the classes are expected to be highly interactive rather than being just a monologue. Students more often than not differ with the view of the teacher. To better equip the teachers to satisfy the students 'co-operative teaching' was sought as a novel method, where more than one teacher handles every class. It is often preferred that teachers with different specialisations or from law and social sciences teach together. For the students the entire course is divided into modules and then into sub-topics, which are given as project topics right at the beginning of the trimester or semester. They are required to research and extensively read on their topics. In other words, at any time in the class, you have at least one student who is well informed about the topic the teacher is dealing with. *Thus, prior knowledge about the course contents and readings and project/research work related to the taught programme is absolutely essential for an interactive participation by the students.*

Teachers become extremely accountable and performance invariably becomes the only criterion to 'survive'. Classes are never cancelled and leave is granted only against an arrangement/ adjustment with other colleagues. *Such a serious academic atmosphere is in fact a pre-requisite for any meaningful participation by the students otherwise it might degenerate into mere 'bargaining' or acrimonious interactions between the faculty and the students.*

More interestingly, at the end of the term, *there is a detailed evaluation by the students on the subject knowledge, communication skills and fairness of the teacher.* Evaluation is taken seriously in both promoting and dispensing with the faculty. There have been innumerable occasions when faculty members were dispensed with on the basis of the poor evaluation they got. In fact, these evaluation sheets are maintained as part of the individual personal files of all the faculty members.

Added to this is the transparency and accountability in evaluation and examination of the pupils. Teachers are required to give in their question papers for the end term right at the beginning to make sure that a teacher puts extra-effort to cover the entire syllabus. Once the exams are over, answer scripts are returned to the students and model set of answers kept in the library for the students to consult. Even after the examination process is over, students can seek consultation with the teachers to reason out the marks they got. This demands a close, responsible and unbiased scrutiny on the part of the teachers. *Such*

mechanisms to build an accountable and transparent evaluation system are absolutely necessary for an objective and purposeful student evaluation in particular and student participation in general.

Finally, students are made part of the executive council meetings in an observatory status and occasional, as and when it is needed (decided by the EC members) they are asked to present their viewpoint on quality of teaching, infrastructure and other needs of the students. *It should be gradually made mandatory to include students in various bodies of the university, including the Executive and academic councils.* They should also be part of various financial bodies in order to check financial bungling. However, precautions should be taken to make the students accountable in various ways for the demands and complaints they make in these forums.

Likewise, students are also required to work hard. They do anywhere between 30-40 courses in pursuing their integrated 5yr B.A. LLB (HONS) degree. They enjoy very little vacation. The trimester system (in Bangalore) for instance makes sure there is no vacation for more than 60days in a year and even during that period students are sent on placement with various law firms to learn the practical aspects of lawyering. Outside the classroom, students are kept busy with various extra-curricular activities, apart from the moot courts that generate a deep sense of involvement among the students. This was evident in the fact that the National Law School at Bangalore was selected in the very first year to compete in the Jessop international mooting contest in the USA. Students are expected to work for nothing less that 12-15hrs a day and teachers are in the university well before 9a.m and continue to work even after 6p.m. Classes are seldom cancelled, instead leave is granted to teachers against arrangement of classes with their collegues. This perhaps is unheard of in any conventional university. Commenting on conventional universities, Prof. Madhava Menon, the founder director of NLSIU, argued, "the work culture is not conducive for serious study. Teachers seek holidays and vacation on some pretext or other. Even when they come they are available only for the required class hours. They hardly spend time in the library. They do research and reading only when they are compelled by rules or paid for additionally"[2].

Another very refreshing aspect about the law schools is the absence of an elaborate, arrogant and lethargic administration, which is rather unfortunately more powerful than the academics in the conventional university system. Faculty willingly takes part in some of the administrative work. Neither the director nor the registrar has personal staff. This partially was responsible for a clean and scam free-administration, especially at the NLSIU. In fact right from the beginning when law school was established and starved for funds, no donations were accepted and no one could influence the authorities to secure a seat. The admission procedure itself is completely transparent.

Undoubtedly in a country suffering from appalling work culture and failure in the realization of obligations towards institutions, law schools have put in place a new set of mechanisms and refreshing practices that are inspiring. The other side of the story, however, is that these institutions are privatised and students pay heavy tuition fees to get trained. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves— is it possible or even desirable to extend and universalise this model of education? This is where we need to look at the flip side of this experiment and think of ways of retrieving some of the very useful practices these institutions have put in place without the accompanying costs and privatization of the education system in India.

New Practices: Necessary Clauses and Caution

Despite it having been a challenge to teach a bright set of students each year, I have throughout felt that they were socially a disengaged lot. Even what was being taught to them in their law classes wasn't socially or politically contexualised. Law is reduced to a 'technical' subject without any serious discussion on its social implications. Case laws are presented as though they exist in a vacuum and what is projected to be relevant is only the 'facts of the case'. Statutes are represented as codifications of eternal and natural principles. This highly technocratic and socially insensitive approach goes well with the corporate requirements for which students are trained. Their entire education is moulded in accordance with job requirements and there is very little that is academic. Most of the bright students opt for either corporate law or company law for their specialization. Not only the social sciences but also even most of the law courses as significant as Constitutional law, not to mention human rights law and jurisprudence, are completely neglected (this is evident from the fact that Law schools haven't produced a single jurist with a reputation that is even close to Justice Krishna Iyer or Rajinder Sacchar). Students develop extremely pragmatic attitude towards both their teachers and the subjects. They distance themselves from anything that is emotional and requiring of social empathy. Relationships between the students themselves appear to be driven by a sense of extreme competitiveness and indifference. There is an absence of a culture of co-operation and sharing. Student bodies seldom address any of the political or social issues. Issues that are highly local and campus specific bog them down. These attitudes are prevalent because they perceive themselves more as 'consumers' in a market rather than as students who are in pursuit of discovering newer facets of life. Needless to say, such a value-system again goes well not only with the corporate houses that recruit them but also with the imaginaries of 'professionalism' and 'excellence' or 'merit' bereft of a social context. This in more than one way is detrimental to pursue any agenda of 'social justice', which rather ironically most of the law schools profess. Legal clinics that are established as appendages only offer benevolent charity-orientation towards issues of social injustice and discriminations. Students at the end of their courses become not only highly pragmatic, but also status conscious, chauvinistic and egoistic. Most of their talent becomes useful for

ego-gratification, rather than any meaningful social purpose. Such professional institutions are complete failures on this front (especially when compared to institutions such as the JNU, where as I could observe students invariably become socially sensitive). This in all probability could be due to the heavy fee that students shell down and more importantly the missing heterogeneity in the social composition of the student body. In fact those students who come from not so well off backgrounds (mostly Dalit students as the law schools follow reservations in their admissions) are either very reticent or very actively and quickly adopt the prevalent 'high-culture'. Students from modest backgrounds invariably distance themselves from their 'roots' and develop a sense of guilt as to who they are and perpetually suffer from lack of belongingness. Professional institutions, in other words, have provided no mechanisms for such students to regain their dignity or confidence. *It is therefore imperative, when we are talking about student participation in maintaining the quality of higher education that these practices should evolve outside the insularity of professional institutions and misplaced emphasis on excellence.*

There is almost a hundred percent placement for the students once they pass out in most of the Law schools. They often join various corporate houses and involve in drafting and gathering information for the cases. However students themselves often accept that most of the jobs are not challenging and are monotonous. But what attracts some of the best students in India is the high pay they begin to draw at a fairly young age. This in many ways is a revised version of the 'brain drain'. Some of the best minds are drawn into an entirely uncreative work. This is also perhaps the greatest damage MNCs are doing to the nation, more than what they seem to be doing to the economy. *There needs to be a larger debate on how to reconcile the imperatives of the job market with an inquisitive learning process in the academic institutions.*

For the faculty though various centers are established (such as National Institute for Human Rights, Centre for Child and Law, etc) there is hardly any serious research that is either pursued or encouraged. Most of the 'research' involves either short-term policy oriented studies or conducting workshops (for Judicial officers, NGOs, etc) with mostly resource persons from outside. There is hardly any effort to pursue fundamental research to add new dimensions to Law or in combining law and social sciences in novel ways. This is, perhaps, due to both Law schools being essentially undergraduate institutions and lack of proper conceptualization of a research agenda for the faculty. Infact post-graduate courses are completely neglected, both due to the want of qualified faculty and also students being unwilling to pay such heavy fee to pursue further studies in Law. This inturn is the reason why standards in Law teaching are anything but satisfactory, as none of the best students opt for teaching as their first choice and Law schools have failed to train quality post-graduates who might be looking for career options in teaching and research. This needs to be taken seriously if law Schools wish to replicate models abroad, such as the Harvard Law School, which not only trains undergraduates but also is one of

the leading institutes for advanced research. *Lack of serious research agenda is also one of the reasons why even the undergraduates fail to appreciate importance of taking an academic approach to the subjects they pursue and raises larger issues pertinent in discussing the ways of maintaining and improving the quality of higher education.*

In Lieu of a Conclusion

The challenge for the institutions of higher education really is how do we incorporate the work ethic and transparency these institutions of professional education have established, without the accompanying consumerist and pragmatic culture? What are the alternative values and symbols that can motivate students and teachers to work hard? How do we reconcile the need to study for jobs with an academic and genuinely inquisitive learning? Unless these issues are addressed we might end up with conventional universities without a work culture and professional institutions without social relevance. This to my mind is nothing short of a crisis in higher education.

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(Footnotes)

Student Feedback Systems for Quality Enhancement in Higher Education: The Indian Scenario

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Abstract

This paper aims at sharing and reflecting on some of the practices of Student Feedback Systems for Quality Enhancement in Higher Education in India. The paper tries to show that though a few good colleges have adopted the system and are using it profitably, by and large it has not found general acceptance. Those who have adopted this tool have tried different methods successfully. The general non-acceptance is not due to any fault of the system but rather due to the mindset. Much needs to be done to change the attitude of all stakeholders if this system is to succeed and contribute to quality enhancement in higher education in India.

By and large, feedback, under any name, is seen with a lot of fear and mistrust. This is true of most of our Undergraduate Colleges and Postgraduate Departments. At the same time, some of our top professional institutions as well as some reputed undergraduate colleges have adopted this practice with very good results. One of the major reasons for this mistrust is the wrong understanding of the concept. To a large number of people it means just negative criticism. Some of the institutions of higher education have initiated a formal system of student feedback only at the time of Assessment by NAAC, and that too with a sense of fear and trembling. Though this is true in general, there are a few institutions that have worked out systems of student feedback. This paper shares with you some of these systems adopted by some of these colleges.

One of the traditional systems used to get feedback in a very indirect way is that of the periodic evaluation system. Exam results are used as indicators of success rate of staff. Results are analyzed at the departmental level. If students fare badly only in one teacher's papers, it is seen as reflecting badly on the teacher. The teacher is expected to ensure better results next time. This tool, in the hands of teachers unsure of themselves works negatively. They tend to over-evaluate and give high marks to their students. But the final exams, taken by the University burst the bubble. But good teachers do take these evaluations seriously and change their approach to suit the needs of their students.

Another external system imposed on the teaching community is that of Student Unions. A generation ago, these unions did take up some of the genuine problems of education and helped change the system. Here one is reminded of the Navnirman Agitation of Gujarat

(1974). The issue was price rise of essential commodities and it originated in college campuses. This affected students living in the hostels and they took to the streets. It led to change in the Govt. But over the years, these unions have become more and more politicized and battlegrounds for political parties. As a result a number of colleges have given up elections in forming students' unions. They are also one of the reasons why student feedback is viewed skeptically. The feedback is viewed to be politically motivated.

A well-tried method of student feedback is that of written answers to a set of questions. In good institutions, this system has worked well. But by and large, students do not seem to take it too seriously. Some have even copied answers from each other! Answers go from one extreme to the other. Most give highly positive replies. Some make extremely damaging comments with hardly any evidence. Quite a number of students take the middle path by giving 4 on a 7-point scale. But there are always a few who take this exercise seriously and give well thought out realistic comments. These are the ones that are very useful. However, since most institutions cannot afford or are not willing to invest in card readers, tabulation has to be done manually and often the work of analysis gets postponed due to pressure of work. Hence sometimes a good work goes waste.

In some institutions, every teacher is expected to get his/her course evaluated by the students. They are to make a summary of the responses and present it along with all the forms to the Principal. The good teachers do it very gladly and are happy to learn from the opinions of students. But those who really need the feedback seem to be reluctant to accept any negative comments. In one instance, a teacher noticed a couple of negative comments in the forms submitted to her. She called the whole class together, gave them a piece of her mind and made them fill new set of forms!

One needs to keep in mind the fact that till the teachers themselves accept criticism as feedback, it will do them no good. At the same time, the administrators also need to know the classroom reality. Keeping both these aims in mind, namely, teachers' reluctance to face the truth and administrators' need to know, some have double evaluation system. The teacher gets feedback forms filled by students but at the same time, a third party gets a random group of students to submit evaluation forms for all these teachers. However, this is not very healthy. An atmosphere of distrust is likely to do harm in the long run. One needs to concentrate more on changing attitudes towards feedback system.

Yet another system tried out is that of tutor-mentoring system. In this system each staff member is assigned a group of around 30 students. These mentors also have feedback sessions with the group. In the written form system, the student remains anonymous. Here, the students are known since the feedback is given in a group situation. All the members, including the mentor are expected to keep confidentiality and not to diverge information as to who said what.

However, this does not happen always. In one instance, a good teacher was given some negative feedback. The comments were valid. But the teacher was so enraged that he

went all out to find out who had said that. He managed to find out the name of the student and then that particular student had quite a hard time. This was quite unfortunate. The teacher was a good teacher, respected by his students. If he had accepted his shortcoming and done something about it, it would have certainly made him a much better teacher. This experiment had to be discontinued in that institution since students stopped being candid in a group situation.

Another system tried out is that of Open House with the head of the institution. Three times a year the head of the institution invites all the students for an open house to give their feedback. On this occasion, he takes up the suggestions put in the drop box and gives a sort of Action Taken Report. Reasons for rejecting suggestions too are given. This system works well as long as students give feedback. But when feedback gets limited to complaints the system deteriorates to mere grievance redressal mechanism. Once again, the attitudinal change is the need of the hour.

Since anonymity is an important aspect for a student to give frank opinion, some institutions have drop-box system. Here again, where the concept of feedback is narrowly understood as grievance redressal, comments are more in the line of complaints than feedback.

Student Feedback must begin from the time of appointment of faculty. Keeping this need in mind, some institutions short-list applicants for faculty position and organize a demo-lecture by the short-listed candidates. The feedback of the students is given due importance in the selection process.

As we can see from the above, different institutions have tried different student feedback systems. Some have kept changing systems in the hope that they will come across a foolproof system. Our experience shows that it is not the system that is at fault but the faulty understanding of the concept that creates blocks in the minds of teachers. What we need to do is to change the mind set that views all negative comments as personal attacks and see them as opportunities to see ourselves as others see us and change if that is what is called for. The students too would have to understand that their feedback is meant to help the teacher to serve them better. A conference like this can help to come up with ways and means of changing the mindset. Once this mind set is changed the system will work wonders.

Student Participation in Quality Enhancement: The Scottish Perspective

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the ways in which students within Higher Education Institutions in Scotland can and do engage in Quality Enhancement. Following a review of the Quality Enhancement Framework, students are now more able to discuss their learning experience and how quality can be improved than ever before. sparqs, student participation in quality Scotland is an organisation funded by the Scottish Funding Council and established in 2003 to train, support and advise students to engage in quality processes. sparqs also supports and provides information to students' associations, institutions and sector agencies across Scotland, with the aim of seeing greater and more effective student engagement in quality. This paper provides information about the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework and sparqs itself.

Introduction

Since the review of the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) in Scotland and the development of sparqs there has been a significant change in how students are engaged in the management of quality both in their own institutions and across Scotland. A recent review of sparqs commissioned by the Scottish Funding Council and conducted by York Consulting Ltd concluded that sparqs had supported students, institutions and students' associations by providing high quality free training and development activities. The report also concluded that sparqs is now seen as a reference point in student participation issues, as well as a catalyst for change. (Castro, 2006)

Background to Higher Education in Scotland

Throughout Scotland, which has a population of just over 5 million there are a total of forty-three further education colleges (FEC's) and twenty-one higher education institutions (HEI's), providing access to education to all members of the population, in a variety of modes and in an extremely diverse range of subjects. Within the HEI's there is a wide variety of provision, size and subject focus, thirteen institutions have full University title, and there are two specialist art colleges and one conservatoire. The institutions are based across the length and breadth of the country.

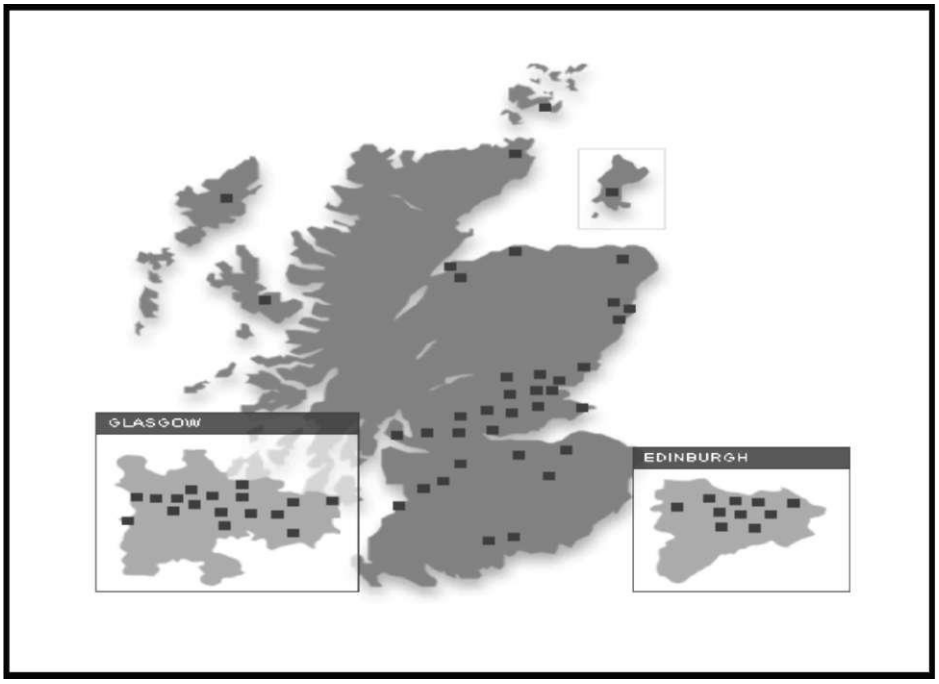

Figure 1 *Map of FEC's and HEI's across Scotland*

All further and higher education institutions are funded by the Scottish Funding Council, which distributes public money to support education and research. This public funding is added to the institutions own income streams.

A total of 210,600 Higher Education students where registered in the academic year 2004/2005 (Higher Education Statistics Agency). Students within higher education in Scotland are from increasingly diverse backgrounds with many more mature students (those over 25 when beginning a degree), students coming from FE Colleges and first generation students studying in Scotland than a decade ago. Full time students continue to make up the majority of the student body in undergraduate programmes (125,215 FT 35,485 PT). This picture is reversed in the post graduate degree programmes with many more postgraduate students choosing to study part time, often fitting study in with family and working commitments (21,430 FT, 28,465 PT). These student population trends are reflected in the provision of degree programmes across Scotland. (Statistics provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency)

Quality Enhancement in Scotland

The system of quality management in Scotland has taken on a very different picture in recent years with the redevelopment of the quality enhancement framework by the Scottish Funding Council, the QAA and HEI's themselves. This new framework provides the basis for student engagement in quality enhancement in Scotland.

The quality enhancement framework or QEF is made of five key strands;

- Subject review
- Enhancement-led Institutional Review
- Improved Public Information
- Student Engagement in Quality
- Enhancement Themes.

Student involvement in quality forms one of the central themes, and is threaded through out the other four, helping to create an environment that enables students to engage in quality management across the country.

Guidelines from the QAA for subject review ask that institutions involve students in this internal process; and all institutions now meet with students during the subject review process. Sixteen institutions have taken this slightly further by inviting students to sit on the subject review panels themselves.

The Enhancement Led Institutional Review system (ELIR). As you can see by the definition of enhancement below the ELIR process has the student learning experience at its centre.

Enhancement is defined as; "taking deliberate steps to bring about continuous improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students"; (QAA Scotland)

Students are involved in a number of ways; as members of the review panels, as members of groups met during the review visit and in a variety of ways by the institution during the preparation for the review every four years.

The enhancement themes are short-life national projects, which focus on a number of areas of development within the Scottish HE sector. In the past three years topics have included; assessment, responding to student needs and employability and two further themes began this year; the First Year Experience and Research and Teaching Linkages. (for more information please see www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk) The themes collect examples of practice from around the world as well as in Scotland, and ultimately provide information resources and/or toolkits for institutions to use to develop that particular area in-house. The membership of students on these national committees highlights the importance of student involvement in the enhancement of Higher Education in Scotland.

Student involvement, although underpinning the other four strands, also as some particular elements of it's own, with the improvement of course representation and student engagement with committees within institutions and nationally being one of the major areas of focus. The sector as a whole is trying to find out more from students nationally through the use of surveys, both as snap shots (the NSS) or as longitudinal studies (On Track 1), as well institutions themselves improving their own internal feedback mechanisms. Feedback is sought on a variety of aspects including resources, environment for teaching and learning, assessment and curriculum.

SPARQS

One of the most demonstrable ways in which the sector is engaging students is through the development of sparqs and the work that we do to enable students to engage with the quality systems in their own institutions. The SPARQS steering committee reflects the ethos of partnership with all of the Higher and Further Education sector agencies represented. sparqs works with all twenty-one HEI's and forty-three FEC's providing a valuble opportunity for the sectors to work together and learn from each other.

Our mission is to assist and support students, their representative bodies and the institutions to improve the effectiveness of student engagement in quality processes. To do this we engage with all the stakeholders in the management of quality; students, administrators, faculty and national bodies. Our ultimate aim or vision for student engagement in Scotland is for students to have an active and engaged part in quality and for that role to be respected and integral to the quality processes of institutions and the sector.

SPARQS is committed to student involvement in quality and the institutional decision making processes. We strive to maintain and deliver excellence in all of our activities from the delivery of training to the development of our resources. We promote diversity and equal opportunity in all of our work and the work of others throughout the sector and this informs our inclusive approach, allowing us to recognise the different needs, and Scotland's educationally diverse range of, institutions and their individual missions. We believe student involvement will develop greatly in the coming years and by looking forward, and beyond our borders Scotland will be able to achieve a great deal.

From the beginning of the project a clear brief to deliver training across Scotland and develop student engagement has guided the work of the sparqs team. To focus the work of sparqs a large mapping project of student representation in Scotland was necessary. This has enabled sparqs to develop work plans and define and focus the project work.

SPARQS provides training for course representatives, student officers, teaching and non-teaching staff of institutions, along with collation of information and the running of projects that can inform the development of quality processes across Scotland. sparqs training and events are FREE and demand is increasing year on year as representation systems develop within institutions. SPARQS also provides resources such as course representative handbooks for both sectors, information leaflets and briefing documents, including online resources produced for staff and students on how to involve students in decision making processes, the different strands of the QEF and a number of other areas.

Work is also being taken forward on a number projects including; Accreditation of students taking part in quality processes, Focusing discussion at course level meetings on learning & teaching issues.

We are also developing our work in involving postgraduate and research students in institutional systems as well as the improvement of communication between different

levels of quality management, from senate and academic council to the grass root students.

Promoting partnership working for the enhancement of quality is certainly one of the most important elements of our work. Review and enhancement processes now emphasise the need to discuss learning, teaching and quality issues with students and institutions are recognising increasingly the importance of ensuring students have appropriate training and access to materials and resources.

SPARQS training emphasises the need for students to reflect on their experiences as a learner, and how they and their institution can make this experience even more successful, we also emphasise how important this skill is in the working world, with professional development advancing so much in the UK in the past 5 years. Student involvement in quality, we believe, involves a number of different stages which all need to be resourced and supported appropriately. By making quality processes more accessible for students may encourage and recruit more students to get involved in quality processes.

By effectively supporting students who choose to engage in quality systems we can ensure they remain interested and they stay engaged, whether this is through the provision of advanced training or the development of more student based structures, ensuring students are aware of the support available is integral to an effective representation system.

An independent sector wide organization such as SPARQS is ideally placed to be able to collect information, provide support and objectively view the systems already in place and therefore contribute very tangibly to the whole process of engaging students in quality.

Websites of interest and references

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"Student Evaluation At Vietnam National University - Hanoi"

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Abstract

Student evaluation is a practice in every HE institution in the developed countries, but to the Vietnam tradition and culture, a teacher/lecturer is considered to be a 'father' at school and therefore highly respected by students. Now, it is felt that this is the right time that Vietnam HE should overcome this inhibition so as in the flow of a positive development of the global HE system, and also it is the Accreditation Standard requirement that students are involved in evaluation activities.

Based on research results of piloting forms of students evaluation, this paper discusses about student evaluation at VNU Hanoi. Results of the pilot form on 'Course Evaluation' to get student feedback from what and how they have learned by the end of a course, proved to be a standard instrument that can reveal reliable data of what a lecturer has done during the course. This is similar to the result of the pilot research on student evaluation of their lecturers' performance.

However, it should be stressed that the outcomes of the student evaluation should not be used as the only evident for personnel decision, because it is psychologically and culturally sensitive to Vietnamese students and lecturers. It should be used as an extra input with cautious consideration in making recommendation for professional training.

General information about Vietnam National University Hanoi

Vietnam National University Hanoi (VNU - Hanoi) was established in 1993 by re-structuring and re-organizing 3 big universities in Hanoi: Hanoi University, Hanoi Education University I and the Foreign Languages Teachers' College of Hanoi. At present VNU - Hanoi has four schools, three faculties, a system of secondary schools for gifted pupil in foreign languages and sciences, many research centers and administration units. The total number of students during the school year 2004 - 2005 was 44,936 in which 38,183 undergraduate students, 98 collegiate level students, 3,768 master students, 307 PhD candidates, 2,363 secondary gifted pupils and 217 foreign students.

Student feedback practices in general

There are many mechanisms to collect student feedback, both qualitative and quantitative; including: questionnaires, discussion groups, lecture or seminar, tutorial. Institutions

can combine some mechanisms ensuring a mix of qualitative and quantitative feedback. Quantitative feedback (through questionnaire) can be used to provide 'evidence' that something is going well or not so well and such evidence will normally be required for quality assurance purpose. Qualitative information (for example, through open-ended response sections of questionnaires and from student representatives) can help explain why something is going well nor not so well (Brennan J. & R. William 2004. p. 20).

Questionnaire is the most common but not the single used mechanism, mechanism. Questionnaire has its pros and cons; while it has many pros as it is useful for gathering responses at various levels; it is inclusive (assuming a census and a good response rate); it can provide quantitative and qualitative information; depending on the degree of standardization it can provide comparisons and trends and it does not require a great deal of time commitment from individual students; it also has many cons as it needs for some specialist skills (e.g. in questionnaire design and analysis), tends to be 'ex-post', frequency and number may induce questionnaire fatigue, the respond rate may be low, it may be costly in terms of time spent on analysis, students may not get information on results and any actions taken, actions may not get taken and it can become ritualistic. (Brennan J. & R. William 2004. p. 20).

Student feedback practices in Vietnam

Although student evaluation is a practice in every HE institution in the developed countries, in the context of Vietnam culture, it is still a new concept and practice. The history of teaching in Vietnam showed that the accepted norm is that the teacher ranked second important after the King, before the father (Vietnamese proverb). Therefore the teacher's role is the instructor who introduced new knowledge to the students and students received passively. In Vietnam tradition and culture, a teacher/lecturer is considered to be a 'father' at school and therefore highly respected by students. She/he will felt offended in being evaluated by the student. It is felt that this is the right time that Vietnam HE should overcome this inhibition so as in the flow of a positive development of the global HE system, and also it is the Accreditation Standard requirement that students are involved in evaluation activities (Nguyen, 2006). On December 2nd 2004, the Minister of the Ministry of Education and Training issued the Decision number 38/2004/QD-BGD&DT on the provisional Regulation of Accreditation of higher educations including 10 Standards for Accreditation in which the student feedback system is officially mentioned as a compulsory for every University.

Practices in Vietnam showed that student feedback was not institutionalized as a feature for assessing teachers' performances.

Currently, there are four common forms for collecting students' feedback at most of universities in Vietnam are: mail box, e-forum for students, Dean/Rector meeting with students' representative, and questionnaire. The mail box and Dean/Rector meeting with

students' representative are two institutionalized forms for students to give their feedback in all issues of the institution. These forms for collecting feedback are according to the guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Training to all Universities. The purpose is to collect students' opinions and provide those information for the administrator and the managers in making related decisions. In the organization chart of one University, a committee in charge of student services is set up as a compulsory office within the University. This office is in charge to organize those feedback collection activity and to act as the liaison between the student body and the University's authority. Up to present those activities had not been used for assessing teachers' performance at its true meaning.

Mail box is fixed in one place of the institution for students to send their questions or comments on any issues and at any time. The questions can be anonymous or with name of the author. However, names were kept secrete except certain cases. The mail box is opened monthly to process the questions. Dean/Rector meeting is often organized once in a school year, usually at the beginning of the school year. Students' representative collected concerns of the students and present to the Dean or Rector for answers. The questions were then analyzed by the administration meeting to find out solution. E-forum is open to everyone for expressing their opinions about issues at the university. Students can ask, discuss anonymously. Questionnaire is not institutionalized, however it is still the most common practice by many universities when they want to collect student feedback. The purpose of the student feedback questionnaires varied depending on the purpose of the universities.

In 2000 the Higher Education project of the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam funded a sub-project to build a common student feedback questionnaire for many universities. The questions were general for students in the whole country and not specialized for individual institution. It consisted of a small group of questions about demography and job status of the student. Many universities tried to add special questions for their own context, and this practice was expensive and consumed much of staff time. After that trial, none of such effort had been initiated again by the Ministry of Education and Training.

In the questionnaire of the Hanoi University of Education, the last question was an open-ended question for student to express their judgment of the suitable level of the university's teaching content and the requirement of the labour market. The questionnaire was mailed to the alumni who graduated up to 3 years ago. The rate of respondents was low. Among the respondents, most of them said that the content was suitable with their work, only a small rate commenting that there was little match between university's teaching and employer's requirement. However, the survey result was still being processed and did not come back to the individual faculty for improving their teaching.

In 2002 - 2003, the University of Fisheries conducted its own research for both teacher and students on their views and the content should be of student feedback questionnaire

about the teaching. The result showed that most of the student highly appreciated the necessary of this practice. Statistically, the data collected from student feedback was proved to be significant. The questionnaire consisted of some demographic questions and 10 questions about course effectiveness. The answers used 3 level likert scale: correct, rather correct, and not correct. The result also showed that the students' evaluation on the teacher had a good relation with the student's study result (Le, 2004).

Student feedback practice at the Vietnam National University - Hanoi (VNU)

At VNU Hanoi, some trials had been done separately within the colleges of the University. In 2005 the first attempt was conducted to build a common Course Evaluation Form. Nguyen (2006) of the Center for quality assurance and research development (CEQARD) developed the pilot form from one previous research on student feedback. The pilot questionnaire had 26 questions and was administered at 3 colleges and one department to collect student feedback on the teaching performance of the lecturer. Staff of CEQARD administered in the classroom after class hour, in the middle of the semester. Student feedback at this moment reflected the actual problems that students were facing during studying. As the questionnaire was administered in the classroom after class hour, the rate of respondents is high. The research result was then analyzed using SPSS software and used for building a common questionnaire for the whole university.

The pilot questionnaire consisted of 4 factors: course related issues, teaching methods and strategies, class hours and behaviours towards students, and assessment and evaluation. Each factor was expressed into a group of inter-related questions. Answer used the 4 level likert scale: from disagree, hesitate, agree, and fully agree. Principle component factor analysis was run to identify the degree of the effect that each factor would contribute to the course effectiveness. The weighting showed that these factors would explain for 64% of the stability of the course effectiveness, while 36% depending on other uncontrolled factors. Among the 4 factors 'teaching methods and strategies' is the most effective following is 'class hours & behaviours' and 'course related issues'; the least effective is 'assessment and evaluation' (Nguyen, 2006).

Also in 2005, another research was conducted by CEQARD (Mai, 2006) using student feedback questionnaire to study the undergraduate students' evaluation of the four categories of lecturer depending on the professorship level (BA, Master, PhD, Associate Professor, Professor) about teachers' performance and the interrelations between lecturers' knowledge and training activities in Vietnam National University - Hanoi. Five factors were studied as: 'knowledge of the lecturers', 'methods of teaching', 'lecturers' communication in the class', 'out class support', and 'students' attitude'. Each factor had a group of interrelated items, and totally there are 25 items. Answer used 6 level likert scale: not applicable, totally wrong, almost wrong, don't know, almost correct, totally correct.

This study was led by CEQARD researchers and administered by post graduate students. The questionnaires were distributed and collected in class at the middle of the semester. The questions asked about information of the previous course, therefore students were not afraid that their study will be affected as their feedback will come back to their lecturer. (Mai, 2006). Factor analysis was done to analyze the research result, and showed a close correlation between the interrelated items of each factor. And five factors had a close correlation. The 5 factors explain 92% of the changes of the research objective "knowledge level of the teacher". The result also showed similar explanation for each group of teachers. This means the questionnaire is good enough to be used widely, and it also means that students' evaluation is reliable. (Mai, 2006).

Students' evaluation of each category of lecturer coincided with the finding of another study on students' examination result according to category lecturer who taught the subject. Both studies showed that students highly evaluated PhD and Associate Professor; the students' examination score of those category lecturers was also higher than other category lecturers (noted here that professor lecturers did not involve much in teaching undergraduate students, they mainly taught post graduate students). (Mai, 2006)

Conclusion

Results of those pilot attempts to explore students' evaluation of the university teachers' teaching and performance all showed that student feedback is a useful mechanism to evaluate the operation of the university and teaching performance. There should be more efforts to bring them into agenda of the University authority and to institutionalize them in routine work at the University.

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Mapping Student Participation in India and Asia -Pacific Quality Network

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Abstract

'Student participation in Quality' is the recent initiative launched simultaneously by the NAAC and APQN- Asia Pacific Quality Network. The APQN project on Student Participation in Quality Assurance aims to collect, analyse and disseminate theory, good practices and experiences of student participation in quality assurance in Asia Pacific Region.

As the first phase of project a mapping exercise has been undertaken to identify:

1. *The status of student participation in higher education institutes in India and Asia Pacific Countries and*
2. *The practices of involving students in Quality Assessment by Quality assurance agencies in Asia-Pacific region.*

This paper provides the snapshot of findings of this mapping exercise undertaken by the author as the Project Group Leader of APQN project on student participation. About 150 HEIs including accredited as well as not accredited colleges/universities in India have responded to the survey which included a structured questionnaire followed by brief interaction with select HEIs.

The next part of the paper provides overview of analysis of responses from QA agencies of China, Russia, New Zealand, Philippines, Japan, Vietnam and others in relation student involvement in quality assessment.

The paper also highlights some of the good practices in student participation in HEIs and QAAs across Asia-Pacific. The interim survey report essentially provides a reflection on the facts and fictions about student Participation and tries to present roadmap for " generating demand for the quality'from the bottom i.e. from the students.

The Context

The students are, unarguably, the most important stakeholders of Higher Education systems and also that of quality assurance mechanisms therein. The interest and participation of students at all levels in both internal quality assurance and external quality assurance have to play a central role. As experts put it, higher education is first and foremost about

the enhancement and empowerment of students as participants in a process of learning. [Harvey, 1996] Even more than that, higher education is about participation in a process of learning for transformation.

Students, being an integral part of higher educational community, must be seen as partners who are in the centre of interest of the higher educational institutions. At institution level, students must have the right to take part in decisions making as equal partners in all issues. At national and international levels students must have the right to participate in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of decisions concerning students including education, students welfare and any other affairs that students see relevant. Any Higher Education Institution needs to ensure that students have voice at all stages of the decision making process, formulating the learning and teaching practices and that views of students are to be considered as the primary evidence on which the quality of teaching and learning is evaluated.

International Experience

Even as the central role of student in Higher Education System is agreed in principle by the policy makers and decision makers, the experience of actual involvement of students vary to a large extent from one country to another. A commendable work in this regard has been done by ESIB - The national Unions of Students of Europe. The ESIB has taken up the cause of advancing student involvement in QA in a systematic manner and has completed a detailed project on this issue. [ESIB , 2002]

Besides the exemplary work done by the European National Students Union (ESIB), the initiatives at Scotland and South Africa are quite noteworthy. Sparqs (Student Participation In Quality Scotland) a unique body at Scotland assists and supports students, students' associations and institutions to improve the effectiveness of student engagement in quality processes and provides advice to the Funding Councils and institutions on good practice in the engagement of students in institutions' quality processes.

The Higher Education Quality Committee of South Africa has also recently initiated a Student Quality Literacy Project.

The project aims at equipping prospective and currently registered students with knowledge, skills and tools of assessing and contributing to quality improvement in public and private Higher Education Institutions. The project will also build the capacity of deans of students, student development officers and quality (cells) in order to create awareness about quality in the three core functions of HEIs. In order to achieve these goal, the HEQC will use a number of strategies, including information and advocacy campaigns, training students, faculty representatives, mass media advertisements, developing student manuals and

handbooks on QA and providing support and development for the quality managers, deans of students, and student development officers. The HEQC has partnered with various stakeholders like national student unions, associations of deans of students and student development practitioners (SAASSAP) and (NASDEV) and the Department of Education [Naidoo, 2005]

The Philosophy

The three approaches to student quality literacy as recognized internationally are: the Student Feedback Approach, the Student Rights Approach and the Student Co-constructor Approach.

While the Student Feedback Approach tends to attribute the primary agency role to students, the Student Rights Approach suggests that students do not only have rights but also the responsibilities to create conductive teaching and learning conditions in their campus and classroom life. This approach thus tends to suggest ways in which students are consumers can access their rights through legal frameworks and channels individually and collectively. [Bernadette, 2005]

The Students Co-constructor Approach emphasizes students' role lies not only in their rights and responsibilities but also in assessing quality. The National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) stresses the need for this.

In the Indian context, experts have argued in favour of student as 'Percener' rather than customer or stakeholder. [Mukhopadhyay , 2005]

The NAAC's Approach tries to draw strength by emphasizing cultural context and giving stress on total participation of students.

Efforts at NAAC

The assessment and accreditation instrument of NAAC is sensitive to take note of student aspirations and goals in a fast-changing world. NAAC believes that that system of higher education, which is ready to appreciate students' aspirations and shape its curricular and administrative performance accordingly, is alone relevant.

The NAAC has emphasized the importance of making institutional assessment of quality depend substantially on student interests. Forming an essential part of the assessment, the criteria of assessment for curricular planning and development insist on providing adequate course options, strategies for meeting differential needs of mixed-ability groups and on student feedback, student progression and the support systems which enable it. "Student Support and Progression" is one of the seven criteria identified by the NAAC. Interaction with students is vital element of site visit that validates institutional self-study report. Student participation is encouraged in all internal arrangements for quality assurance including the IQAC.

A large number of institutions in this country have their own success stories to share concerning students partnership in quality assurance. [Prasad , 2006] Some have actively involved them in academic planning through representation of academic decision-making bodies. Others have made them effective partners with the institution in extension work. Many personality development programmes are student planned, funded and monitored. A few have involved them in the highest administrative bodies. While these are sporadic and need closer structuring and co-ordination, newer initiatives are necessary to make students active partners in responsible functional roles so that they can set their agenda within the policy of governance of the institution.

To facilitate initiatives in this direction, the NAAC launched the campaign by declaring the year 2006 as Year of Student Participation. [Prasad & Patil, 2006]

APQN Project on Student Participation

Taking note of the worldwide initiatives, NAAC thought of initiating such project for Student Participation In Quality Assurance at international level as well. A project proposal on Student Participation in Quality Improvement was submitted to Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). The APQN board approved this proposal and now NAAC is working on this international project group on "Student Participation In Quality Assurance". NAAC representatives also attended Student Participation in Quality Assurance workshops organized by HEQC, South Africa. The present series of activities by NAAC is informed by the experiences gained from such international initiatives.

The project on Student Participation in Quality Assurance aims at fulfilling the following key objectives:

- To collect, analyse and disseminate theory, good practices and experiences of student participation in quality assurance in Asia Pacific Region.
- To promote exchange of good practices in student participation in quality assurance between different countries
- To raise awareness of the importance of student participation in quality assurance processes among all stakeholders.
- To Identify and promote Asia Pacific wide strategies to involve students and student organisations in quality assurance, both internal as well as external. [Patil, 2005]

Mapping Student Participation

A survey involving APQN member agencies about the status of Student Participation in Quality Assurance in their respective countries. Attempt was made to capture data on following key indicators.

a) Internal Quality Assurance (HEI):

- Representation of students in decision-making bodies (Academic Committees, Courts, Senates etc.)
- Staff student consultative committees
- Feedback mechanism, both informal and formal; questionnaire - feedback on courses, teachers and campus experience
- Adoption of Student Charter
- Grievance Redressel (Complaint box, committees etc.)
- Student completion surveys
- Alumni representation
- Representation of students in IQAC/QA office Summary of general findings given below reflects issues for concern and attention.
- Student representation is low or negligible in academic bodies, curricular design & review
- There is trend of token representation in statutory bodies like senate , court or syndicate.
- Good involvement is observed in co-curricular and cultural activities
- Lack of formal channels to raise issues of quality is another feature. Emphasis seems to be on informal mechanisms
- Student feedback systems are getting popularized in good quality accredited institutions
- NAAC efforts have triggered alumni involvement in affairs of HEIs
- Apprehensions about student participation include
    - Assumed maturity problems
    - Apathy on part of students
    - Lack of training

Challenges ahead, as identified in the first phase of survey would include:

- Motivating students and teachers
- Sharing good practices of student involvement
- Training students to effectively participate

Some Good Practices of Involving Students in Indian HEIs

Sl. No.	Institution Name	Practices
1.	IIM, Bangalore	Key role played by students in organizing placements
2.	St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad	Students Participation in planning and execution of programs through Students
3.	Loyola College, Tiruvananthapuram, Kerala	Practice of open house with student by the head of institution
4.	Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra	Online student feedback system in University Campus
5.	University of Mysore	Representative of students in Academic Council and also effective student feedback
6.	IIT Madras (Chennai)	Practice of student representatives in class committees and other academic

This is certainly not an exhaustive list. There are many good practices existing on many campuses across the country and the NAAC has already put in place a publication series on Best Practices to put all such practices in a book form.

It is quite interesting to note that global education brands of India like IITs, IIMs and Law schools besides some noted accredited institutions have been following set of good practices of involving students with extensive use of digital technology. Case in point is **BITS Connect Project** funded by its Alumni of BITS Pilani, which provided internet connectivity to classrooms, all the rooms of the hostels, chambers and residences of faculty members the new online 24 x 7 feedback system, completely designed by the institute. Even regional universities like that of Shivaji University in Maharashtra are now using E- assessment methodologies.

Experiences in other APQN Countries:

The experiences differ in different socio-political settings in Asia-Pacific countries. A few glimpses given below hint at the diversity existing in the region.

- Because of series campus trouble in 1960s, HEIs in Japan are very much apprehensive about student Involvement
- Russia encourages student involvement at all levels in HEIs
- HEIs in Iran have no representations of students in statutory bodies

- Student involvement in curricular design and review is routine in China. Students are also involved in teacher evaluation and course evaluation
- Universities in Mongolia also encourage teacher evaluation by students. Exit questionnaires by graduating students are also in place
- In Australia and New Zealand practices vary from HEI to HEI but Student involvement is encouraged

Mapping Student Participation in Quality Assessment

Another important dimension of the survey is to map the practices of various external quality assurance agencies with regard to involving students in quality assessment process.

- Most of the agencies encourage student involvement in the Self-Appraisal process of HEIs: - NIAD - UE, Japan;PAASCU, Philippines;JABEE, Japan;NZUAA, New Zealand; NAA, Russia;SEEI, China;AUQA,Australia & NAAC, India
- Representation of students in peer review process is by way of interview during onsite visit in most of the cases.
- Representation of student in Accreditation decision-making body is not a common practice except Russia.
- Importance is given to student feedback/interactions during assessment and accreditation process.
- External Student Satisfaction Surveys and its linking with Accreditation is also not a common practice.
- Alumni feedback in accreditation process is given importance in agencies like NAAC, NIAD-UE and PAASCU.

Learning from Global Practices:

Even as the central role of student in Higher Education System is agreed in principle by the policy makers and decision makers, the experience of actual involvement of students vary to a large extent from one country to another depending on socio-economic and cultural contexts. The information summarized in a table below provides a snapshot of practices followed worldwide.

Country	Practice
USA	• Teacher's promotion, pay etc. are directly linked with student feedback in many institutions. • Several institutions are funded by alumni, thus having great stake in governance of institutions.
Australia	• Student union in each institute is funded for activities like induction programme, placement etc. National student satisfaction surveys are linked with special grants to institutes.
South Africa	• Student unions submit separate self-study portfolio to national quality assurance agency at the time of assessment.Accreditation decision-making body (HEQC) has student representatives on Board.
UKScotland	• Students are active members of expert team for assess¬ ment of institutions. Unions also submit reports to Quality assurance agency. Scotland has world's unique institute called Student Participation in Quality Scotland (SPARQS), which is dedicated to promote student participation for quality higher education.Most of the European countries have strong element of student participation in quality by way of student staff consultative committees, student assessment of teachers/ courses etc.
Russia	• Student satisfactory surveys are conducted regularly across the country. Students give on-line feedback to National Accreditation Agency during assessment. There is also a student representative on accreditation body.
China	• Student feedback has serious consequences for assess¬ ment. Institution may loose accreditation due to negative student feedback.
Japan	• Student involvement viewed with suspicions due to serious campus trouble in 1960s. Quality assurance agencies are trying to encourage student views.
Vietnam	• Teacher regarded as father! But scene is now changing with introduction of student feedback systems.

India	• Institutions known for excellence have strong student feedback and involvement systems in place. Apprehensions among majority of general education institutions still exist. NAAC's campaign on student participation is set to change the scenario.

The practices at USA, UK and other European countries are well known to many but a very few people may be aware of some vital initiatives that were reported in study by this author undertaken for Asia Pacific Quality Network.

Road Map for Promoting Student Participation in APQN

In addition to continuation of above said steps the proposed activities of the group include- Focus group discussions with student bodies and HEIs; Workshops and small group meeting and a post conference publication on **Student Participation in Quality Enhancement.**

1) A desk study or survey on similar lines would also be conducted for non-APQN member countries, preferably INQAAHE members.

- Collaborate efforts with experienced bodies like ESIB, SPARQS would be planned besides seminar of stakeholders.
- Series of Training workshops for students and stakeholders.
- The emerging quality assurance systems would be provided with necessary inputs so that they may have strong student involvement in quality assurance process right from the inception.
- Advocacy measures would be taken up with different government agencies for better focus on student involvement in quality assurance.

Proposed Publications

- Monograph/status report on SPQA in Asia Pacific Region
- Student Handbook on Quality Assurance Book on Good/Best Practices in SPQA across Asia Pacific Region.

One of the most important and ambitious plans under the project is to launch dedicated website for promoting Student Participation in quality Assurance. Promoting use of ICT and web based mechanisms for effective student engagement tops the agenda of international project group.

To sum up, the NAAC and APQN have shown potential by way of this project to become international resource center for promoting student participation in quality assurance.

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Different Approaches & Good Practices
(Parallel Session Papers)

Best Practices To Activate Students Participation In Quality Assurance

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Abstract

Moving along the path of the visionary first Vice-chancellor Dr. A. G. Pawar, Shivaji University, Kolhapur has always kept students at the center of all its activities, curricular and extension programmes and developmental policies. Quality enhancement can be achieved when students are aware of their entitlements, rights and responsibilities; the faculty shows positive attitude for change and improvement and the administration is efficient, live and responsive to the requirements to bring about the changes. Some of the best practices involving student participation in quality assurance at Shivaji University include Students' Feedback, 'Earn and Learn Scheme', 'Work on Demand', Placement Services, Running of all Hostel Mess, etc.

Introduction

Shivaji University is one of the premier educational institutions in India, engaged in imparting value-based education in nine faculties. Since inception, this University has catered to the needs of rural students. As the great visionary and first Vice-Chancellor Dr. Appasaheb Pawar has rightly said, whatever is done in an educational institution ought to be done efficiently and effectively and it should be student centric. In accordance with the same, Shivaji University has taken several initiatives to accelerate student centric activities and related novel schemes to ensure quality assurance in higher education by pursuing high ideals in teaching, research and extension activities that reflect our vision to make this University a center of excellence.

Students' Feedback Mechanism

The students' feedback mechanism has been introduced by Shivaji University as per the guidelines of NAAC under Quality Enhancement Scheme of our university. The scheme involves student participation to help the University authorities to get the exact status of ongoing activities in various academic and administrative departments, and to get suggestions for improvement and remediation of the shortcomings, if any, at implementation level. This mechanism focuses on maintenance and improvement of standard in academic and research activities in order to fulfill the expectation level of our stakeholders. This activity has been planned to bring out detailed feedback about the performance faculty members and non-teaching staff, availability and optimum utilization

of infrastructure, teaching and research resources, co-operation and guidance at administrative and academic level and suggestions for further improvement in course curricula.

2.1 Objectives

The broad objectives of the feedback scheme are:

1. Student contribution in planning and effective implementation of various activities as per their requirements.
2. Monitoring the academic and research activities for improvements.
3. Get new ideas and suggestions from students for further developments.
4. Finding out any difficulties and shortcomings on the part of administration, which needs special attention of higher authorities.

1.2 Actual Process

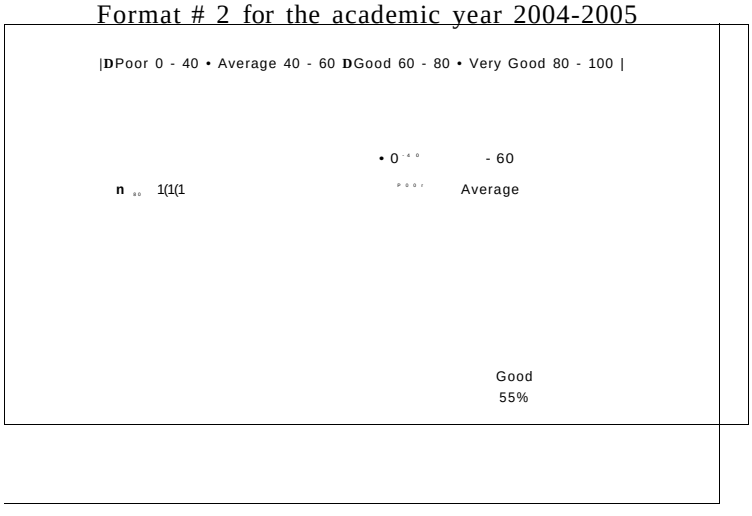
The actual process of getting student feedback involved following steps:

- Centralization of the programme i.e. batch-wise, department-wise and course-wise students give online feedback at Intranet Hall of the University.
- Department-wise online feedback forms are developed covering the list of faculty members of concerned department.
- Proper scheduling and circulation of the schedule (i.e. time, day and date for student feedback) to every department.
- It is compulsory to all students to give the feedback.
- Programme only for final year students so as to get correct feedback free of fear and pressure.

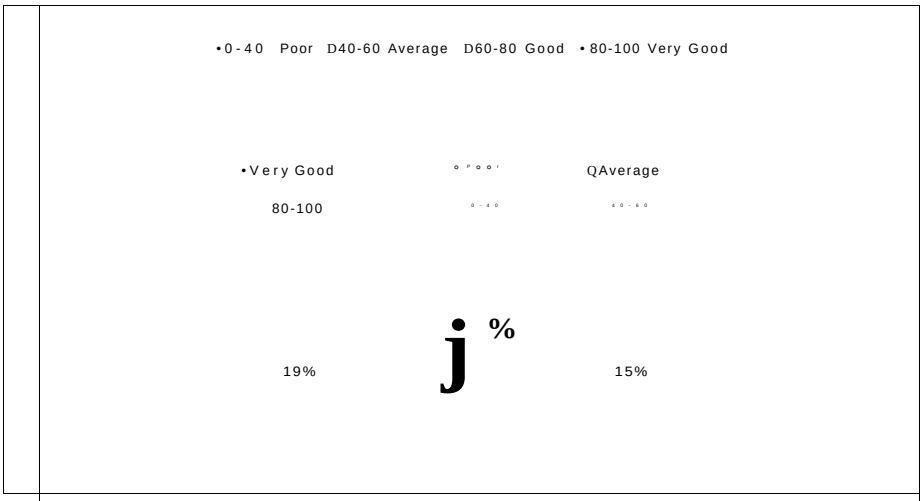
1.3 Analysis

An example of progressive analysis of comparative developments and results during 2004-05 and 2005-06 are shown below:

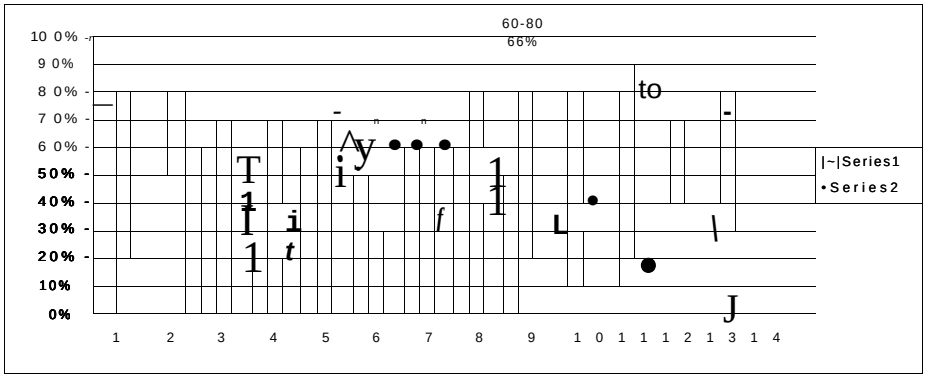
Department of Chemistry Feed back response from students of Teachers (17) on Format # 2 for the academic year 2004-2005



Department of Chemistry Feed back response from students of Teachers (26) on format # 2 for the academic year 2005-2006



Bar Chart of Feedback Response based on the questionnaire Format # 1 during the academic year 2004-05 and 2005-06



Based on the analysis, those members of teaching or non teaching staff whose performance required improvement were called personally by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellors and were counseled in confidential manner. Those who showed good performance were appreciated as a group and by name in department meetings.

3. Other Best Practices

3.1 Earn and Learn Scheme

A unique scheme has been introduced for supporting education of economically backward students. The first Vice- Chancellor, Dr. Appasaheb Pawar, introduced this scheme to encourages the students with poor family background to get into education and support their education. It also aims to develop work culture among them. There is a separate hostel for students working under 'EARN AND LEARN SCHEME' providing free lodging and boarding facilities for 150 students. Apart from doing various activities, these students run mess at their hostel. This scheme has also accommodated about 35 girl students.

3.2 Work on Demand Scheme

The University has introduced work on demand scheme in academic year 2005-06. This novel scheme has objective to develop work culture amongst students and providing financial support as well. This novel scheme is financed own resources of the University. The aim of this scheme is to provide opportunity to the students to gain practical work experience to all students, besides giving financial assistance to the students. The work assignments include works in various administrative and academic departments, medicinal plants cultivation, gardening, accounts, rain-water-harvesting etc., which are society oriented. Students are expected to be ambassadors of the University to carry these schemes into rural villages, when they pass out and for meet the society. These part time assignments (daily of two to four hours) are planned to benefit the students without disturbing their academic curriculum and about 500 students have taken advantage of the scheme.

3.3.Lead College Scheme

Shivaji University is in the forefront in the implementation of the Lead College Scheme since academic year 2005-2006. The main focus of this scheme is to uplift all affiliated colleges at equal stage in the quality race. Seventeen lead colleges have been identified to in the cluster colleges allotted to them. The object of the scheme is mainly student centric, through this unique scheme we have planned to organize various activities in respect of students friendly.

3.4. Running of University Hostel Mess

University postgraduate students' running Hostel Mess on the basis of "Club System". This mess has been managed and maintained by the students. It aims to develop actual training to them, which will benefit, when they pass out and act accordingly within the society.

3.5. Training as a Part of Curriculum

The students of 'Diploma in Travels and Tourism' are provided training through a facility Centre for Travels and Tourism. Our students run this centre. They will plan and organize study tours of our academic departments, prepare travel itinerary, take care of ticket bookings and facilitate their activities through the travel agencies on service charges at subsidized rates. Accordingly the students from Department of Statistics participate in data analysis; students of Computer Science make automation programmes and software development, etc.

3.6. In house software development by the students

Hostel Mess Bill Software: Students from the Department of Computer Science have developed software for accounting bills of Hostel Mess. This includes detailed accounting of mess facilities, etc. This facility intends to promote the actual participation of students in real work experience of software development and involvement in other administrative developments.

3.7. Placement Cell Software

Students form the Department of Computer Science has developed software for Placement Cell. This software consists of department profile, students and faculty members' profiles. This data facilitates for specialization wise bio-data of students, which is sent to companies and firms etc as per their requirements. In academic year 2005-2006, entire data through this software and this data is placed at University website. The MCA students of department of Computer Science have carried out the formatting of the data and development of the code. The programme is updated every year, based on revision in data and feedback.

3.7. Placement Cell Management Service

It has become necessary to organize placement related activities in all colleges, institution and Universities, so that maximum number of students get job at the earliest possible time i.e. immediately after getting their degrees. The job opportunities at various levels and in various fields are made available to students through our placement cell. Shivaji University has organized Placement Cell Management Service, which is being carried out jointly by Departmental Students Representatives, Departmental Placement Officer (DPO) and the Central Placement Cell. All the information about the Placement Activity is being placed on the Intranet and Internet for at easier communication. Shivaji University has provided an incentive scheme for the DPO for putting their additional efforts in the same.

Through this cell during the academic year 2006-07 near about 250 students are selected for various jobs on the better salary package. This will gear a momentum of placement activities and awareness of the same amongst the stakeholders of the Institute.

4.0 Encourage to Students Talent and Potential

The students' talents are focused so as to give them opportunity to show their intellect in the concerned area. As such the students from Department of Journalism publish University publication at regular intervals.

Accordingly students from Mass Communication have prepared the university VCD, showcasing the academic and research activities of our university department. It is a documentary of our university. This is displayed on various occasions.

Researchers and students from the Department of Physics and Space Science Division have recorded a landmark achievement in the year 2005-06. As such they have captured a "Solar Flare"- ejection of luminous gaseous plasma cloud during sun's spot activity on the sun - on a camera. This news was flashed in Times of India with greatest appreciation.

Students of Music and Dramatics have recorded their performance at state and national level and brought various awards and recognition to the university. Accordingly our students have recorded the achievements in sports at national and international level.

4.1 NSS Programme

We have a wide range of activities under National Service Scheme. Students voluntarily undertake various social activities and awareness programmes under this scheme. They adopt villages and improve social awareness for removing evil customs and habits among rural people. Accordingly the students undertake plantation schemes, activities for improving health and hygiene conditions, Gram Shibirs and such other activities etc.

5.0 Conclusion

The University has implemented several schemes to involve students participation to ensure quality in education, infrastructure, resources and their utilization and all round development of the students.

A * * * A

Good Practices in Involving Students for Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions: Experience at Holy Cross College, Nagercoil

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Abstract

In an increasingly competitive global context, knowledge and information are gaining pre eminence in all walks of life. Knowledge and educated people are the resources for development. Any Quality Higher education institution has to focus on the liberation and development of the whole personality of the students, preparing them to face the challenges of life and to take a stand in the struggles of the poor and the marginalised. Quality Education is essentially a learner centered and learning centered activity. Hence students take initiative in innovative learning by participating in the academic and research oriented programmes. Periodical reflections, discussions and sharing on the values at the personal, community and society level enable them to be integrated personalities. It gives them an impetus to reach out and involve in the society through various outreach programmes. The active participation of students in the. co-curricular and extracurricular activities promote critical thinking and creative leadership. Quality circle is the platform where institutional/societal issues are discussed, analyzed and goal-oriented activities are carried out. The involvement of the main stakeholders at various stages - planning, discussions, decisions, implementation, evaluation and follow up - accentuates the quality of higher education. All these foster academic excellence, aesthetic sense, eco -awareness, socially desciable values, emotional maturity which in turn awaken in them the richness of their spiritual centre and the necessity to contribute their mite in the building up of a harmonious India.

There is an inherent quest for the best or for "quality" in every individual. In our journey for quality, whether within the structure of family or in an organization or institution, the focus is on participation, transparency involvement and transformation. "Quality" has in fact evolved to include values rather than strategies and the term has become an integral part of Higher Education.

Quality enhancement in Higher Education is a deliberate process that leads to empowerment. Enhancing something is fundamentally about trying to make the world a better place and succeeding in the enterprise. Higher Education Institutions voluntarily engage in Quality Enhancement both in order to improve student learning and their experience of Higher Education and to respond to the ever-changing needs and interests of society.

It has become an inclusive concept and collective enterprise, which involves everyone who teaches, supports and guides students, as well as the managers and administrators of Higher Education Institutions. It also enfolds significant strategic initiatives and the many small things people do to improve life.

As students form an integral part of the Higher Education community, education actually becomes a process leading to their enlightenment and empowerment.

From	To
Teacher centered	Learner centred
TeachingActivities	Learning - innovating and taking initiative
Class Room	Experimental Learning
	Field Work, Project, Industrial visit & Educational tours
Hierarchy	Participatory planning and decision making

The shift is with a view to bring out the latent potential in every student and to enhance the quality of Higher Education. With the introduction of Quality Education, students become capable of

- thinking analytically, logically, critically, culturally and laterally
- making a healthy living, employing learning skills and work experience
- realizing their ability for self development and reaching out to others.
- Acquiring a discriminatory capacity to appreciate, imbibe and balance emerging values related to eco system, communal Harmony and technological development with those of human fellowship.

For the past 41 years the focus of Holy Cross College, Nagercoil has been on Women Empowerment and on "Higher Education for socially and economically disadvantaged women". This is inherent in the vision of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, France and in response to the needs of our times. In order to enable the students to mature into empowered women capable of facing future challenges and taking up any responsibility in society, the college imparts an education that promotes wholesome development. This education emphasizes physical, intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, moral, social and spiritual values. In short the college aims at "forming well - integrated persons who will strive to transform society, by meeting the challenges of life and taking a stand in the struggles of the poor and the marginalized."

Its goal is therefore the total liberation and development of the whole person of the students in order to prepare them to take their rightful place and responsibility in society."

Student Involvement in Quality Enhancement

Student Involvement

Academic **Assessment**

Value Formation **Decision Making**

Academic

The college fosters an atmosphere for academic excellence. Students are encouraged and motivated to perform to the best of their ability and this has resulted in the securing of several ranks every academic year.

Stress is laid on developing the various learning skills, and low achievers are helped by the high achievers through group study and group projects. Students are encouraged to participate in innovative learning process through

- taking up projects within and outside the college
- group work, role play
- using audiovisual aids/ Browsing facilities
- participating in study tours
- organizing programmes at the college/Department level
- developing effective communication skills.

The students themselves are increasingly aware of the need to compete and perform well in a globalized world with rapidly advancing technology. Accordingly they take the initiative to apply and participate in summer training programmes at various centres like IGCAR, Kalpakam and the centre for Astrophysics, Kodaikanal. Post Graduate students equip themselves by attending coaching classes for NET/SLET/GATE etc. Students also participate and present papers in Regional/National workshops and seminars organized

within and outside the institution. In order to enrich student experiences, field and industrial visits form part of the educational programme of our institution.

The Readers Forum regularly conducts book reviews, slogan competitions and other programmes to promote reading habit among the students.

Students of the college also conduct and participate in various quiz, elocution, story and poetry writing competitions as well as dance, music, cultural and sports events. Their involvement in these programmes enrich them and contribute in making a difference to their future by helping them develop and utilize their full creative and leadership potential.

Pre-placement training, equip the students to face written tests, group discussions and interviews. They also benefit from sessions on personality development and from certificate courses on Spoken English, which contribute to improving communication skills. These efforts have significantly increased the number of students getting job offers in campus interviews, arranged by the Placement cell.

Value based approach

Values bring quality to life, and ensure integrity of character and emotional maturity. They ensure the realization of what is truly excellent in human nature.

- Values essential for democratic citizenship are imbibed by the students through their initiative in the celebration of National days and festivals, organizing cultural extravaganza and Fine Arts competitions as well as other programmes.
- The academic activity of each day begins with a short devotion that includes thought for the day, reflection and prayer. This is organized in turns by the students of the different departments the prayer sessions vary according to their creativity and aesthetic sense. The students of the Department in charge of prayer also display the central theme of the week on the Notice board.
- Value education classes conducted once a week are the platforms for students to interact, discuss, reflect and share on values such as Personality Development, Inter personal relationships, family life, social issues, Faith formation, environmental concerns, Yoga and Meditation, as well as Women Empowerment. Students are divided into small groups of 15 - 20, to get maximum benefit from the classes.
- The valid testimonies of students who have come back from the edge of suicide, from depression, from the verge of divorce and from the nadir of despair are vital pointers to prove the significance of the value education classes.
- Through the Mentor ward system, students are able to identify their uniqueness and their hidden talents and strengths. They grow in self-confidence and gain courage and are more equipped to face their future. This helps the youth to modify their behaviour techniques and ability to take firm steps confidently.

- Visits of the students along with the staff to the centers of mentally and physically challenged people, AIDS patients, orphans and the less privileged ones provide valuable exposure to the students regarding the less fortunate. It also gives them an understanding of the value of life and of sharing.
- Students are encouraged to become eco friendly through eco tourism, and campaigns to make the campus plastic free. The students who are members of the nature club, weed out parthenium in the campus and in the locality and plant trees, on important occasions.

Out reach programme

As Quality Enhancement concerns itself with making the world a better place, our students serve as effective partners in the extension work. They involve themselves in outreach programmes such as

- N.S.S. (National Service Scheme): students participate in special camps, seminars, and awareness programme and tree planting in the village adopted.
- RRC(Red Ribbon Club): students are active in AIDS awareness campaigns and interaction with aids patients.
- YRC (Youth Red Cross): students donate blood and also conduct blood donation camps. They collaborate with the staff in organizing service camps and leadership programmes.
- Women's Cell: conducts Talks, exhibition, women's Day celebration, participation in the rallies organized by SHGS
- Rotaract: involves itself in Blood group identification and leadership programmes
- AICUF: concentrates on training, seminars, and awareness on social issues given
- Consumer Club: organizes Exhibition, Competition, and awareness on consumer rights
- Legal Aid: offers training in Legal Aid services as well as interaction at the grass root level.

Students also participate in several social programmes in the locality and in the district. They take interest in coaching the children of the neighbouring schools and orphanage and express their concern for the Tsunami affected in the neighbourhood by visiting them, listening to them and contributing their share, physically and materially in helping them. Earn while you learn scheme creates in the students a sense of dignity of labour.

The Post Graduate students of literature give Part II English coaching to the students of History and Economics. Part time jobs in companies, and shops are also different alternatives.

Decision - making

Right from its inception, the college has always functioned on a democratic basis. The administrative council comprising of the management and staff is helped by a student council that is elected by the student body as a whole. This student council embodies a President and Vice President from III year Under Graduate classes and Secretary and Joint Secretary from the II year Under Graduate classes. As best practice in Quality Education includes the rights and privileges of the disabled, the council has a Joint Secretary who is a physically challenged student.

This council is guided and directed by student co-ordinators from the staff. Their activities are

- Active participation in the programmes of the college.
- To give suggestions for the effective functioning of the college
- To act as a link between the Management and students

This Enlarged student council, consists of Members of the college student council, as well as class representatives and assistant representatives. They discuss and analyse issues related to academic, curricular co-curricular and infrastructure facilities and suggest measures. Thus they become partners in planning and government.

Students of the college also participate actively in the departmental associations, committees and clubs, and enrich their campus life with Quality culture. Students also involve themselves in the formulation of the Action plan of the department and the institution, every year with the help of the SWOT Analysis. This deepens their sense of belonging and team spirit.

The Quality Circle consisting of 3 - 5 students per department, along with staff representatives reflects, discusses, analyzes and gives its ideas on various issues pertaining to student life for example, introduction of college uniform, punctuality problems, provision of facilities to the students etc. It has facilitated a shift from suggestion box to discussion circle. The decision-making skill enables the students to think and decide any issue with creativity, and also it prevents them in over reacting to any emotion.

Assessment

Conscious effort is made to review periodically the goal, policies and process of growth of the institution. The college has also been practising student enhanced learning through an effective feed back system for the past 20 years. This Evaluation is an ongoing,

systematic practice of the institution for quality enhancement. This assessment of the teachers by the students is introduced in all the aided as well as self-financing courses.

During the II semester, the review and evaluation committee conducts an evaluation of the teaching staff by the outgoing students through a format on a 5 point scale and through an open ended questionnaire focusing on subject knowledge, teaching methods, innovative techniques, communicative skills, staff -student relationships and career motivation.

The secretary prepares a consolidated report and the findings were communicated to the departments and the individual teachers. Prompt positive action is taken on the basis of this feedback and effort is taken by the staff to improve their performance.

The students appreciate the value-based education, mentor-ward system, and the personal interest taken by the staff in motivating, encouraging and coaching the low achievers. The faculty initiated the students in participating in co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Their interest in career guidance and in job placement for students is remarkable.

Conclusion

Any amount of physical infrastructure cannot bring about the desired quantum change. It is only the quality of human infrastructure that would make a quantum difference. We are on a quality journey. May God enlighten us and enable us to contribute our best for a higher education which will contribute to the formation of strong and responsible women and consequently a better society.

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Enhancing Quality Through Student Participation: The MIER College Practice

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Abstract

*The pursuit for quality enhancement in all walks of life is the reigning '**Mantra**' for survival and progress of individuals, organizations and nations in today's world. In modern times with winds of globalization and change blowing everywhere in the face of cut-throat competition, scientific management and enhancement of effectiveness and quality at different levels are being internationally valued and emphasized. The worldwide movement for quality improvement can be appreciated in the above backdrop. No wonder, all institutions whether schools, colleges and universities both in the private and government sectors are today relentlessly engaged in the pursuit of quality enhancement. (Stella, 2001; Stella and Gnanam, 2002, 2003, 2003; Paul, 2005; Pathan, 2005; Prasad and Patil, 2006).*

It is firmly believed by quality experts today that the quality of an educational institution is determined by the willingness, involvement and continued participation of all stakeholders namely students, teachers, alumni, management and public at large whose inputs can help in quality enhancement. However, the participation of students in the process of quality assurance in the capacity of being primary stakeholders has not received due importance and attention of the academic fraternity (Harvey, 1996; Kirpal, 2005; Khanna, 2005; Mukhopadhyay, 2005; Patil, 2005; Kurup, 2006; Prasad and Patil, 2006;).

In this context, the practice followed by MIER College is worth sharing as it pertains to the involvement and participation of students in the process of quality enhancement of the institution.

Quest For Quality Enhancement In MIER College of Education

The MIER College of Education was established in the year 1981 when it became the first college of education to be established in the private sector under the University of Jammu in J&K State. The college represented the manifestation of the mission and vision of its founders who were both eminent educationists and who had founded a high quality co-educational school in the year 1936. Thus, the college inherited a strong emphasis on quality alongwith a team of dedicated teacher educators who were experienced teachers in the school with high qualifications and joined the college as its first faculty when it was started. The school was attached to the college as its experimental school. Eversince its

inception, the college grew as a quality institution but for nearly 20 years, the quality indicators were mainly the conventional ones namely annual results, emphasis on values like discipline, punctuality, regularity, hard work, curricular activities and informal interaction with the students.

The College started its tryst with quality as understood in modern terms in the late nineties when at international fora, serious concerns were raised regarding the need to maintain standards in educational institutions which can be quantified and understood uniformly across cultures and national boundaries (Bonstingl, 1992; Lewis and Smith, 1998; World Bank, 2000; Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

Subsequently, the management initiated a process to review the functioning of the college and decision was taken to obtain ISO quality bench marking for both the school and the college. Some key staff members were sent for training to different institutions to understand the process of quality bench marking and a number of workshops and training programmes were organized to sensitize both teachers and other workers at different levels regarding different components of the quality process (International Standards, ISO 9001:2000). This was followed by the decision of the management to enhance the quality of different components of teaching learning process by actively involving students in the year 2002 when the process of quality assurance was formally taken up. As a result of these exercises, both the school and the MIER College of Education obtained ISO 9001:2000 certification in the year 2003 and 2004 respectively thereby becoming the first institutions in the state of J&K to receive this certification.

The Quality Policy Manual (QPM) of the college happens to be a significant document in which the role of the management, faculty, students, parents and public has been clearly defined (QMM, 2004). The Quality Policy Manual, which was framed and developed in-house by the active cooperation of our faculty, headed by the Director, has been based on the following eight quality management principles namely 1) Customer Focus, 2) Leadership, 3) Involvement of People, 4) Process Approach, 5) System Approach to Management, 6) Continual Improvement, 7) Factual Approach to Decision Making and 8) Mutually Beneficial Supplier Relationships.

The Quality Policy Manual also clearly defines the role of students in the day-to-day decision making at the college level by being members of sixteen college committees mentioned below to monitor the teaching learning, operational and other important components.

i) Admission Committee ii) Examination and Evaluation Committee iii) Academic Committee iv) Co-curricular, Sports and Games Committee v) Infrastructure, maintenance and security Committee vi) Library Committee vii) Hostel Committee viii) Student Support/Guidance and Counseling Committee ix) Canteen, Dispensary, Bank and Transport

Committee x) Attendance/Leave Committee xi) Computer Information Resources and Technology Committee xii) Disciplinary Committee xiii) Research Committee xiv) College Magazine/Publications Committee xv) Teaching Practice Committee xvi) Alumni Committee

Each committee comprises three members of staff and five students headed by a Convenor. The committees meet regularly and document their decisions to ensure responsive, effective and transparent working. Each committee functions with a well defined charter and objectives. Monitoring mechanism is quite rigorous, and is not only done by the Quality Assurance Officer but also by auditors both internal and external, specially trained to perform the academic audit in conformity with the ISO 9001:2000 quality framework.

The college also has a grievance redressal mechanism through which the students voice their grievances, which are screened and redressed in the best possible manner. In addition, a suggestion box has been provided at a prominent place to receive suggestions from all visitors and stakeholders. These suggestions are recorded and a decision by consensus is taken to incorporate these suggestions.

Shift In Quality Emphasis- From General To Academic

Once the quality policy and the process approach were put into practice, the valuable data obtained from the statutory feedback from the teachers and the students enabled the faculty and the management to initiate the process of quality enhancement at the college level. It was at this point that the college decided to go in for NAAC accreditation. The focus of the college shifted from general quality parameters to specific academic quality audit, with adequate checks and balances. Serious preparatory work was undertaken by making the management and the faculty aware about NAAC, its objectives, process of accreditation and the criterion for assessment namely I) Curricular design and planning, II) Curriculum transaction and evaluation, III) Research, development and extension, IV) Infrastructure and learning resources, V) Students support and progression and VI) Organisation and management. Again feedback from students was elicited including alumni and teachers regarding their assessment of the college on the NAAC criterion. As a result of the valuable feedback, decision to volunteer for NAAC accreditation was taken by the college in December 2005. The efforts put in by the college led to the successful accreditation by the NAAC with Grade A making the MIER College the only one in the State of J&K in private sector to receive this grade.

Students' Participation And Feedback For Quality Enhancement

It goes to the credit of the students that their valuable inputs and feedback enabled the college to introduce several improvements in respect of physical infrastructure, library services, computer facilities, hostel environment and other student support services besides extra curricular activities, sports facilities, interaction with faculty and administration,

academic content and usefulness of teaching material taught during the session. This was empirically proved when the college took up a follow up study of the students' feedback over a period of five years from 2001-2006 (Gupta; Bindra and Kapoor , 2006). This study was based on the feedback received from 625 students selected randomly over a five-year period. For collecting data, Format IV of Evaluation Tools prepared by NAAC to be used by departments/colleges was employed. This instrument is a rating scale having items related to fifteen components namely 1) Academic content 2) Usefulness of teaching material 3) Usefulness of study groups in furthering learning 4) Giving and getting helpful feedback 5) Fairness of evaluation 6) Timeliness of practical work 7) Interaction with faculty 8) Interaction with administration 9) Educative value of Mid Term Programme 10) Library facilities 11) Computer facilities 12) Hostel facilities 13)

TABLE - I

Students' Feedback On The Academic Components Over A Period of Five Years

Sl.No. Area	2001-2002 N=125	2002-2003 N=125	2003-2004 N=125	2004-2005 N=125	2005-2006 N=125
1 Academic Content	68.8	70.1	77.0	78.0	80.7
2 Usefulness of Teaching Material	81.6	81.1	90.7	90.0	91.9
3 Usefulness of Study Groups	62.3	62.7	84.0	94.0	94.6
4 Giving and getting helpful feedback	89.2	81.0	76.0	89.0	90.0
5 Fairness of Evaluation	74.0	72.9	78.2	80.0	82.0
6 Timeliness of Practical Work	67.3	68.5	70.0	74.0	85.0
7 Interaction with Faculty	70.3	68.5	82.0	88.0	86.0
8 Interaction with Administration	62.7	61.6	76.0	74.0	70.0
9 Educative value of mid- term programme	37.0	39.0	45.0	50.0	54.0
10 Library facilities	70.3	70.5	74.0	80.0	85.0
11 Computer facilities	37.2	40.5	50.0	68.0	72.0
12 Hostel facilities	34.7	40.5	50.0	64.0	67.5
13 Recreational facilities	54.0	51.5	60.0	65.0	72.0
14 Extra curricular activities	62.7	79.3	84.0	87.8	90.0
15 Sports facilities	62.9	36.6	52.0	66.0	65.0

Recreational facilities 14) Extra-curricular activities 15) Sports facilities.

It can be seen from the results, how the student feedback over a five-year period lead to improvement in the functioning of the college in the designated areas as each year the college authorities with the cooperation of faculty and the students made sustained efforts to improve the students' degree of awareness regarding different components in the scale and made necessary improvements in the academic calendar, organizational structure, job responsibilities, reporting and recording systems respectively. Side by side, the faculty was constantly sensitized to the need for improvement in their performance levels in the light of student feedback. In this manner, student participation was made a tool for Internal Quality Assurance that ultimately proved highly useful and valuable to earn high external quality assessment.

The MIER College practice ensuring student participation to improve the quality of instruction and other institutional components can be described as a success story. A few important observations from the MIER practice need to be highlighted:

The practice has succeeded in a college offering professional programme (B.Ed) with limited intake capacity. In such an environment, the management and control over the students is comparatively easier.

An average B.Ed student is at least a graduate with 45-50% marks in the qualifying examination while about 33% B.Ed students have additional and higher qualifications in addition to graduation.

Mostly the girls out number boys in the ratio of 2:1 in the course. Further, the course is of one-year duration (9 to 10 months in practice) and the students' mobility is ensured every year. The students have a hectic timetable with fewer avenues of free time and leisure.

Being a professional college, the instances and avenues of student's activism and politics are very less.

Marching ahead for Quality Assurance

At present, the college is using a new feedback format developed by the faculty to receive students' feedback on different aspects of college functioning. This is given in Annexure I. The new format is planned to arrive at summative assessment on different components of college functioning. A valuable addition in this direction has been the involvement of alumni whose association has been activated. The assessment and feedback processes have now been integrated into the college calendar and mandatory feedback from the students and the faculty are supposed to be collected two times during the session- once in the mid term and the other at the end of the session. In addition, data from the students and their background variables is collected in the beginning of the session. Further, it has been decided to cover all students for feedback purposes. The college has also made

induction and orientation of students regarding their role in quality assessment and assurance made mandatory for which a student manual is currently being prepared. As a result of the feedback received most recently, the college authorities are paying more attention towards creation of a placement cell for providing placement services; introducing value added courses especially in the areas of communication skills, computer skills; organizing remedial and enrichment programme to benefit both weak and bright students; introduction of electronic classroom project to use modern information and communication technologies to enrich classroom learning and starting diversified programme in the area of special education, guidance and counseling, taking up programme related to empowerment of women and involving students with educational experiments and innovations, and the setting up of IQAC at the college as a sequel to NAAC accreditation. These measures alongwith steps like construction of an additional floor, improving hostel and Internet facilities, use of e-mail for internal communication and interaction etc are likely to go a long way in ensuring that the college not only follows the roadmap to quality enrichment but also become a leader in this direction.

Student's Participation: The Challenges Ahead

The road leading to quality enhancement in institutions of higher education through the involvement and feedback of the students is circuitous, full of pitfalls and challenges for the academic fraternity and policy planners. Nigavekar, 2001; Verma, 2004; Sharma, 2004 and Gupta and Gupta, 2006 have identified some of the issues that require the attention of academic fraternity so that regular and mandatory data, which is reliable and valid, can be made available for decision-making leading to enhancement in institutional quality. However, it needs to be realized that information gathering from students is at best, a means to an end and not the end itself. The ultimate aim of involving students in the process of quality enhancement is to empower the student community in general and make them primary stakeholders in institutional decision-making, which has largely remained unrealized in our educational settings. The efforts of NAAC in this direction, therefore, require to be supported and strengthened by all well wishers of higher education in India.

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Involving Students in Quality Enhancement When, Where and How?

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Abstract

Where-when-how these questions are very common and intriguing as well. ***Where*** *could the students be involved? Obviously in the major way in the class rooms. But as they stay outside the class room for the maximum time, we have to get them involved there, too, for example in the play ground, in the stage, in the field of work, in fact, everywhere they chat, eat, drink, dance, shout, act, play, work.* ***How*** *? By making them first understand the need for the special programmes chalked out for them and then made them participate in the measures adopted. If they feel these are for their benefit they will hardly skip.* ***When*** *? It may start any time of the day or night congenial to them. They may also participate when they are tender, growing, attaining youthfulness and old age, too. At every stage in their lives they need to be better equipped. In this age of competition they are either to shape up or quit. Taking this fact into consideration this paper discusses the issue into two broad aspects at curricular front and spiritual front*

The Need

None of us has seen a monkey metamorphosed into a man but still we have faith in the natural process of Evolution of Darwin. Rarely do we feel that while teaching this concept we are preaching our opinion and faith and not our conviction and science. Science has thus slowly crept into "Faith" and tries to discover first the power of matter and then of man. The science which purports to bring out power in matter and physical body is called Physical Science and that science when applied for bringing out immense possibilities in human beings is called Spiritual Science.

Thanks to the NAAC, APQN and other several bodies all over the world, the science of Human possibilities has been widely discussed, debated and finally accepted as the avowed goal of Education. Education must impart information and make the students knowledgeable, intelligent, smart, efficient, disciplined, successful (capable of earning a lot) and leader-like in their area of specialization. But if we leave them there, then are we not creating some little Hitlers from our educational institutions and sending them out to society to create havoc? Those qualities of students cited above are the very ones Hitler did possess. We want to create a society, which is free from violence, aggression and all that. But we want to achieve this goal by producing students who are self-centred, aggressive, greedy and competitive. If we organise those selfish and violent Hitlers either into a communist society or into a capitalist society, we will have violence, divisions, domination only.

We must pause here and ponder. Quality education and its enhancement have a deeper dimension. Why is it that the modern mind should advance in this area of science and technology only but "remain almost primitive in its understanding of itself"? Man receives information to know others. When will he receive inspirational education to know himself his inner possibilities? We also ask ourselves following T. S. Eliot: 'Where is the knowledge we have lost in information'? The solution rests on acquiring both information and inspiration.

Obviously the enhancement of quality in Education has two aspects, not quite separate but mutually inclusive:

A. Quality Enhancement at the curricular front, thereby making the student understand his environment and the world around. It will make him as powerful as a king in handling power with absolute authority. We need to prepare our boys and girls to face the business and employment world efficiently and we must do that for the sake of advancement of the society.

B. Simultaneously, we must seek Quality Enhancement in respect of Life itself. Man must be educated to shake off his crudity and imbibe the spirit of a refined mind just as in the Oil Refinery the crude oil is made refined through a rigorous process. The crude man (Nara) has to be made into the best man (Narottama) by giving him secular education and ultimately he must be made divine (Narayana) through spiritual education. Both these ideas are to be taken into consideration by way of making a synthesis between the two and we have a Rajarshi concept as our reconsidered goal. A student has to be a Raja without and a Rishi within at the same time. He must be as powerful as Hitler but that power of an Adolf Hitler in him has to be softened by the saintliness of a Rishi or a sage. A King can control others but he cannot like a Satan, control his greed, his anger. So, a King is a half ideal. Similarly, a Sage in isolation is a half ideal because he can control himself but cannot control others. Only a Rajarshi who is a King outside and a Sage within can protect all without troubling others and without being troubled by others. Therefore, the power of a Hitler has to be softened by the love and compassion of a Sage. The two great values are to be respected by all engaged in education.

How When and Where

Where-when-how these questions are very common and intriguing as well. **Where** could the students be involved? Obviously in the major way in the class rooms. But as they stay outside the class room for the maximum time, we have to get them involved there, too, for example in the play ground, in the stage, in the field of work, in fact, everywhere they chat, eat, drink, dance, shout, act, play, work. **How?** By making them first understand the need for the special programmes chalked out for them and then made them participate in the measures adopted. If they feel

these are for their benefit they will hardly skip. **When?** It may start any time of the day or night congenial to them. They may also participate when they are tender, growing, attaining youthfulness and old age, too. At every stage in their lives they need to be better equipped. In this age of competition they are either to shape up or quit. Taking this fact into consideration we shall discuss the issue into two broad aspects at (A) curricular front and (B) spiritual front

A. Quality Enhancement in Educating Man without: Curricular Front

A. Quality Enhancement

i. Now we take the formal educational scenario and see how far can it go and with what results.

ii. This education taking man as a secular human being releases tremendous power in him. This secular power is first physical then mental and vital and finally intellectual. These are called Bahubalam, Manobalam, Buddhibalam. The function of secular education must work at these three levels of our consciousness. We must see to it that all the three are attained in a happy proportion and not a single one is allowed to go ahead of the other two. We have seen brilliant students suffer from physical ailments all their lives. Many of them are so weak in mind that they cannot live in the open society. Intellect we must sharpen but not at the cost of a sound body and strong mind. Moreover, we have seen that the intellectuals are oftentimes heartless, hard and harsh, having no emotion and love within.

So, the task of the teachers including the heads of the institutions and the families the students belong to, is to arrange for a qualified physical education trainer/ teacher. We have so long neglected this aspect totally. The result is that our intellectual people are mostly dyspeptic.

We need to emphasize this aspect more thoroughly as shown below:

Sound Health

Every student will have to observe Health Rules. The arrangement has to be made either by the families or by the institutions. He will take regular exercises (say free hand) in the morning for 10 minutes. After drinking two glasses of pure water in empty stomach he will go for ablution, toilet etc. After that, he is advised to undergo 1. Anulome Bilome Pranayam 30 times (inhaling and exhaling briskly through one nostril alternately); 2.Kapal Bhati (Filling up the lungs with air briskly and instantaneously letting it out through the nostrils with a heavy jerk at the abdomen, 25 times) and then 3.Mahabandha Mudra (after exhaling, the air has to be held outside the body and then abdomen, organ of urination and excreta all are to be contracted as long as possible, 5 times). Its efficacy is superb. One of my students has practised these exercises and brought down his high blood sugar

from 290 to 85 only within 3 months. He took no medicine whatsoever. Since our college is strictly residential, we have all students go in for these practices. For non-residential institutions, the task has to be done by the parents. In the afternoon, students must play the games of their choice. Moreover, selections of live foods like fruits and avoiding dead foods like heavily boiled vegetables are of supreme importance. My humble suggestion is that every institution should have a physical instructor to look after the hitherto the most neglected aspect of our life — sound health.

Sound Mind:

Mind is restless. Unless it is controlled, we cannot achieve anything. Our eyes do not see, ears do not hear unless mind comes to their help. Mind must be present with the sense organs and then and then only can we enjoy or suffer. Patanjali, the great Sage, has given us his monumental work - Yoga Sutra (Yoga Aphorisms). Yoga Sutra has suggested eight ways to control the mind — these are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayam, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Controlling mind actually means transformation of consciousness in us. The accompanying, picture will help us understand the point.

It has six points/cenres of consciousness. Mind, when awakened, will pass through these from the bottom of our body and becomes united with the Shiva (consciousness) at the Head. Without concentration of mind, education is impossible and with concentration of mind, education becomes easy. There are various ways to have the mind controlled. One can have that by (a) observing one's own breathing and/or (b) doing Omkar (O+M), Pranayam, (inhaling with the pronunciation of O mentally and exhaling with the pronunciation of M). This has to be practised at least for 2 minutes at different time-spans — first slowly and then quickly till the incumbent feels sleepy. A meditating mind, an introspective mind is a calm and collected mind. If a student is taught this thing by a Yogic teacher, he will be definitely an improved person within a month. He can learn a lot about his academic subjects with minimum efforts. He never disseminates hatred but radiates love and peace. Not that our students are not interested in this art. A large number of the student population are now visiting Ramdev Swami or Ravisankarji and sincerely practising the lessons provided by them.

Sound Intellect:

Intellect or Buddhi is the last state of our existence in the relative world. Beyond Buddhi is Atman/Spirit. Not all people have the same capability of intellect and, therefore, people differ in respect of their performances and also of their gains from their work.

This all important intellect has to be nourished and protected. Earlier IQ or Intelligent Quotient was considered the measuring rod of achievement. Later, it was replaced by

EQ or Emotional Quotient and then SQ or Spiritual Quotient. The task of the teacher is to invigorate the intellect of the students. While doing so, the teacher must know that 'A child educates itself'. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening and that much is the work of the teacher (Education by Swamiji P-9). Hence the teacher must know that violent attempts at teaching and rectifying or reforming students always end by retarding the progress. The idea is that a teacher will have to take everyone where he stands and push him forward (Education by Swami Vivekananda P-10). This has to be done in the class and outside as well.

ii. The role of the teacher is supremely important: He must be a man of knowledge and character as well. He should be a teacher by choice and not by chance. He must love the subject and love his students as his own children. While punishing the students, he should feel he is punishing his own children for committing some faults. He must not consider any of his students worthless and destroy a single student's special inclinations. He alone can give hope and encouragement to his students even if they are degraded and backward and then lift all of them up. In each of them, there are infinite tendencies which require proper scope for satisfaction. Facts are to be made the faculty in each of them. Sports and games of various types, Art, Music, normal academic subjects - these are all facts. These are to be converted into faculties. Everybody plays cricket; it is a fact. But Sachin Tendulkar has made cricket a faculty. He, by all standards of education, has the best quality of it. In this case, the role of parents can never be overlooked. "Owing to undue domination exercised by the parents", observed Swami Vivekananda, "our boys do not get free scope for growth. If you do not allow one to become a lion, one will become a fox." It is our parents who will allow their children to be jacks of all trades but master of one. Unfortunately, parents guide all students to be scholars only — having college/ university education. They forget that their children can attain eminence in other non-academic fields as well.

iii. Learning information efficiently: Apart from teachers and parents, students themselves have to have certain prerequisites for the enhancement of quality learning. They must be faithful, humble, submissive and respectful to teachers. A teacher is not merely a lecturer and also students are not merely learners. Love for students, sympathy for the taught by the teachers on the one hand and veneration for teachers by the students on the other will work miracles. Education is a joint venture. We can think of some details of the process and infrastructural items only and when these are worked out, he will surely have enhancement of the quality of learning. The idea is that the students must qualify themselves for the job world and the teachers, management of the educational institution, shall provide all possible help to them. To prepare them for the job is the first priority and this truth has to be respected by all involved with educating our students.

1. The syllabi of the subjects must be made up-to-date and uniform all through the country so that students do not face major difficulties in shifting over from one university to the other in the country. Standardisation of curriculum, administration, taking classes regularly, system of holding exams periodical or otherwise, awarding marks, encouraging reading habits, table manners, fellow-feeling and team-spirit etc. The students everywhere enquire about all these good habits practised in an institution before they seek admission there.

2. Teaching within and outside the class hours has to be encouraged. The cordial academic atmosphere will entail the loving participation of both teacher and the taught in imparting information.

3. Students are to be prepared for competitive examination both in academic and employment spheres. When? During the college hours or outside that schedule. How? Through holding mock parliament seminars, debating performances, essay competitions, extempore speech competitions, quizzes, group discussions, mock-interviews etc. In the classes, teachers should encourage each student to speak out his heart. Their speaking power has to be improved. The rural students are to be guided to pick up at least two languages other than their mother tongue, namely Hindi and English. Obviously, college authorities should make provision in the weekly routine for learning Spoken English and Spoken Hindi. The rural colleges should provide ample opportunity for students' access to the computer. There should be special tutorials for the advanced and backward students separately. These groups shall be homogeneously prepared. This is a loving venture. Neither the teacher nor the student has come to trade in education. Both have gathered to participate in a sacred task. Buying and selling, giving and taking are bad. If education deals with this shop-keeping, they know it for certain that there is manipulation in the name of education. There is no conviction, which is so important a concept in the educational world. We suffer most not by what we give but by what we expect. Suggestion, therefore, is that an atmosphere has to prevail in an educational institute where nobody asks for anything, but everybody learns to give joyfully. This healthy convention, if properly inculcated in the students, will alone make the world an abode of Peace.

4. Learning process has changed a lot these days with the advent of computer, LCD projector etc. Modern technology and other aids are to be introduced for the benefit of the students. Students must take interest in such changes. They are to be taken into our confidence. Through computer, the best books on the topics being taught are made available from the Internet. Important

chapters could be xeroxed, too. We are really flooded with knowledge explosion.

5. Students are generally very weak in bargaining. They are to be empowered to bargain with equal terms and at the same time respect the teachers. Every decision with respect to the administration of the educational institutions in the 3rd world countries is taken by the authorities. Students must have the right to choose their teachers by evaluating their performance in the class. It is not that the teachers alone will evaluate the quality of the students; students will also evaluate the teachers' ability to communicate the knowledge they have within.

6. The Principal's role in making a through review of the changes incorporated in the system is of primary importance. New relation of the Institute with the industry, society, trade and commerce, of the domestic life has to be compared with those of the educational institutions abroad. In fact, none engaged in education should feel that he or she is doing a slave's work. This is the great task of the Principal. He has to protect all, guide all, chide the wayward, if need be, but not without sympathy anytime. He has love for all but praise for the sincere.

B. Quality Enhancement in Man within: Spiritual Front

We have been trying to make our students great from outside by adding so many qualifications. But inwardly they are poor, limited, greedy and selfish. Efficiency alone will not count; it would land us nowhere unless it is supplemented by the spiritual treasure hidden in us. This treasure is not altogether unknown to us. Buddha had this treasure and he left his home for it, too. Wealth was a danger to him. For us, it is a treasure. Buddha after attaining Bodhi bestowed solace on all; we after attaining age steal peace from others and from us ourselves in turn. This is a complete reversal of values. Man must be made educated and allowed to earn, possess. But along with that, he must acquire the spirit of non-violence, trustworthiness, non-stealing. This is real growth in him, real enhancement of quality in his life. Beyond body, mind and intellect is Atman. We need Atmabalam, spiritual powers. All values start from Atman. A great scholar-cum-mystic the late Mahanamavrata Brahmachari gave us an interesting anecdote about a brilliant boy who was born of aristrocatic parents. At his tender age, the boy formed the habit of stealing pens from his friends' bags. The matter was reported to the HM. He called the boy and set him scot-free after a mild reprimand. The boy, in course of time, became an efficient government administrator but the thief in him had become more powerful. Now he does not steal pens but steals crores through his pen.

His actual place would have been in the jail but unfortunately for us, he has become the jailor. So, a boy is nurtured for long 18 years and is given sufficient learning but he fails to imbibe nonviolence, truthfulness, non-stealing. He has no education. He is a learned anti-social and is much more dangerous than an illiterate hooligan. An educated rogue could hardly be recognized if he can master the art of acting.

Students are to be taught this aspect of their divine heritage with much caution. In fact, there are no such aspects as a physical world, a mental world, an intellectual world or a spiritual world. "Whatever is, is one. It is a sort of tapering existence, the thickest part is body, it tapers, becomes finer in Mind and Intellect and the finest is the Spirit or Atman. The science of Yoga has really discovered the laws which take into account these realisations without hurting the faiths of the students. This truth can be propagated. Swami Vivekananda has done it through his beautiful concept of a Universal faith. It applies to all, no matter what faith they profess — Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism etc. Not only that. Even a stark atheist or agnostic is welcome. He states the first principle of the Universal Faith as being : **Each soul is potentially divine.** This divinity is the innermost spirit / Atman which everyone of us understands and with which we are united in our deep sleep state. This divinity or truth in us has to be manifested through self-less work. We cannot exploit anybody while we work because this anybody is also divine, is lovable and worshippable. We cannot exploit the one we love. So, everyone whosoever he is, whether he is a Christian, a Musalman, a Buddha, a Jaina, a Baishnava, a Shakta, a Ganapati, a Marxist, an atheist, agnostic — will embrace one another, feel and serve to know his/her true internal nature. Each of them would then become a better Christian, a better Musalman and so on. Why better ? Their devotion to their own faith will deepen while taking other faiths as true also.

Actually we never accept man as matter. Laws of matter we know well. The third law states that actions and reactions are equal and opposite. True. But what about the law for the teacher who is teaching the law? If he slaps a student in the class, shall also the student slap him in the same way — with the same magnitude? No. This law of matter is not for man. If action is 1, reaction is -1 for matter. For man, reaction may be -1, or 0, or +50 or +200. This freedom is not with matter. But man enjoys this freedom. Jesus was crucified but he prayed for his tormentor. Jesus is a special man, a godman. The law of matter is not meant for us, let alone Jesus.

So, we have to be qualified in attaining manhood first and then our divine nature through education only, through the direct life of the teacher only. A teacher can ignite the student's mind, only if he himself possesses that fire within. Again and again, we must remember that there is still more to be discovered which can substitute a teacher. He is more than the parents of the student; we have the Government, legislature, law enforcement agencies to control us. But our educational institutions are there to transform us through the

enlightened individuals called teachers. It is they who are producing good planetary citizens who, in turn, transform the society.

Conclusion

To sum up, we need both - science and technology, thus helping develop the society outwardly and also spiritually (religion is mistakenly equated with mere belief). We do not need a mind, which is purely rational, scientific and intellectual because such a mind can be extremely cruel, having no love and compassion. Nor do we need emotion only. The religious mind (in the narrow sense) is oftentimes emotional, sentimental, superstitious and neurotic. We need a combination of the two in a mind which is scientific rational and at the same time has a sense of beauty, sensitivity, humility, love, sacrifice, service and above all an awareness of the limitations of the intellect. Without this balance, the mind is not educated; without this ignited mind, quality enhancement in secular education has no meaning at all.

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Awareness Of Quality Among College Students: Students' Quality Literacy Index- A Case Study

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Abstract

Students' participation in quality enhancement begins with quality awareness. It is highly essential to estimate the quality literacy among students so that systems can be developed to harness students' potential. The level of quality literacy among students should be objectively assessed.

The study of quality literacy firstly attempts to calibrate the scale of measure, evolve methods to solicit feedback and evaluate the response as per opinions.

The Student Quality Literacy Index (SQL index) quantifies and measures, the level of student observation of quality systems that are part of or external to institution, individual quality perceptions and perception of ones role in quality systems.

The Student quality Index is primarily made up of seven components, each with different weight. The weights sum up to 100. The quality index is the score of student out of 100

These components are broad indicators of awareness of student on various aspects of quality: observation, perception, evaluation and capacity to interact with systems.

It is found that the awareness of quality grows from year to year in collegiate education. The lowest scores recorded are at Quality procedures and on institutional Quality perceptions PG students score very high. It was found that Role perception is poor. This gives scope for mass awareness campaign for student awareness on quality issues.

Introduction

The quality movement in higher education has entered a new phase. With wide spread accreditation and assessment activities, quality in higher education has gained common acceptance. It is the time to develop processes that can sustain quality. Internal quality assurance cell, information and communalization technologies and reaccredidation procedures are valuable in enhancing quality. However, the onus of quality management should rest with the stakeholders; importantly, the students.

The quality sustenance measures depend on the level of awareness and participation of stakeholders in the quality pursuits. The stakeholders need to educate themselves regarding various aspects of quality management systems in higher education.

Among the multitude of stakeholders in higher education, students occupy a pivotal role. Centering on the students, the vision statement is drawn, mission is identified, goals are determined, quality education norms are drawn, activities are planned and outcome is measured. Even among competing methods of quality assurance in higher education the customer based systems are always highlighted.

2006 has been observed by NAAC as the *Year of Students' participation in Quality Assurance.* It is imperative to enhance students' participation in the management of quality systems and should be inducted into the process of decision making. The onus of quality education should shift to the students. This will help in developing the proactive role of the students in the dynamics of higher education. While empowering the students with tools of decision making in the democratic administration of academic systems, two factors emerge very significant.

The first step in the direction of students' participation in quality enhancement begins with quality awareness. It is highly essential to estimate the quality literacy among students so that systems can be developed to harness students' potential. The level of quality literacy among students should be objectively assessed. In the process of assessing levels of students' awareness certain deficiencies and misconceptions may be discovered. Such deficiencies need to be rectified and misconceptions clarified. There upon, the process of empowering students for participation in quality management can start.

In the subsequent process, the methods of inducting students into quality movement can be designed. The role of students in quality management in colleges can be visualized in various systems, ranging from feed back, reviews, evaluation to proactive roles. The student can be harbinger of quality movement.

It is essential to evolve a method of assessing students' quality literacy which is comprehensive, comprehensible, durable and acceptable across regions and time. This will allow the academic administrators, measure growth in quality consciousness, compare quality awareness between institutions, bench mark minimum quality literacy standards and promote quality movement in higher education.

The Student quality Literacy Index is computed by quantifying students' responses under quality awareness, internalization of quality issues, personal evaluation of quality systems and objective analysis of institutional quality sustenance efforts. This study pertains to a case study of a degree College in Mumbai. Being a pilot study the sample is small but highly representative.

Student Quality Literacy Index

The Student Quality Literacy Index (SQL index) quantifies and measures, the level of student observation of quality systems that are part of or external to institution, individual quality perceptions and perception of ones role in quality systems.

The study of quality literacy shall firstly calibrate the scale of measure, evolve methods to solicit feedback and evaluate the response as per opinions. It being a preliminary study, the survey will also have the responsibility of conveying information on quality awareness to students at an appropriate time during interview.

Prepared to deal with a wide variety of students across faculties and programmes, seniority, levels of information and nature of institutions, the scale of measurement needs to be comprehensive as well as comprehensible. Secondly, the study should yield enough information to facilitate the quantification of awareness and specific deficiencies in awareness. The follow-up can aim at improving the awareness of quality among students in identified areas. Thirdly, the study does not benchmark the expected level of awareness. The scale is so wide that it can measure quality literacy right from modest levels to higher degreed. Such an index wills comparison between different students' reference groups, institutions and across time.

	Components of Students' Quality Literacy Index	**Weightage**
1.	Awareness about the institution	05
2.	NAAC Quality procedures	05
3.	Perception of institutional quality systems	10
4.	Self identified quality systems	10
5.	Personal Quality perception	25
6.	Role perception	25
7.	Institutional Quality concerns	20
	Student Quality Literacy Index	**100**

The Student quality Index is primarily made up of seven components, each with different weight. The weights sum up to 100. The quality index is the score of student out of 100.

These components are broad indicators of awareness of student on various aspects of quality: observation, perception, evaluation and capacity to interact with systems.

These components are developed into comprehensible questions called probes. Probes are direct questions seeking information, which can be evaluated in quantitative scale.

1. The awareness about the institution with 5 percent weight is the first among the two dealing with awareness of students regarding the quality parameters that are external to the institution. While studying the awareness about the institution, the student is expected to describe the institution whether Autonomous or Affiliated college and affiliation to the University, whether Accredited or not and if accredited when and grade received.

2. Awareness of quality procedures carries 5 percent weight. It seeks to quality students' awareness on quality procedures, NAAC and grading of quality in higher education.

3. Perception of institutional quality systems carries a weight of 10 percent. The study collected opinions on the choice of courses and curriculum, teaching, academic environment, college administration, student support activities, library, and facilities.

4. Self identified quality systems carry a weight of 10 percent. This is a self generative and intrinsic parameter. The students' perception of self-identified quality systems is recorded. These are all open ended questions, where the students independently draw information on ones exposure and participation in institutional affairs; a true stake holder. These are good practices endorsed by the student.

5. Personal Quality perception is assigned a weight of 25 percent. This is what a student conceives in quality as important. This is accepted as one single parameter to judge the institutional quality. Such quality perception included college academic results, discipline, good teachers, research and consultancy, publications by teachers, good buildings and infrastructure, good Principal and administration, student leadership, student participation in college matters, sports and extra curricular activities, availability of course and optional subjects of choice, scholarships / freeships, Effective Alumni, campus placement, Students' Council, accreditation by NAAC and gradation, recognition of college by industry, personality development, good NSS or community service, and modern teaching methods.

6. The role perception is given 25 percent score. This is about the role the student envisaged in quality management. This is a subjective contribution supported by experience and expectations and aptitude of the student. This component dealt with probes like teacher evaluation by students, course evaluation, students' elections, participation in decision making, providing regular evaluation and feed back to college, developing self study programmes, liaison with alumni, maintenance of infrastructure, participation in administration, and grievance reddressal.

7. The students' participation in institutional matters is named Institutional Quality concerns, carrying a weight of 20 percent. This component measures students

understanding of the quality systems, deficiencies and has methods for improving the system. Under this head the study collected information on issues and suggestions in specific for improvement at the institution.

The questionnaire was designed in such a way that probes were indicated during interview so that the student can consolidate ones observations in the given parameter. However the students were also encouraged to compose opinions independently, as natural progression after initiation.

The investigators also doubled-up as educators. During the survey, the investigators interviewed to collect information and later provided information. This way the survey collected data and also accomplished the supplementary motive of initiating quality movement among students. Winning twin objectives, the study could collect data on quality literacy and also disseminate information on quality education. The investigators were thoroughly trained for the job.

Description of sample

The sample for the study is a random group of students from Vaze College Mumbai. Vaze College is a Mumbai sub urban college affiliated to University of Mumbai. It is a multi-faculty College with around 3000 students. It has graduate and post graduate programmes. The College was accredited in 1998 with top 5 star and reaccredited in 2005 with A grade. It is recognized as the College with Potential for Excellence and adjudged as Best College by University of Mumbai in 2005.

Ten degree student were selected, trained and were given the task of interviewing the students. The students of Vaze Research Group of Vaze College worked on the survey. The data collected was classified, tabulated and run on the model for analysis. Firstly, the data was run on for regression analysis to ramify the component variables and weights in the computation of SQL Index. The analysis that followed dealt with simple aggregates of indices and the standard deviation to check the variations in the data.

Notations

V1:	Institutional Awareness,	
V2:	Institutional quality perception,	
V3:	Quality preference,	
V4:	Quality perception,	
V5:	Role perception,	
V6:	Quality concerns, and	
V7:	Quality procedures	
S1:	first year students,	mean-M1, **a** 1- Standard deviation
S2:	Second year students,	mean-M2, **a**2- Standard deviation
S3:	third year students,	mean-M3, 3**a-** Standard deviation
S4	Post graduate students,	mean-M4, 4**a** - Standard deviation, and,

Aggregate mean **E**M *Ea-* Standard deviation at aggregate

Student Quality Literacy index in terms of Component scale values

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	
	Institutional Awareness	**Institutional Quality Perception**	**Quality preference**	**Quality Perception**	**Role perception**	**Quality Concerns**	**Quality procedures**	**Group aggregate**
Max Value	**5**	**10**	**10**	**25**	**25**	**20**	**5**	**100**
Ml	**2.05**	**7.4**	**2.8**	**16.3**	**8.75**	**4.75**	**0.9**	**43**
al	0.68	1.75	1.98	2.57	3.17	5.59	1.02	9.52
M2	**2.55**	**8.95**	**3.7**	**18.5**	**9.4**	**4.5**	**1.55**	**49.65**
S2	1.19	1.43	2.45	2.03	5.66	5.59	1.76	10.73
M3	**2.7**	**7.25**	**4.02**	**17.95**	**7.78**	**7.27**	**1.4**	**48.05**
a3	1.09	1.05	1.70	2.51	2.94	5.25	2.08	8.54
M4	**2.8**	**10**	**6.8**	**15.9**	**12.6**	**6**	**1**	**56.5**
a4	0.42	0.0	4.02	4.17	4.90	4.59	2.10	6.07
S **M**	**2.53**	**7.96**	**3.98**	**17.47**	**8.88**	**5.95**	**1.27**	**48.22**
Ea	1.00	1.60	2.50	2.78	4.17	5.40	1.81	1.02

Inferences

Similar to the core scale analysis the aggregate SQL Index is 48.22. The aggregate score has variations between 43 for fresh degree students and 56.5 for the PG students. The awareness of quality grows from year to year in collegiate education. With in the reference group the variation large at S2, second year degree students, again the deviations being low at PG students.

Among component scale, the lowest scores recorded are at Quality procedures, where the individuals scored a maximum of 12 percent. On the other hand the deviation within the sample is highest. During the year 2006, The Year of Students Participation in Quality Assurance, there is a greater need to educate students on quality procedures. Such a low score on quality procedurals show that there is a great need to educate students on quality assessment endeavors.

The score on Quality concerns are among the lowest. At a component aggregate of 5.95, it amount to less than 3 percent score. Quality concerns are expressed largely by the final year degree students. With three years of stay at the college, these students demonstrated relatively better quality concerns. PG students are mostly new entrants like fresh degree students. Even within the low score the deviation is very large with Ss 5.4. The quality concerns are discrete and sporadic at final year students. Trailing on quality externalities,

scoring low on institutional awareness is understandable with reference to the sample. The university has affiliated system; autonomous institutions are not very common in Maharashtra.

On institutional Quality perceptions PG students score a perfect ten. The College is known for its laboratories recognized even at National level. The PG students are from science faculty. The score is an exception at the college and need not be truly representative.

On Quality preferences the aggregate score is 3.98 with again the S4 scoring the highest and lowest at fresh degree entrants. There are large variations with in the sample showing that the quality preferences are highly individualistic.

On quality perception the scores have been high and consistent. The deviations with the sample are reasonable. Students scored around 62 percent on this component, more than the aggregate index.

Role perception is poor at an aggregate score of 8.88, that too with large variations with in the sample, Ss = 5.40. This gives scope for mass awareness campaign for student awareness on quality issues. Poor role perception in quality issues generally put the onus of quality on the institution, university and governments. Awareness alone can enlighten the role of students in quality management. It is yet another case for enhanced inputs for students' participation.

Forward integration

The study could support the hypotheses and also throw light on issues which were only supplementary to the main objectives.

- The aggregate SQL Index is 48.22. The aggregate score has variations between 43 for fresh degree students and 56.5 for the PG students. The awareness of quality grows from year to year in collegiate education.
- The awareness of quality procedures are learnt by students only during accreditation exercise, specific to the period. This awareness wanes off with time.
- The Year of Students Participation in Quality Assurance, there is a greater need to educate students on quality procedures. At such low levels of scores on quality procedurals, even from an accredited institution, highlights the need to involve and empower students in Quality education on much larger scale.

- In component scale analysis it was found that Role perception is poor. This gives scope for mass awareness campaign for student awareness on quality issues. Poor role perception in quality issues generally put the onus of quality on the institution, university and governments. Awareness alone can enlighten the role of students in quality management. The objectives of quality movement can be shared by students with equal zest.

The study is first of its kind with no known inputs for comparison between institutions and across time. The response from students and the quality of data and the post interview quality standards of students observed in the study have been all encouraging. The study makes way for more in-depth study of quality literacy index. In terms of probe analysis where data on 45 predefined variables is collected. With probe scale analysis and study between institutions and across time, the levels of awareness can be effectively assessed for bench marking.

The methodology described is highly simplified here for ease of common understanding. The system of students' quality literacy index (SQL Index) is developed into an independently usable kit. The Student quality literacy index kit is available with open source which can be adapted by any institution.

In addition to being a method of measuring students' quality literacy, the study also brings out evaluation of institution by students. It will be highly useful in review and revision of local policies at institution level. As regular practice, SQL study at institutions will help in revising local quality bench marks. It will also serve as an additional testimony for the institution during NAAC assessment and accreditation process.

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Quality Literacy Among Students: A Three-Dimensional Perspective

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Abstract

Quality Literacy per se among students is conceptually looked in three different perspectives in any higher educational institution. Firstly, the approach any higher educational institution takes towards orientation of the entire expected campus experiences the students shall be benefiting. Basically this can be seen as the information dissemination processes of the institution among the student community. Secondly, it is looked upon as how well the feedback mechanisms from the students with respect to the curricula, teaching-learning and evaluation, and infrastructure facilities are in place. The efficiency and effectiveness of the feedback systems is also a gauge of the Quality Literacy among student community. The third dimension being interrelated to the second - the suggestive measures in terms of student services, governance, and the role of students in academic and administrative decision-making bodies ensures quality literacy. This paper aims at possible experiences of the three dimensions of Quality Literacy among students. It also tries to explain with focus on the redressal of grievances /problems in the evaluation system as a measure of Quality Literacy among students. It attempts to understand Quality Literacy among students in Indian context with a panoptical view.

Introduction

Quality concepts are highly inbuilt among the high performing higher educational institutions. Quality *per se* conceptually is well explained among the student community in these Universities and Colleges. The performance of higher education institutions is also measured through the quality literacy among its teachers and students. The institutions of excellence have quality concepts deeply rooted in the organizational culture. Most of the top Colleges and Universities have quality concepts right from bottom to top as well as from top to bottom. This free flow of the information through cascading or dissemination processes makes them a special mark in the regional, state, national and international scenarios. The General Information Dissemination processes take place right from the beginning of the programme of study to the students who enter into these institutions through different ways and means. Henceforth, the student community is well informed about the entire campus culture and the course offerings. Either public higher educational institutions or private funded institutions there are commonality measures in their initiatives regarding quality literacy among students.

These quality concepts, which are intrinsic in nature and the quality literacy, can be seen as a foundation for excellence. The quality literacy among students can be viewed in a

three-dimensional perspective or even in a panoptical view. Firstly the General Information Dissemination processes about the entire institution to the students at the beginning of their institutional career. Secondly, feedback systems administered among students for institutional building and feedback mechanisms given to the students regarding their performance and learning process. Finally, support services or delivery systems the higher educational institutions cater to student community. These three dimensions are emphasized in the ensuing pages.

1-D: General Information Dissemination Processes

As a foundation for excellence general information dissemination processes of higher educational institution are in place. It is the case with institutions with potential for excellence and institutions with higher level of quality among student community. Universities and Colleges make the prospective students entering into higher or further education clear with the objectives of each programme of study. Most of the information regarding the courses / subjects available for the students and their evaluation procedures are exhibited through print media and electronic media through websites of host institutions.

In order to propagate literacy of quality among the students the free flow of information about higher education institutions are great in top class Universities and Colleges. The institutions print various booklets, leaflets, pamphlets, diary, academic calendar, application for admission, profiles of departments, placement brochures, etc. for the benefit of the students. This in turn helps the students to get familiarize with the institution as well as the School / Faculty / Department / Programme of Study.

More than educational consultants within and outside the higher education set up, student counselors are also available for students to meet them and get first hand information about the Universities and Colleges. Some of the institutions advertise them in the dailies (newspapers) regarding the admissions and their eligibility criteria for each programme of study as per the norms and guidelines that appropriate statutory councils and bodies govern them. Quality literacy among students starts much before they could get admitted in a programme of study of a higher educational institution through various measures as stated earlier.

Once the students get admitted in an institution, they are well-informed about the whole higher educational experience in the initial phases. They are groomed by different methodologies right from the beginning, the system of instruction and evaluation that will be followed i.e., trimester, semester, annual patterns. Information is given to the student community regarding the required number of credits, months, years of study for their degree, diploma, etc. and also the flexibility about completing each course of study. Students are in general informed in the initial stages about core and ancillary subjects, and in addition facilities to earn more credits through other cocurricular and extra curricular activities. Inter disciplinary and multidisciplinary courses that they can opt for in cafeteria model is also well explained.

The general information dissemination processes gets the students into the basics of credits, grades and percentages of marks and the procedures of study, which will lead them to. The *modus operandi* to earn credits through seminars, group work, assignments, projects, dissertations, internships, practicum and laboratory work are the essence in the first dimension of quality literacy among the freshers. They are informed about the formative continuous internal assessment and the end of semester examinations or summative examinations at the end of the academic year, whichever being the model the higher educational institution follows.

The entire period of perspective study plan, guidelines and instructions are given to the students at the beginning. Students are guided for their self-study and academic and career planning in this process. The impact of the programme of study and formation of character by the way of - intellectual, affective and psychomotor domains are also elaborated in the orientation given to the students during the beginning of the programme of study. All of these activities are even demonstrated and senior students give testimonials during the first week for the freshers. These concepts help the students to get clear picture during the entry period itself.

The norms, rules and regulations of the campus, the institutional history, its culture and heritage are well imbibed to the student community in this dimension. The emblem, coat of arms, motto, vision, mission, core values and goals and objectives of the higher education institution are categorically explained to the students in the opening days.

The role of students and their participation in the institutional activities to take the institution to greater heights are also inbuilt in the general information dissemination classes. The students are taken on a campus tour, which explains, stay and study in the campus, infrastructure, library, sports and recreation, computing facilities and their access, availability and utility. The management, authorities, boards and other academic and administrative bodies are introduced to the students in the information dissemination process. All these inputs are given immediately after admission by counseling and lectures, by virtual campus tours and real campus tours. Thus, general information dissemination processes helps the students being qualitative right from the beginning as a part of the excellence institution to add value.

2-D: Feedback Systems

The feedback systems that are inbuilt in higher education institutions are one of the most important and the second dimension of quality literacy among students. Obtaining feedback from the teaching as well as the student community is an essential element of quality. For quality and excellence in educational institutions the simple PDCA (Plan, Do, Check and Act) cycle had helped Universities and Colleges. The effect of globalization made institutions to realize that there should be an effective system of learning from the past

experiences. The rapid expansion and changes in higher education institutions had been acknowledged due to these systematic feedback mechanisms, which were in place for quality institutions.

Due to consistent methods of collecting feedback and analyzing them had helped institutions to bridge the gap in curriculum as well as to built-in best practices. The thorough implementation of the feedback analysis had made teachers to be innovative in their teaching-learning processes.

The general information dissemination processes had helped the students to give quality feedback in a systematic and scientific way in all aspects related to the campus experiences. Many quality assurance agencies had developed sample questionnaires format to collect feedback from students. It varies from institution to institution and sometimes it serves a model formats to obtain feedback.

The NAAC had developed some sample questionnaires to be administered among students randomly or across board. They are at entry level, during the middle of the programme of study and exit level. These sample questionnaires to obtain feedback can be further categorized into curriculum, evaluation of teachers, evaluation of the teaching process, and students overall evaluation of the programme. Appropriate measures had been taken by the curricular boards to incorporate the feedback report that had been given by the graduating students. This had been the distinct characteristic of a quality higher education institution striving for excellence. The major success was due to the quality literacy among the student community.

3-D: Delivery of Student Support Services

The third dimension of the quality literacy among students is the feedback systems that are inbuilt by the delivery of student support services. The knowledge base and awareness that had been created by the first and second dimensions of quality literacy helps the students to understand their quality of life in the campus during the programme of study as well as expected skills and competencies that could be developed by support provided by the Universities and Colleges.

The delivery of support services to students are in general the common understanding of the programme of study as understood by the higher education institution, delivery of the programme, library and information resources, computing facilities, sports and recreational facilities, cafeteria, financial scholarships, housing, alumni, counseling, etc.

As delivery of student support services also reflects quality literacy among the students and *vice versa.* Normally the higher education institutions with potential for excellence had followed the following basic principles of delivery.

1. Identify the need of the student support service
2. Design the support service
3. Deliver it, and
4. Evaluate it

The three major areas of student support services and its delivery are accessibility, availability and utility. Be it in services of library holdings viz., books, journals, e-resources, photocopying, etc. or computers and Internet facilities or even financial scholarships. The conducive and clean environment for learning in higher education institutions is a reflection of quality literacy among the student community. The time for mind spacing and self-reflection and self-learning is also part of the support services the Universities and Colleges that would deliver as part of the quality enhancement.

Conclusion

Why quality literacy among student community? The quality literacy among students is a key for any higher education institution success. The conceptual clarity of quality and quality literacy among teachers and students are essential due to the basics of globalization, rapid changes and innovation in curriculum, teaching-learning and evaluation, improving efficiency in the delivery of support services and tendency of all higher education institution to work towards perfection or excellence. These are the four pillars, which are connected to the vision, mission and core values of the higher education institutions. The first dimension had mainly looked into the general orientation or information dissemination process effectiveness in order to achieve the stated objectives. The consistency of obtaining feedback across board in the higher education institutions and the systems in place to measure, analyze and make midcourse corrections had given the pathway for quality enhancement process - the second dimension of quality literacy among student community. Finally, the third dimension, delivery of support services has been thoroughly implemented in most of the excellence higher education institutions. Thus, the three dimensional perspective of quality literacy among student community has given leaps and bounds of educational excellence.

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Teaching and Learning: A Symbiotic Approach to Promote Students' Participation in Curricular Designing

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Abstract

Our educational system has made our students to remain passive listeners for years together. Even in the traditional Gurukula system, the disciples had to live with their respective Guru's to listen, discover and explore the field of knowledge by themselves. Every theory taught by the Guru was immediately practiced and experimented by the disciples now and then in front of Gurus. But our present educational system give more importance to listening skill and reproduction mechanism. The educational input and output remain indigested. The process of verbal diahorrea ends in the form of written examination. As the result the Indian academic institutions have been producing graduates with enviable degrees, diplomas, gold medals and great distinctions. But the system has miserably failed to create graduates with innovative approaches, analytical faculty and discriminative abilities. We have a plethora of disciplined clerks and hard-headed bureaucrats but not thinkers with sense and sensibilities. Students should be given more number of opportunities to participate in the curricular development. Educational consultancy should be developed as a system at all levels so that students may have opportunities to decide their future course of employment, its content and relevant institution. The paper offers some suggestions, which may be considered to improve the students participation in higher education system.

"I learnt most not from those who taught me, but from those who talked with me"- St. Augustine

Preface

India has remained basically a knowledge-society from time immemorial. The strength and glory of this ancient nation have roots in its strong intellectual power. The marvelous architecture, ancient mythologies, scriptures, culture, literature and our heritage announced the world that India is basically a country of amazing intellectual stamina and fervour. The great dramatist Kalidasa, Vishakadata, the renowned law-maker Manu, the great architect Mahagovinda of 3rd B.C. who designed the ancient city Padaliputra, Bharatha, an expert of dance, Kalhana, the first Indian historiographer are some of the exponents known to the world. The ancient universities such as Taxila, Kanchipuram and Nalanda

offered excellent education of international recruit. Sri Arabindo, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore and Vijayalakshmi Pandit are some of the modern advocates of India's intellectual resources. The Indian system of education has never been inferior to any other systems of similar kind in the world. But it now requires some alteration in its goals and some minor changes in its application as per the prevailing social conditions at a globalised context.

Indian Higher Education - A Profile

The modern Indian higher educational system came into being 1857 when the first three universities were set up under British rule. Methodology of teaching and course content of this universities were designed and decided by the policy guidelines of Lord Macaulay and Wood's despatch. The periods between 1857 and 1947 were a gradual growth of institution of higher education having its focus mainly on liberal arts education. There were only 20 universities and 500 colleges when India became an independent country. A major transformation took place in the Indian higher education system during post-independence era as its focus changed from being an elite system based on the principles of colonialism to a "mass system" to meet out the evergrowing demands of a developing democracy.

The next stage of revolution in the sphere of Indian higher education took place in 1990's when the globalisation and liberalization of Indian economy set afoot in the country. These national process fueled excellency, quality and competency in Indian higher educational system. There are at present 343 universities of which 19 are Central universities, 204 State universities, 95 deemed universities, 5 Institutions of National importance and 7 private universities. Apart from this, there are 10 open universities and nearly 17625 colleges of which 5386 have recognized by the UGC.

Enrolment of Students

As against the total enrolment of 200,000 students in 1950, the enrolment of students upto 2004 has risen to 99,53,506 out of which 86.97 percentage are enrolled in colleges in pursuit of undergraduate, postgraduate diplomas and research whereas only 13.03% are enrolled in the university departments. The student enrollment ration in higher education has also increased from 1.5% in 1960 to 6.86% upto 2004. But this rate is very low in comparison to other developing and developed countries. The enrolment ration in higher education is close to 100% in Canada, 80% in USA, 50% in France and 30% in UK. Even in some less developed nations like Thailand, Indonesia, Mexico and Brazil, the enrollment figure is much higher than in India.

The Role of Curricular

One need not emphasize on the supreme importance of curricular in an educational institution, as its importance is self-evident. The entire educational system is built around the nucleus called "curricular". It is a fact that the ultimate responsibility lies with the academic community of the country to build a meaningful curriculum. But the curricular content should be built around the specific purpose for which the educational provisions are made and they should be made explicit to the students, employers and to the society at large. Every curricular should have a specific objective and be student-centered and socially relevant. It is the basic unit of each and every academic activity. The curricular should be contemporary and futuristic too. It should be determined by needs of sustainable development. Courses may be built around the specific needs of global employment and culture-needs that reaffirm one's identity and heritage.

Why should the contemporary Indian higher educational system change?

It is time that the Indian higher education system to undergo immediate oceanic change to suit the contemporary social needs. The globalised social order of the present situation requires meritorious, competent and resourceful student generation with sharp analytical ability and quick decision making resources. Politically, economically and socially India has to play a major role in the international social system. It emerges as an inevitable country for intellectual needs of the globe. The developed countries started looking India for their knowledge based orientations. The country has to produce graduates who will take up the respective responsibilities not in the next street, town and cities but across the globe. The objectives of Indian higher education system has become wider both in its scope and vision. India has to produce graduates with multilingual, multicultural, multiskilled and multifaceted resources. Our graduates take up assignments in USA, France, Germany, UK, Australia, Canada, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia and in fine all the world over. Multinational companies throng campuses of rural Indian colleges in search of "freshers". Therefore the changed contemporary social conditions gives the wake-up call to Indian academicians, educational planners, administrators and national policy makers to get away from their long-lying stupor. The goals and objectives of Indian higher education are no more local, regional and national but simply global. Hence the entire gamut of our approach towards Indian higher education system needs to change.

How to Change?

The word "change" is inevitable in every discourse on Indian higher education. But there are too many answers for the single question, 'why should Indian higher education system change'? But there are very few answer for the question how to change it? Where to change? when to change? and what to change?

Why should it change?

Students: The mute recipient of knowledge.

Students of any disciplines are expected to be proficient in four basic skills of learning such as Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). But Indian traditional educational system has so far successful in all avenues in imparting only one basic of four skills namely "Listening". Our educational system has made our students to remain passive listeners for years together. The classroom teaching system namely the lecture method never allowed the students to speak, question and discourse in their respective subjects. Even in the traditional Gurukula system, the disciples had to live with their respective Guru's to listen, discover and explore the field of knowledge by themselves. Every theory taught by the Guru was immediately practiced and experimented by the disciples now and then in front of Gurus. But our present educational system give more importance to listening skill and reproduction mechanism. The educational input and output remain indigested. The process of verbal diahorrea ends in the form of written examination. As the result the Indian academic institutions have been producing graduates with enviable degrees, diplomas, gold medals and great distinctions. But the system has miserably failed to create graduates with innovative approaches, analytical faculty and discriminative abilities. We have a plethora of disciplined clerks and hard-headed bureaucrats but not thinkers with sense and sensibilities. Students should be given more number of opportunities to participate in the curricular development. Educational consultancy should be developed as a system at all levels so that students may have opportunities to decide their future course of employment, its content and relevant institution. The following factors may be considered to improve the students participation in designing curricular.

- Students orientation and consultancy should be systematically developed at all levels of education.
- Students be made member of board of studies.
- Students evaluation of teachers and course content should be given serious consideration for systematic follow-up action.

Innovative Teaching Methodologies

The ultimate output of any educational ideology is classroom teaching. The classroom atmosphere at all levels of education is a crucial place because it is a centre where the shaping of minds take place. The teachers are the ultimate authority and chief executive of the entire operation called, 'transmission of knowledge'. C. M. Clark, an eminent U.K. based educationist has made a commendable observation about the teachers. He observes:

Schooling is organized so that educational policies, curriculum and instruction are interpreted and enacted by teachers. Teachers are the human point of contact with students. All other influences and quality of education are mediated by who the teacher is and what the teacher does. Teachers have the potential for enhancing the quality of education by bringing life to curriculum and inspiring students to curiosity and self-directed learning.

Need for Student-Centered Passionate Teaching

Teaching at all levels has to shift from teacher-perspective to student-perspective. Stating simply, teaching has to be student-centric instead of being teacher-centric. Passionate teaching is a current teaching methodology gaining momentum all the world over. It is a high standard of teaching, learning and achievement of various forms of intellectual, physical, emotional and passionate endeavour in which teachers at their best engage. Christopher Day is a Professor of Education and Co-Director of the Centre for Research on Teacher and School of Development at the School of Education, University of Nottingham has made the following statements about passionate teaching.

Teachers with a passion for teaching are those who are committed, enthusiastic and intellectually and emotionally energetic in their work with students. Passionate teachers are aware of the challenge of the broader social context in which they teach, have a clear sense of identity and believe that they can make a difference to the learning and achievement of all their students. They care deeply about them. They like them. They care also about how and what they teach and are curious to learn more about both in order to become and remain more than merely competent. They are aware of the role played by emotion in classroom learning and teaching. For those teachers, teaching is a creative and adventurous profession and passion is not an option. It is essential to high quality teaching.

Need for Pre-Joining Orientation Programme

An I.A.S, I.P.S. officer after passing their respective exams undergo systematic training before joining service. The training imports necessary skills and perceptions required for their profession. This is the same case with doctors, engineers and lawyers. But it is sad that there is no such pre-joining orientation programme for teachers. Soon after their selection and appointments they simply walk into classroom and start teaching. They neither know about themselves or about students. P.J. Palmer's statement about 'teachers professional and personal identities' is worth quoting here.

When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are, I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadow of my unexamined life - and when I cannot see them clearly - I cannot teach them well. When I do not know myself I cannot know my subject - not at the deepest levels of embodied, personal meaning...3

Orientation program and refresher courses are presently offered only after teachers joining service as lecturer in colleges. It is high time that such courses are arranged for teachers before they join service. In the absence of such training, they learn the art of teaching through hit and trial methods and by the time they actually attend the course, a lot of unlearning of unsuitable methods is required. It is a fact that every profession in India has some systems and methods except teaching.

Entry Level Test for Students

Entry Level Test (ELT) should be conducted at all levels of higher education to diagnose the level of proficiency and expectations of students. It is only after this, the concerned teacher can make proper assessment of his students and accordingly he can decide his teaching methodology. Students level of proficiency, their attainments, expectations and ambitions should be taken into account before formulating the teaching strategies. The teacher should bear in mind that the teaching strategy required for students differs from one to another. Hence the teacher is expected to do some ground work before teaching a course to his students. He should not have his, "own teaching methods" (OTM). He has to decide a teaching methodology decided by his students or the one that suits them.

Conclusion

Student is the nucleus of every educational institution. Massive buildings, scholarly professors, scientifically-designed curricular, objectives, mission, vision, huge amount of finance, plethora of educational equipments, innovative concepts, methodologies and strategies will have their meaning, relevance and existence only when these pervades an entity called "Students". But for students, the world of academia would become hollowed. But it is sad that all kinds of educational reforms do take place in India without taking into consideration the aspirations of the students community who is the very foundation of the superstructure of Indian academia. It is a fact that one cannot pull on with this condition further for the 21st century. The 21st century is a century of knowledge, resourcefulness, proficiency, competency and analytical abilities for human development. Therefore students should constitute the preamble of India's academic reforms for the 21st century.

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Student Participation In Quality Enhancement - Tools for Student Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

In the present scenario, there are tremendous changes in the Higher Education System all over the world, which demand various tools for student empowerment for quality enhancement at the institutional level. Higher Education institutions must equip with these tools which are broadly categorized into Academic Tools and Non-Academic Tools. Both these tools must be procured and effectively implemented for total quality enhancement in the student empowerment process.

Sufficiently ventilated and technologically equipped smart classes provide the most congenial study environment to Higher Education institutions. Electronic gadgets such as LCD Projectors, teaching -learning processes entwined with activities such as discussion boards and teaching aids like view grades; a role-model teacher with the balanced capabilities of acquisition, transmission and addition of knowledge; interactive classes bringing out the softskills of the students such as paper presentations and evaluation techniques such as Continuous Internal Assessment, need based curriculum sandwiched with off-campus programmes, incorporation of ICT oriented courses and establishment of placement cells; provision of training and opportunities to develop interpersonal skills; furnishing ideal Infrastructural facilities like the laboratory and the library and encouraging more student participation in institutional activities - all these factors share their contribution to the Academic tools. The role of bodies constituting -academic tools like the management, the government and other non-governmental bodies wield their share to enhance student empowerment in Higher Education Institutions.

Methods and methodologies imbued with both the academic and non-academic tools have resulted in decrease in failure and drop-outs rate and increase in placement which are the conspicuous evidences of Quality Enhancement of student empowerment.

Notations

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
HEI	Higher Education Institution
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
CIA	Continuous Internal Assessment
NSS	National Service Scheme

YRC - Youth Red Cross

RRC - Red Ribbon Club

SHG - Self-Help Group

Introduction

Students are the vital stakeholders in educational institutions for whom the institution comprising teaching staff, administrative staff, the management and the university to which they are affiliated, are accountable. The vision and mission of every Higher Education Institution have been fixed upon the staple stakeholders, especially on finding ways and techniques to empower them for quality enhancement. In the global education scenario, enhancement of techniques or tools in schools and Higher Education Institutions has come to play a mandatory role in teaching process. This is instrumentalised by means of learning processes, extension and research activities, infrastructure development, student support services, curriculum aspects and value addition programmes which are catagorised into two broad heads! Academic and non-academic tools. Learning has been made easier and enduring by the introduction of advanced technological devices in the classrooms and laboratories. Despite the multifarious technological gadgets that have stolen into the modern smart classes, the teacher still and for ever will remain the center, and will be the role model for the moulding of the character and the future of the students which are the long-term motifs of education.

Introducing innovative teaching methods and methodologies is a crucial tool in Higher Education Institutions. More student participation should be encouraged. The more interactive the classroom is the more profound and enduring will be the learning process. More student participation in research, consultancy and community education can be entertained

The holistic growth of students is achieved only when the mechanism (Higher Education Institutions) comprising students, teachers, parents, management and the government keeps on turning in coordination

Materials and Methods

Various academic and non-academic tools are utilized by Higher Education Institutions for empowering students for quality enhancement

2.1 Academic Tools

2.1.1 Electronic gadgets

In the present educational scenario smart classes have come into picture in Indian HEIs. Such smart classes make active use of academic tools like multimedia, panaboards, flip charts, LCD projectors, laptops, VCDs and slide projectors making

the classroom environment highly technological. Teaching and learning processes like quizzes, surveys, discussions boards, group discussions and brain - storming sessions also serve as some tools. Relevant information are provided by tools like calendar, view grades, messages, contact list, rosters, online manual comprising content areas, course tools, course options, user management and assessment methodologies adhered to in the Higher Education Institutions.

2.1.2. Teachers

ICT has come to play the primary role in the teaching-learning process. Teachers with ICT knowledge are assets to Higher Education Institutions. An ideal teacher's capabilities are three-dimensional. A balance has to be struck between acquisition, transmission and addition. The teacher has to equip herself/himself with major growth points in her/his speciality or sub-speciality and demonstrate adequate communicative skills to create new knowledge. Her/his knowledge should become a part of the cognitive universe of the common people focusing on the improvement of the quality of life.

2.1.3 Soft Skills

Introducing innovative teaching methods and methodologies in teaching is a crucial tool in HEIs. More student participation should be encouraged. Seminars, presentations and discussion sessions help the students to realize their own capacity. Teaching aids like films, charts, maps, diagrams, graphs and cartoons can be used. Students' analytical skills can be kindled by the teachers' use of metaphors and analogies. Different evaluation techniques like CIA can be followed to assess the over all [all round] performance of the students. Students performance in the class can be observed and smart and highly interactive performances can be awarded with merit or credits.

2.1.4. Pragmatic Methodologies

Seeing is believing. More laboratory activities, experiments, field trips, workshops, training, research and extension activities should be incorporated into the curriculum; off-campus programmes and dual degree programmes empower the students for placements. In the first place the curriculum should be framed in such a way that it is need-based utilizing the locally available resources with the insightful mission of proving better job opportunities for the bright future of the students. They can be engaged in activities like doing projects and role-plays. They can be encouraged to develop their own software skills such as profiling capabilities, data visualization, full-chip simulation, full instruction set simulators, etc., Placement cells, on the job training and industrial tie-up help the students to reach out the world when they are in the HEIs.

2.1.5. Interpersonal Skills

Developing inter-personal skills and soft-skills mould a juvenile student into a matured and bold adult fit to face the external world. The students should develop

- Ability to speak clearly, grammatically and cogently
- Ability to read all that is written/printed
- Ability to comprehend all that is read
- Ability to write all that one wants to express
- Ability to handle, do and apply basic arithmetic

Values like simplicity, honesty, tolerance and spirituality must be inculcated in the students by incorporating such values in the values and ethics curriculum. The professional development of the students should also be taken proper care. Students must be trained to write their own resume, a covering letter to accompany it, and provided with information on interviewing skills. Skill-based training on communication, teamwork, action-planning and leadership abilities should be inculcated, developed and encouraged. This involves or this is the outcome of stressing and incorporating listening, seeing, speaking, reading and writing skills into the curriculum. Learning can be accelerated by using techniques like Pavlov's Code Behaviourist Theory where any positive action is immediately rewarded which boosts up the furtherance of the progress.

2.1.6. Library

Library is the most effective tool, which has played a permanent and valuable role in HEIs. They function as the source of information and knowledge for the teacher and the taught. Inculcating reading habit in students boosts up the students learning process. A modernized library has various facilities such as browsing, educational CD ROMs, audio and video cassettes, tape-recorders, electronic gadgets for listening and watching and understanding the concepts of learning new or tough subjects. Visualizing theories and concepts through these aids help the students to recapitulate the hard-core components such as in physics and Mathematics. Such modern digital libraries have changed and triggered the learning process of students. More student participation in research, consultancy and community education can be entertained

2.2 Non-Academic Tools

In the machinery Higher Education Institutions, students are the stake-holders. The rotation of the mechanism is made possible by the extra-curricular, co-curricular and student support services which are provided to students in Higher Education Institutions. Eco-clubs and library clubs can be formed to disseminate awareness on bio-diversity, sustainable use of internal resources and reviewing. It is mandatory to establish clubs and associations

to bring out the full-fledged growth of the students. Such activities like the NSS, Rotaract club, college union, YRC, Youth Welfare, Alumnae Association and RRC are in plenty. Co-ordination, leadership qualities, compassion, discipline, managerial ability, organizing capacity and self-confidence are cultivated because of these co-curricular activities and they help the adolescents in the minds of students to move towards adulthood with positive values and bright attitudes.

Such associations and Individual departments can have tie-up with village development activities like the SHGs. Engagement of the students will activate the students in two dimensions. They are moulded into good citizens with social responsibility and they can help themselves to support themselves.

Results and Discussion

Students, the most important stakeholders of HEIs realize the importance of the role they should play in the enhancement and sustenance of quality in the almamaters and in the society. Once introduced into the wide range of tools, methods and methodologies with which they can access into the realm of knowledge and success, they become aware of the world-standard technologies that are available and they utilize them to the optimum

It is also realized that the quality enhancement of a HEIs is shared by all the stakeholders like the government, management, teachers, students and the external quality assurance agencies. The management primarily, provides the necessary and required infrastructure, in the form of equipment and faculty members. Classrooms have become smart classes with slide projectors, LCD projectors and flip charts-whatever is required. For the proper utilization of these staff and students are given orientation and training periodically. With the role model ideal teacher and interactive classroom atmosphere, teaching-learning process becomes highly beneficial to all the stakeholders

When innovative curriculum and teaching and learning methodologies are implemented, when the existing curriculum is constantly revised and updated based on the feedback obtained from the students, naturally the quality of education is enhanced and the HEI is elevated to excellence, namely, attaining autonomy. Autonomy facilitates the HEIs to care for, to influence, to guard, to guide, to direct, to channelise, to protect, to nurture, to strengthen and to take to fruition the untamed potential of the youth. Figure one shows that the failures rate has fallen after the inception of autonomy in 2005-06.

The fall in the drop-out rate exemplified in figure 2 is the product of culmination of various efforts taken on the part of the institution, especially the management. Extending transport facilities to remote areas, arranging financial assistance from the government, other private trusts, funding agencies and from the individual philanthropists of the locality, alumni association and above all the management have considerably reduced the dropout

rate Provision of additional coaching classes like the spoken English, audio-video techniques, English for competitive examinations, training for civil service examinations and enriching course in computer application, stream-lining career oriented programmes like Web Designing and Computer Graphics, Food Preservation and Food Processing and Clinical Dietetics alongwith the regular curriculum have helped the students to become competent professionals and venturesome entrepreneurs. Soft skills development practices, training, workshops and courses have enabled them to challenge global standards. Launching and efficient functioning of the placement cell also has gone a long way in giving a turning point in the career life of women hailing from a most backward area. Figure 3 shows a gradual and steady increase in the placement of students. Though the number looks very marginal on the over view, the number is quite appreciable in a society which was refusing to send their girl children out of their houses to study

The result has proved that the vision and mission of the HEI have been duly realized by the students and they have imbibed and utilized the institutional activities. By understanding clearly and following closely the rules and regulations of the institution, by the optimum utilization of the materials and services available in the institution and by participating actively in the developmental programmes of the institutions, quality enhancement and students empowerment are ensured

conclusion

Now, the challenge which has been thrown on the students is how to survive in the competitive world. Students from all fields, whether in medicine, technical, Arts and sciences or paramedical, face the same challenge. Hence it becomes the necessity of HEIs to devise such tools to empower students. Students empowerment is empowering the Economy of the Nation. All the stakeholders in Higher Education have to pay much attention in strengthening the academic and non-academic tools and the use of these tools in a holistic manner by the stakeholders will help to enhancement of Quality in the Global Scenario.

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Empowering Students for Workplaces Building Self-Efficacy for Employability

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Abstract

Students' Empowerment for workplaces refers to their employability. Workplaces are changing due to the dynamics of globalisation and ICT revolution. The prime necessity at the outset therefore, is to make us aware of the emerging requirements of workplaces and the challenges it offers to the job seekers. Towards this end Pro Vision Education [A Centre for Studies and Research in Students' Empowerment] conducted field surveys in workplaces to understand the emerging requirements and among the tertiary level students to assess their employability gap.

This paper presents the important findings of these surveys also presents an innovative idea as to how higher education can play the role of a facilitator to empower students [i.e. enhance their employability] by enhancing the self-efficacy belief of students.

The paper also intends to highlight the necessity of Empowering Teachers for Students' Empowerment and would invite attention of educators and policy makers [in particular UGC] to evolve means for Teachers' Empowerment for Students' Empowerment.

In this paper Section author discuss as three major changes that have occurred in the job market and how employability of students has become a major issue in such a scenario. Section II introduce the concept of self-efficacy belief and discuss how development of such belief could lead to students' empowerment. Section III presents an outline of the initiative taken by Pro Vision Education to empower students. Section IV suggests how higher education institute can play an effective role in sensitizing the issue of students' empowerment.

Introduction

The problem of today's job market is more of non-employability and less of unemployment. Students are unable to find a job not because job opportunities are non-existent but because they lack the capability to make them attractive to the employer to deliver the workplace requirements. It is therefore necessary on one hand to reach out to the employers in the workplace and find out from them what the most important changes that have taken place in the job market and on the other to meet our students to see where our students stand in face of such emerging requirements.

Section I: Changing Job Market and Concerns of Employability

Information and communication technology, used in all sectors is increasing and changing rapidly resulting in increased integration and globalisation of work, such that national solutions become increasingly dependent on international conditions.

Students are expected to keep up with these changes and learn the relevant new technologies as they emerge and need to develop "self" akin to global citizen and having communicative abilities through diverse languages and media.

There's also routine work throughout the career. Instead, workplaces are embracing new forms of work, such as muli-tasking, flattened hierarchy, telework, self-employment, sub-contracting and temporary employment - a shift away from traditional forms and cultures of work, such as working five day a week, eight hours a day and performing routine work throughout the career.

Employability in such a world is determined by the synergic combination of subject understanding, skill-endowment and personal qualities. Employees are expected to exhibit decision-making abilities resulting from metacognition and strategic thinking.

'Lifetime employment' contract with a single employer is no longer relevant for a large share of the working population and it has been replaced by a more dynamic view towards "protean" careers - characterized by a high degree of flexibility, varied experiences in education, training and self-management.

In face of the emerging requirement of building such "protean" careers, students will move between employers more often and think of "engineering their own future" as a life-long exercise. In order to face such emerging new work order "attitude" to identify the "new" and "attitude to learn to live" with the new is all that which matters, because others follow naturally.

With regard to the above changes, students besides having a range of cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral subskills - should have nurturing self theory and strong self-efficacy beliefs so as to integrate the above subskills for facing the myriad challenges thrown up by the changing world.

Students are now required to have decision-making abilities resulting from metacognition and strategic thinking which requires:

- Mindfulness to comprehend the experience of one situation
- Ability to make reflection of the experience one situation to another
- Ability to make strategic repetition with necessary situational customization
- Given appropriate subskills, successful performance in workplace therefore is determined by strong self-efficacy beliefs of individuals.

Section II: Self-Efficacy Belief, Empowerment and Employability

Every individual is required to perform tasks - routine as well as "new"- and it requires the ability to apply the skills necessary to perform such tasks. To perform these tasks an individual has to have a belief embodied in him/her [or what is generally described as "self theories" or "efficacy beliefs"] of how he/she can tackle tasks given to them. Such belief can be mutable or immutable and hence self-theories in an individual can be of "nurture" type or of "nature" type.

Individuals with the "nature type" self theories believe that abilities or capabilities are inborn and therefore cannot be enhanced. On the other hand the "nurture" self-theorists do not accept lesser capabilities as their nature and believe capabilities can be self-developed.

The implication of such belief has important implication on employability.

The weak self-theorists think that in any given task if they fail, that is due to lack of ability and since abilities cannot be enhanced, they prefer to shy away from challenging new tasks as failures they think, will pull down their self-esteem. Quite understandably the employers less prefer "nature" type self-theorists and therefore they are less employable.

On the other hand the nurture type self-theorists are of the conviction that ability is an acquirable skill and can be self developed. In any given task if they fail they think that they have not put enough effort or to have not put the right kind of effort. To them failures are therefore errors that can be mended and are not something that hurt but act as a source of learning. They therefore, prefer to face challenging new tasks and achieve them by learning through failures. Needless to mention, the employers place these individuals on the higher preference scale and therefore they are more employable.

Now, if higher education is to serve the purpose of employability of the students, the very first function they need to deliver is to assess the self-efficacies of the students and make the students believe that they are to move from weaker self-efficacy belief to stronger self-efficacy belief if they are to enhance their employability. A move from weaker self-efficacy belief to stronger self-efficacy belief is something what may be described as empowerment of a student and empowering a student is therefore an initiative producing some qualitative change in higher education comprising many high value-added innovations to strive for betterment and excellence.

Section III: Building Students' Empowerment Curriculum - An Initiative

Accepting empowerment from the viewpoint of enhancing self-efficacy belief a Pro Vision Education in Calcutta has taken a unique initiative to empower students and to build Students' Empowerment Curriculum for the purpose.

The initiative comprises of different stages of experience, which this paper would share, expecting views and suggestions and adds dimensions to the initiative through replication of similar initiatives at their respective fields.

Stage I: Conducting a Three Level Survey

Meeting employers to find out what they say about the emerging workplace requirements and how the students perform in face of such emerging challenges after they join the organization.

Learning from the graduate job seekers of how they see the emerging workplace and whether they can match what they learn from academia with the workplace requirements.

Understanding the employability of undergraduate students and to find out the different focal points of limitations of our students which need to be taken care of.

Stage II: Developing Students' Empowerment Curriculum

From the findings of such survey certain efforts are on to design and develop curriculum, with the objective of making a student move from weaker efficacy belief to stronger efficacy belief.

Certain key areas for such curriculum development have been identified as follows:

Generic skill development - This is defined as a set of general or non-specific skills which are necessary to perform in any work situation. Such skills include (to mention a few) ability to identify key points from reading a passage, present them in simpler language to others either verbally or in writing, ability to build self-esteem and understand one's own strengths & weaknesses, as visions and values, ability to manage self, ability to think to deconstruct problem to find out its solution, ability to appear confident and outgoing with people and most importantly ability to learn lifelong in a self-directed mode through repeated metacognition.

Functional computer skills - Generally students learn computers and internet from the viewpoint of learning the use of certain hardware and software. But functional computer skills can be defined as task enabling IT skills. The objective is to enhance self-efficacy belief of a student by empowering him as a task enabler where computer and internet are just the means. Thus learning functional computers involves task-solving which is primary and the knowledge of hardware and software is secondary.

Self-employment skills - This refers to designing of different activities among the students with the specific objectives of motivating self-employment and small entrepreneurship among the students through the Students' Participation Method.

Communication skills - This refers to the Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing [LSRW skills] and learning of Functional Communicative English as second language through the Students' Participation Method. The necessity of communicating in English through the Internet has also been emphasized as one of the important areas of curricula development.

Functional knowledge of economics - Another area of curriculum development is in the sphere of developing functional knowledge of economics for students following the 'layman's approach.' The objective is to make every student understand the functioning and trends of global economy.

Stage III: Students' Empowerment Workshop for tertiary level students

The objective is to interact with them to make them talk to their hearts so that they open their mindset and so as to reveal the nature and level of their self-efficacy belief. Interactive workshops imparting empowerment curriculum to the students make them learn the art of self directed life long learners.

Section IV: Higher Education for Employability

Students for their successful progression to the workplaces need to utilize the three years of tertiary level education as the time for cultivation and social validation of their cognitive competencies. Higher Education Institutes is that place where students develop the cognitive competencies and problem-solving skills through continuous testing, evaluation and social comparison.

Need Assessment

A questionnaire is to be designed which we may call the "Efficacy Rating Sheet." The questionnaire is to be so designed that an individual can make self-assessment of their efficacy-belief by responding to the questions through simple binary options of "yes"/ "no"/"can't say" etc and by putting self-assessment score within the range of 1-5. The efficacy-belief could be judged from different perspectives like communication skills, economic literacy, ability to work in a team, managerial skill, ability to learn new skills, self-assessment skills, self-management skills etc and so on.

For example: The following is the "efficacy rating sheet" to assess the efficacy score with respect to ability to communicate.

	If 'yes' to what extent?				
Can you argue with a quarrelsome person? Yes / No / Can't say	1	2	3	4	5

Can you bring focused attention in listening and recognize the key points? Yes / No / Can't say	If 'yes' to what extent? 1 2 3 4 5
Can you convince others to validate your own point of view? Yes / No / Can't say	If 'yes' to what extent? 1 2 3 4 5
Can you effectively recognize and retain the key points of a read passage Yes / No / Can't say	If 'yes' to what extent? 1 2 3 4 5
Can you make synthesis of counter viewpoints of any discussion? Yes / No / Can't say	If 'yes' to what extent? 1 2 3 4 5
Can you provide clear and confident presentation of information to a group? Yes / No / Can't say	If 'yes' to what extent? 1 2 3 4 5
Can you write clear reports, letters etc written specifically for the reader? Yes / No / Can't say	If 'yes' to what extent? 1 2 3 4 5

Curriculum Design

Next curricula in modular form are to be designed. The aim and design of all such curricula need to be pointed at the general direction of making the learner learn to overcome the limitations that they have expressed in their self-assessed efficacy score. For example, keeping in mind that efficacy belief of the learner with regard to communicative ability may be low, a curriculum for communicative skills may be designed. One module in such curricula could consist of

- How to read a newspaper
- How a structured approach of reading a newspaper could make relatively easier to retain the key points of the newspaper
- How to document the key news items into synoptic but comprehensive notes
- How to make news reporting in a newspaper reading society to develop presentation skill and so on.

Similarly curricula for economic literacy, generic skills, functional computer skills, selling skills, entrepreneurship skills may be designed to address the weaknesses of students with lower efficacy in these areas.

Curriculum Deliverance

Students need to be encouraged to practice the curriculum in areas of their weakness and may be required to practise different curricula - as assignments extended over a period of two to three years. Such deliverance would require emphasizing on

Attaining Sub-goals towards Empowerment: A series of modules within a well sequenced empowerment programme can be construed as a sequence of sub-goals. If these sub-goals are successively attained then the desired goals of stronger perceived efficacy can be achieved.

Expansion of Student's compass: Students are needed to distinguish between achievement of goals that are already within the student's compass and achievement of goals which expand the student's compass. If the goals are so sequenced that students are encouraged to learn to achieve attainment goals beyond their compass then their capabilities are enhanced.

Self-Directed Lifelong Learning: Finally, students should be made to learn to transfer learning experiences from one situation to another, so that they develop the art of learning on their own either from encouragement of their achievements or from their failures due to errors. As they learn to learn lifelong under self-direction they learn to engineer their own future.

Conclusion

The Essential Pre-requisite: The task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive skills rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers, as only high sense of efficacy can breed stronger efficacy among students and motivate them to enhance their cognitive development. This paper therefore intends to draw the kind attention of educators and policy-makers to formulate policy decisions with regard to Teachers' Empowerment for Students' Empowerment as necessary in today's changing context.

Suggestions for consideration: The Academic Staff Colleges in particular can play a very special role in encouraging Teachers' Retraining Programme, Refresher Courses and Orientation Programmes on the theme of Students' Empowerment.

During these programmes professionals and HR executives from industry may be invited to deliver on the emerging requirements of industry and enlighten the teachers about today's changing nature of workplaces.

The UGC or the universities can then encourage small research projects for the teachers spanning for a period of three to four months so that they can develop curriculum to fulfill the emerging requirements of workplaces.

The curricula so developed may then be introduced by universities at the college level for empowering students.

Pro Vision Education seeks to draw attention of the Government of India and the various State Governments in this regard so as to make the students employable and empowering them before the task is hijacked by edu business agencies and international service providers often at very high costs making the country's higher education system increasingly irrelevant to the students' fraternity.

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Student Empowerment for Quality Evaluation

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Abstract

Effective means of evaluation are required for ensuring dissemination of quality education and learning and diffusion of educational innovation to the community. The current methods of evaluation in higher education are not able to promote effective learning. For innovative dissemination of knowledge which is the need of the hour, an active and visible support to encourage and support innovation and good practices can be established by developing acceptable and practicable systems for evaluation. For ensuring quality learning, recognizing development of acceptable formative methods is necessary. Institutions need to be concerned and mandate for effective evaluation methods and user-based evaluation. If institutions refine procedures to improve validity and reliability, effective evaluation should occur.

The paper overviews the methods for effective evaluation and user-based evaluation while recognizing the need of evaluation for certification and by engaging students in the process to make them effective lifelong learners. The paper also addresses the benefits of formative assessment and importance of continuous evaluation

Introduction

There is a great stress on quality consciousness in the higher education system. Quality may relate to a programme or an institution or the education system. It is the procedure and attitude the existence and use of which ensure that appropriate academic standards are maintained and enhanced by each programme at the Institute. Academic audit is the process by which an institution monitors its own academic standards and acts to assure and enhance the quality of its offerings. Involving students at various levels like delivery of courses, evaluation, curriculum development, administration etc. can work if they are equipped adequately with the required tools to carry out the activities in an effective manner and help in quality education standards. User-based evaluation of the programme, teaching and learning is necessary.

With the rapid development of society and economy there is a demand for professionalism in education. In this process the teachers and students learn from each other, explore the world of new knowledge and develop together. The ethics and sense of social responsibility are getting increasingly improved. Continuous improvement approaches help institutions to more rapidly respond to change and input from professional, organizational and industry sources. A method for evaluating courses, teaching and learning in higher education is sorely required by educational institutes to deliver quality education.

Evaluation of teaching and learning initiative can be encouraged through the use of formative and summative evaluations that focus on investigating links between the particular objectives of initiatives and educational outcomes. Provision of professional development and support programmes that focus on educational evaluation as well as teaching tools and methodologies may be adopted.

The paper evaluates the methods, procedures and strategies for effective and user-based evaluation of learning while recognizing the need for certification. The paper overviews the importance of internal assessment and continuous evaluation, using subjective and objective elements, and promotes necessary reforms. The paper also addresses the benefits of formative assessment and recommends its implementation. It expresses the need for students to become effective lifelong learners by engaging in the evaluation through feedback from peers, practitioners and others which will enable them to undertake subsequent learning effectively. Areas addressed by the initiatives identified for learner-based outcomes include student retention and student engagement, enhancing learning, catering for groups of students with diverse skills, accommodating large class sizes, curriculum integration and teaching skills associated with professional practice.

1) Evaluation Reforms - a perspective

Examinations are formidable even to the best prepared, for the greatest fool may ask more than the wisest man can answer - Charles Colton, 1825

An examination is a mechanism for the assessment of a student's performance and future potential. It sets a time-frame and an achievable set of objectives for students. By setting goals, the students are motivated to achieve clearly-defined levels of learning and competence. For the students, examinations provide an opportunity to manage time, plan and direct their effort to achieve specific educational and development goals. A systematic approach is required in which the milestones are the various evaluation components. Or else the student may well end up spending his or her effort in an undirected manner and not achieving his or her full potential.

The examination system moulds the student to a work culture which later helps him or her to become a productive and valuable member of the economy. With an increasing change towards a 'knowledge-based economy', the importance of this work culture will increase greatly. We cannot doubt that this culture has in part moulded the characters - and therefore the careers - of brilliant performers in the global IT and financial sectors who have received at least the early part of their college education in India.

But with the current system in existence, it is brought forth in most of the studies that the student's effort throughout the education is concentrated wholly on how to get through the examination. "Students concentrate only on the test and beating it which is not helpful in

learning. If any activity is not related directly or indirectly to the examination, it fails to evoke or enlist their enthusiasm. They are interested in methods which secure an easy pass rather than those which are educationally sound. It is necessary to make intangible efforts for character building, well rounded personality, a wholesome emotional and social development, physical and mental health, social adjustment and a proper development of appreciation of the finer values in life," *Jotwani & Jadhav.*

The attitude of the parents also lends support to this state of affairs. Because of the close connection between employment and the passing of examinations, the average parent is more interested in the child passing that examination than in anything else. Even the authorities who provide higher courses or employ young people are guided almost solely by the certificates awarded on the results of the external examinations. To this may be added the unfortunate trend to utilize the marks obtained at public examinations as the sole criterion for admission of students to most institutions.

Taking into consideration the above, it is necessary for institutions to continuously assess the learning. Continuous assessment definitely contributes to better education and assessment. The proposed framework should include computer-based examination, analysis/design focus and practical examination along with the written examination which can present with different and complementary means of assessing a student's learning and ability. The practical examination of a student should include specially designed experiments to test knowledge of basics, as well as practical skills demonstrable in the laboratory. The aim of an oral examination should be to test the student's understanding of basic concepts, and ability to express in simple and clear language.

With proper division of work and planning, and with the use of Information Technology, results should be declared timely. Apart from fairness and reliability, the timeliness of results is an important criterion of the performance of an evaluation system. It should be possible for a student to review answer-books to have fairness in the system.

The evaluation system should include both the subjective element along with the objective part side by side. The questions should discourage cramming and encourage intelligent understanding. Semester pattern of examination with a system of continuous learning and evaluation is required. A semester evaluation may include three assignments which judge the subject mastery, first semester, mid semester and semester end - three examinations. The cumulative of the semester grade point may be carried forward to the last semester.

2) Effective Credit & Evaluation Systems

The most important characteristic for any successful evaluation method is validity - whether a procedure measures what it purports to measure. It becomes inappropriate, meaningless, and useless to make specific inferences from invalid measurements. Evidence of validity

must be accumulated to support inferences made from evaluation results. Successful evaluation methods also must be reliable, effective, and efficient (Wise and others, 1984). Reliability means consistency - an evaluation always must give similar scores, ranking, or ratings for similar tests, regardless of the evaluator or the evaluated. Effectiveness implies that the evaluation provides results in their most useful format. Summative evaluation yields a score or rank that does not have to be interpreted to be used for accountability. Formative evaluation initiates the improvement of weak areas. Efficiency refers to spending time and money for evaluation training, materials, and procedure to ensure the desired results. To evaluate learning and quality of education, adoption of standard-based framework for evaluation is necessary by prohibiting norm-referenced evaluation. This will help students to realize whether their achievements are a result of meeting an acceptable standard or simply doing better than others in the same cohort. Students must always be treated as if they will succeed. "To admit students and assume they will not succeed is ethically irresponsible," *Boud2000.* If this is not a valid reason the intake should change. Evaluation must contribute towards building confidence in the ability of the students to learn. Grading and feedback should be separated. Grades classify work which binds learner to this and cannot point effectively to improvement. Greater emphasis should be on students' learning and understanding rather than performance goals.

The marking system should be replaced with an effective grading system. A good grading system must meet three criteria: it should accurately reflect differences in student performance, it should be clear to students so they can chart their own progress, and it should be fair. Performance can be defined either in relative or absolute terms (comparing students with each other or measuring their achievement against a set scale), and each system has its defenders. But whichever grading scheme one uses, students should be able to calculate (at least roughly) how they are doing in the course at any point in the semester. Some relative grading schemes make it impossible for students to estimate their final grades because the cutoff points in the final distribution are not determined until the end of the course. A complete description of the grading system should appear in the course syllabus, including the amount of credit for each assignment, how the final grades will be calculated, and the grade equivalents for the final scores.

Also, students should perceive the grading system as fair and equitable, rewarding them proportionately for their achievements. From the standpoint of measurement, many different kinds of assignments, spread over the entire semester provide a fairer estimate of student learning than one or two large tests.

Some of grading systems followed all over the world are given below:

European Grading System		
A	Excellent	outstanding performance with only minor errors
B	Very good	above the average standard but with some errors
C	Good	generally sound work with a number of notable errors
D	Satisfactory	fair but with significant shortcomings
E	Sufficient	performance meets the minimum criteria
FX	Fail	considerable further work required before awarding credit
F	Fail	considerable further work is required

Table 1

European Universities

The European Course Credit Transfer System has 60 credits representing the workload of a year as indicated in *Table 1.*

American Universities

American universities employ a system of continous assessment and assign grades for each course taken. Almost everything you do for a class will influence final grade. Examinations and tests, essays or written assignments, laboratory reports, laboratory or studio work, class attendance, and class participation may all be used to determine your final grade. This means it is essential to keep up with the reading and course work and to attend classes on a regular basis. The general percentage/letter grade scale for classes taken at U.S. colleges is indicated in *Table 2*

A	100 to 90 %
B	89 to 80 %
C	79 to 70 %
D	69 to 60 %
E	59 to 50 %
F	49 to 0 %

Table 2

Queens' University Grading System is highlighted in Table 3.

Queens' University Grading System			
80 to 100 per cent	Grade A	Exam deferred	ED
65 to 79 per cent	Grade B	Aggregate grade	AG
50 to 64 per cent	Grade C	Credit	CR
Below 50 per cent	Grade F	Audit only	AU
Final examination not written	NW	Dropped	DR
Coursework incomplete	IN	In progress	IP
Grade deferred*	GD		

Table 3

The **Danish, German and Virginia** University Grading Systems can be seen in Tables 5, 6 & 7 respectively.

Danish Grading System	
13	The exceptionally independent and excellent performance
11	The independent and excellent performance
10	The excellent but not particularly independent performance
9	The good performance a little above average
8	The average performance
7	The mediocre performance, slightly below average
6	The just acceptable performance/ passed
5	The hesitant and not satisfactory performance/not passed
03	The very hesitant, very insufficient and unsatisfactory performance/not passed
00	The completely unacceptable performace, hesitant/ not passed
	Table 4

German Grading System

1.00 - 1.50	**A**	Very Good
1.51 - 2.00	**A-**	Good
2.01 - 2.50	**B +**	Good
2.51 - 3.00	**B**	Satisfactory
3.01 - 3.50	**B-**	Satisfactory
3.51 - 4.00	**C**	Adequate
4.01 - 4.50	**D**	Adequate
Below 4.50		Fail

Table 5

Virginia International University Grading System

A	4.0 Excellent 4.0 grade points per credit	95-100
A-	3.7	90-94
B +	3.3	85-89
B	3.0	80-84
B-	2.7	75-79
C+	2.3	70-74
C	2.0 Average / Satisfactory 2.0 grade point per credit	65-69
C-	1.7	60-64
D+	1.3	55-59
D	1.0	50-54
D-	0.7 Lowest Passing Grade	45-49
F	0.0 Failure or Unofficial Withdrawal 0.0 grade point per credit	0-44
I	Incomplete	
P	Pass	
S	Satisfactory	
U	Unsatisfactory	
R	Re-enroll	
W	Withdrawal	
		Table 6

Dutch Universities **-** Based on the European Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the full study load for one year is 60 EC, where 1 credit is equivalent to 28 hours of study. The grading system is based on a number scale from 1 (very poor) to 10 (outstanding). The lowest passing grade is 6. A 10 is rarely awarded.

1) Formative Assessment

The diagnostic use of assessment to provide feedback to teachers and students over the course of instruction is called formative assessment. It stands in contrast to summative assessment, which generally takes place after a period of instruction and requires making a judgment about the learning that has occurred (e.g., by grading or scoring a test or paper). Formative type of evaluation guides in how to learn what the students wish to learn and tells how well they are progressing to get there. It is neither possible nor

desirable to remove the summative judgements of others but a shift is required to equip students to sustain as life long evaluators.

Black and William (1998) define assessment broadly to include all activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used diagnostically to alter teaching and learning. Under this definition, assessment encompasses teacher observation, classroom discussion, and analysis of student work, including homework and tests. Assessments become formative, when the information is used to adapt teaching and learning, to meet student needs.

When teachers know how students are progressing and where they are having trouble, they can use this information to make necessary instructional adjustments, such as re-teaching, trying alternative instructional approaches, or offering more opportunities for practice. These activities can lead to improved student success. Formative assessment helps learners become aware of any gaps that exist between their desired goal and their current knowledge, understanding, or skill and guides them through actions necessary to obtain the goal by specific comments about errors and specific suggestions for improvement and encourages students to focus their attention thoughtfully on the task.

Black and William (1998) encourage teachers to use questioning and classroom discussion as an opportunity to increase their students' knowledge and improve understanding. They caution, however, that teachers need to make sure to ask thoughtful, reflective questions rather than simple, factual ones and then give students adequate time to respond by involving everyone. Portfolios, or collections of student work, may also be used formatively if students and teachers annotate the entries and observe growth over time and practice (Duschl & Gitomer, 1997). Formative assessment is tightly linked with instructional practices. Teachers need to consider how their classroom activities, assignments, and tests supports learning aims and allow students to communicate what they know, then use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Teachers generally need to undertake or participate in some summative assessment as a basis for reporting grades or meeting accountability standards. However, the task of summative assessment remains quite different from the task of formative assessment to monitor and improve progress. While tests provide a snapshot of a student's performance on a given day under test conditions, formative assessment allows teachers to monitor and guide students' performance over time in multiple problem-solving situations.

2) Students' Participation in Evaluation

The following components can be used in combination for involving students in evaluation.

Feedback from Students - As the intended beneficiaries of the educational system, students are in a unique position to help their teachers in the evaluation process. Who else

could possibly answer these kinds of questions better than the students themselves? Of all the sources of information, students are the best source for understanding the immediate effects of the process of teaching and learning.

Questionnaires - The most common method of obtaining student reactions is to use a questionnaire. The special value of questionnaires is that they obtain responses from everyone and they allow for an anonymous and a candid response. The questionnaires at the beginning of a course can be used to get information about the students, e.g., prior course work or experience with the subject, preferred modes of teaching and learning, and special problems a student might have. Mid-term questionnaires get an early warning of any existing problems so that changes can be made in time to benefit this set of students. The advantage of end-of-term questionnaires, which is common practice, is that all the learning activities have been completed. Consequently, students can respond meaningfully to questions about the overall effectiveness of the course. Questionnaires can be developed in-house or those developed for evaluation nationally / internationally can be used. The limitation is that they can only ask a question once, i.e., that cannot probe for further clarification.

Interviews - The other well-established way of finding out about student reactions is to talk to them. Either the teacher (if sufficient trust and rapport exists) or an outside person (if more anonymity and objectivity are desired) can talk with students about the course, teaching and learning. The special value of interviews is that students often identify unanticipated strengths and weaknesses, and the interviewer can probe and follow-up on topics that need clarification. The limitation of course is that a teacher can usually interview only a few students. A teacher can informally get responses many times. Although the students know better than anyone what their own reactions are, they can also be biased and limited in their own perspectives. Perhaps more significantly, students usually do not have a full understanding of how a course might be taught, either in terms of pedagogy or content. Hence they can effectively address what is, but not what might be.

Students' performance - Teachers almost always give students some form of graded exercise, whether it is an in-class test or an out-of-class project. Usually, though, the intent of the test is to assess the quality of student learning. One can also use this same information to assess the quality of teaching and programme. Feedback is much more effective in letting students and the teacher know whether they are learning what they need to learn as the course goes along. Some students work very hard in a course, not because the teacher inspires or motivates them but because they require a good grade in the course. Therefore they work hard to learn it on their own.

Peer Review - Colleagues observe each other's learning, examine lessons, tests, and assignments. Peer review examines a wider scope of learning activities than other methods. Disadvantages include time consumption and possible peer conflict. Formative application features may justify the time demands and minimize sources of tension.

Outside observer - In addition to the two parties directly involved in a course, the teacher and the students, valuable information can be obtained from the observations of a third party, someone who brings both an outsider's perspective and professional expertise to the task. Part of the value of an outside observer is that they do not have a personal stake in the particular course; hence they are free to reach positive and negative conclusions without any cost to themselves. Also, as a professional, they can bring an expertise either in content and/or in pedagogy that is likely to supplement that of both the teacher and the students. A variety of kinds of observers exist: a peer colleague, a senior colleague, or an instructional specialist. Outside observers can usually only visit one or two class sessions and therefore do not know what happens in the rest of the course. Apart from this general problem, each kind of observer has its own limitation. The peer colleague may also have limited experience and perspectives; the senior colleague may be someone who makes departmental decisions about annual evaluations and tenure; and the instructional consultant may have limited knowledge of the subject matter.

Benchmarking & Monitoring - A very effective way is to compare and contrast approaches with similar institutions.To gain the benefits of benchmarking requires an exchange of detailed information which can be analysed in depth. Continous monitoring of the teaching and learning process and a formal recording of information can be carried out throughout the learning process by the Institution. This will help ensure whether the course objectives and the teaching and learning objectives comply to established standards.

Feedback from Community - The views of a representative sample can be taken by encouraging feedback from a cross section of the community through surveys, focus groups, representation etc. about the learning and evaluation patterns followed in the Institute.

Self-Evaluation - This method usually supplements more formal evaluation methods and is used with other data to identify the weak areas and overcome them. While feedback generally originates from a teacher, learners can also play an important role in formative assessment through self-evaluation.

Indirect Measures - Other issues can be examined to determine if they correlate with student achievement. These descriptors include enthusiasm, humor, judgment, objectivity, and punctuality.

Information Technology use needs to be explored in the form of online surveys which can be an efficient way of collecting data particularly in a well-developed network which offers connectivity to all students and teachers.

3) Learner-based evaluation

Evaluation needs to encompass the abilities required to undertake activities that necessarily accompany learning throughout life in formal and informal settings. Evaluation involves

identifying appropriate standards and making judgements about quality. "The present evaluation systems are controlled by the knowledge givers like teachers, educational institutions and professional bodies. It gives responsibility of education to them. The educational institutions have become obsessed with certification and grading and public measures of performance and accountability. The evaluation systems drive off learning while at the same time seek to measure it. Evaluation therefore needs to move from the exclusive domain of evaluators to learners. It should be sustainable in nature that meets the needs of the present and prepares students to meet future learning needs," *Boud 2000.*

In a learning society learners adopt a learning approach to life, drawing on a wide range of lifestyle practices. "Learners today will continue to be learners throughout their lives more than ever before. It is the responsibility of educators to equip all learners for formal and informal learning," *Boud 2000.* This requires going beyond course-related goals and view learning and evaluation in a wider term. The students need to be prepared not just for the outcome of the course but to operate in a complex society. Frequent self evaluation is highly efficacious in enhancing student achievement. Peer evaluation can also help if encouraged in the right perspective. The challenge is to find a balance between providing a wide range of new learning opportunities for students and enabling them to complete the feedback loop enough times for them to gain confidence that their achievements are secure and can really demonstrate the desired outcomes.

In order to equip students for a learning society, not only providing suitable forms of formative assessment as part of any learning enterprise is required, but also finding ways of embedding formative assessment thinking into all acts of learning. Learners should be able to undertake their own processes using whatever resources they can identify using colleagues, peers and friends and other sources. Consideration of standards and criteria is not enough in itself unless they are applied to learner's own work and feedback sought on the appropriateness of the application, then learners cannot be confident that they are able to use them to improve their own learning. The students need to know how they are progressing in the direction desired for which a range of strategies and devices need to be developed which can be used in learning such as setting of intermediate goals checking progress at regular intervals to sophisticated cognitive devices. Students should be exposed to certain kinds of questions in evaluation so that they may be able to develop the ability to discern and handle simultaneously the relevant aspects of various situations. The aim is to be engaged in discerning pertinent aspects of problems or issues and finding ways to simultaneously handle them. To do this, students need to draw upon both disciplinary and professional knowledge.

Students need access to peers and expertise to reflect on challenges and gain support for renewed efforts. Peers are required to help check understanding, see alternate ways of interpreting a task or situation, give ideas, provide support when feeling low, identify

new sources of information and provide other views and judgements. In educational institutes, there are never enough teachers when needed to provide expertise and they are not necessarily the most useful persons to provide it. Unless feedback is applied and used to demonstrate improvements, there is no way to tell if it has been effective. Lifelong learners need to be mindful of the language they use to refer to their own learning and do not use excessive judgemental language. Self-oppression is often more difficult to extract oneself from than oppression from a known external source.

The students if not engaged in the construction and reconstruction of criteria for judging work, they will not be able to effectively establish criteria for work. If they only write essays, they may not be able to communicate in other modes. If they only learn to perform in unseen examinations they may not be able to deploy the range of resources of the normal work environment. If they only write theory, they won't know how to put ideas into practice. And so on. Teachers need to be more transparent about their own expertise and what constitutes it, and make their knowledge available to learners. This can be done by enlisting students in the process of how to come to know what they know. A move towards great openness in standards requires an attempt to be more explicit. Students should not be deprived of information concerning assessment weightings or course objectives, a further move to explicate and make accessible the standards in marking assignments and judging good work is needed. Teachers need to focus on their expertise as learners and decentre their role as possessors of knowledge.

4) Conclusions & Recommendations

All aspects of evaluation need to be considered while evaluating for lifelong learning. It involves more than is apparent and must be judged accordingly Evaluation can have both positive and negative effects and has wide impact. It influences learning, and it helps construct the society. Thinking and practice needs to be embedded in the curriculum at all levels. The students need to be equipped for effective evaluation, learn self-assessment strategies, able to understand and set criteria, able to identify cues and clues from the context of learning, make appropriate judgements, give and receive feedback. Institute-wide policies about evaluation should be accepted widely, depending upon how they can manifest in a particular cause, department or location and the impact of contextual influences on student learning.

The unintended effects need to be identified while adopting an assessment strategy. The effects of assessment on students' approaches to learning, and the effects of the assessment on students' approaches to evaluation should be examined. It should encourage students to meaningfully engage with criteria for good work in the area and add to students' repertoire of self-assessment strategies. It should also help students to devise their own assessment strategies to respond to the assessment.

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Promoting Student Participation in Quality Enhancement

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Abstract

As democracy is for people,of people and by people, similarly Higher Education Institutes should be for students,of students and by students.Students have every right to participate in the management of colleges and for enhancement of the quality of higher education. The ideal will be to promote toppers of students in academic field by inviting them in management meetings of the college and to invite their suggestions for quality improvement.Students can suggest better books for library. Students can suggest for good sports and cultural activities in the institute.Whatever an Higher education institute does, it is for betterment of students and therefore student participation is a must and it should be made compulsory by NAAC and UGC.Younger generation always offers creative,economic,novel and intelligent suggestions (New generation is always more intelligent than the previous one.It only lacks experience) which should be incorporated by management in quality enhancement.

Quality Enhancement

Quality enhancement (QE) in higher education is a deliberate process of change that leads to improvement. Enhancing something is fundamentally about trying to make the world a better place and succeeding in this enterprise. Teachers and HE Institutions voluntarily engage in QE both in order to improve student learning and their experiences of HE and to respond to the ever changing needs and interests of society. Voluntary participation in QE is driven by the same values that drive personal learning and facilitate the learning of others.

It is an inclusive concept and a collective enterprise. It involves everyone who teaches, supports and guides students and the managers and administrators of HE institutions. It includes significant strategic initiatives and the many small things that people do to try to make things better.

The quality of learning opportunities made available to students is of great importance in the maintenance of standards. These are concerned with the effectiveness of teaching, the learning resources and the academic support in promoting student learning and achievement.

Quality enhancement is a responsible professional activity which should be undertaken at all functional levels in the University. Quality enhancement, is concerned with a planned and strategic approach to improve continuously the standards and the effectiveness of the learning experience of students

The University needs to pursue through its Schools, working in collaboration with the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching, the development of a "culture" of enhancement.

The quality enhancement systems are designed to maintain and enhance the standards that are achieved by students and the quality of the student experience. The locus of quality enhancement rests with the schools and divisions of the University, where the leadership of each subject discipline resides.

The quality systems have been designed to have the following characteristics:

a) to provide opportunities for individual staff members and groups of staff to develop their expertise and effectiveness and for the University to develop its reputation for teaching and learning;

b) to ensure that the needs of students are identified and that the student body has opportunities to contribute to the enhancement of the student experience

c) to maintain a clear and accountable process for quality assurance;

d) to identify and make available the information that colleagues require in order to judge performance and effect improvement;

e) to define clearly the quality processes and provide opportunities for their improvement;

f) to provide a framework within which Divisions and Schools can plan and implement initiatives which are well linked to the strategies of the University;

Conversations that have to take place between students and faculty are critical to the process of deciding the issue. If conversation is bad, it leads to bad incidents in the Universities. Recently Professor Sabarwal was murdered by students of Ujjain over hot talks at students union election.

Our achievements should be:

1. To build the capacity of students to participate in decision-making processes in universities.

2. To raise the awareness among students about their rights and the state of education.

3. To advance educational reform. The goal is to involve students in the process of drafting, adopting, and implementing education reform laws at the government level

All students should be encouraged and expected to participate in the development of policy. Today we look at ways that colleges and communities can engage students in meaningful activities. Students can become engaged in a number of ways. In their classrooms, they can connect curriculum to real-world problems facing their communities, such as water pollution or homelessness. They can be given real roles in classroom management, and decision-making power in designing projects, including culminating senior projects. They can have roles in student governance that go beyond the prototypical student government. They can be given a voice about college programming, graduation requirements, faculty hiring, teacher licensing, and even the lunch menu.

Students can design their own research projects, carry them out, and follow up with action plans. They can also work in the community in meaningful roles, such as being part of Youth Courts, where youth are sentenced by their peers.

Strategy

Quality Enhancement strategy should be student-focused and flexible. It enhances students' employability. It is valued by students, employers, professional bodies and the community. It contributes for a high quality HE sector.

Five main quality perspectives are:

(a) an assurance perspective whereby academic standards are verified and our commitment to students is honoured.

(b) an enhancement perspective whereby our vision is realised through critical self-evaluation and programmes and teaching which are imaginative and forward looking.

(c) a customer care perspective, where one listens and responds to the student voice; respects and embraces diversity; encourages student engagement with quality processes; and ensures that systems are in place to responded appropriately to issues raised.

(d) Identifying appropriate SMART targets, defined by outcome rather than process wherever possible and contributing to the drive for the better achievement of students.

(e) to respond to new challenges and promoting greater collaboration and co-operation across and between institutions.

Students should contribute to the implementation of the Quality Enhancement Strategy by:

1. Taking an increasingly proactive and responsible role for their own learning, including:
    a. providing feedback to staff on their learning experience
    b. using feedback to self-assess and improve their own future performance
    c. engaging in activities that enhance their employability
    d. raising issues related to their learning appropriately as they arise
    e. attending lectures, tutorials and other relevant activities as appropriate.
2. Participating in quality structures and processes, such as:
    a. acting as Programme Representatives and contributing to student/staff liaison committees
    b. completing student satisfaction surveys and other feedback surveys
    c. accepting that any work submitted by them adheres to university advice and policy on academic conduct and plagiarism.

Achieving high quality learning

Activities in this area

a. are designed to be inspiring, challenging, student-centred, flexible and accessible to our diverse range of students
b. incorporate rigorous assessment which is appropriate to the level and subject, makes use of appropriate assessment instruments and measures achievement of the intended learning outcomes
c. have clearly articulated assessment strategies which are explicitly mapped onto learning outcomes and are designed to optimise student learning and motivation
d. are designed to encourage students to develop responsibility for their own learning and employability
e. are enhanced and supported by the use of learning technology and learning environment
f. are described clearly and accurately in publicly available information such as programme specifications and module descriptors to assist students in making suitable course and module choices

g. employ appropriate resources and effective support mechanisms in order to enhance student success.

h. encourage student participation in quality processes and structures

i. monitor student progress and achievement

Support for an enhanced student experience

1. Promoting a holistic approach to enhancing the student experience which sets the learning experience in context.
2. Maintaining quality processes and procedures across the University to ensure consistency and equity in the student experience.
3. Providing opportunities for students to contribute to discussions about programme review and development and to raise issues relating to the quality of their experience;
4. Ensuring that timely and effective action is taken to address matters raised by students and that students are provided with prompt feedback on the action taken.
5. Identifying and embedding good practice and customer focus.
6. Promoting appropriate, structured and supportive personal and professional development activities
7. Promoting activities for social and academic integration whether in face-to-face or 'virtual' environments.
8. Working collaboratively with both faculties and central services.
9. Ensuring students are orientated appropriately:
    a. at entry, and at all transitions
    b. in time for any significant programme requirements
    c. for any programme-related practice placements.

Use the University's Professional Development Review system to encourage all staff to:

a. engage in quality enhancement activities

b. engage in personal and professional development for themselves

c. identify development needs of individual and groups of staff and plan how they can be met.

Students stay interested and learn more from class when teachers use many different techniques to involve them in the learning process. These range from very short and

simple techniques, like telling a story about the material, to more involved activities like small student work groups doing collaborative learning projects.

Teaching effectively is as much a process as learning effectively, teachers who are new to the classroom situation often find it helpful first to use traditional learning activities that they have modified, and then to experiment with unconventional strategies once they have established a comfortable rapport with their students. As they establish a hierarchy of active learning strategies, teachers also find it useful to document and evaluate the effectiveness of each activity. Asking students to critique activities places teachers in the role of facilitator rather than dictator.

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Setting The House In Order: Student Feedback System As An Imperative

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Abstract

Student evaluation and feedback have been the most assiduously practiced principles of intellectual freedom and transparency tools in the best of the universities the world over. The assurance that such inductions will hold for the system is a continuous evaluation of the factoring in of intellectual tools as well a bridging of market forces with cultural imperatives. As for now, the higher education system in Karnataka has already accepted implementation of the Student Feedback on Courses and Teachers, Student Evaluation of Teaching, Feedback on Campus Experience and Overall rating of Programme of Study. Of these, the first two have given way to debate and considerable anxiety and tension. Also there are instances where students have been coerced into favorable assessment. There needs to be both a genuine acceptance of the process as well as a respecting of it by the people administering it. The students themselves must be taught to value their rights as well as the significance of their participation in setting the house in order. Such a practice can only be essayed upon by answering crucial questions such as, "To what extent is the student 'evaluation' of teaching reliable and valid?" "What is the pedagogical value of such evaluations?" "What are the contaminating factors / variables?" This paper argues that if the students are asked to record their "learning experience" rather than their "evaluation" of teacher / teaching, tension surrounding the process could be reduced. It tries to outline Methods of collecting feedback / getting their learning experience recorded, analyzing and interpreting feedback, follow-up strategies to be adopted (acting on feed back), etc.

Considering that the Institute of Higher Education is the best of the democratic and democratizing systems of a civil world, it is imperative that the institution should provide space to students to express their need and to assess such provisions. For, the students are the real participants of such a dynamic force. Towards this end the universities and the colleges must begin to think of themselves as service providers and not as some elite standard bearer, strutting on the scene of competence.

The two most assiduously practiced principles of intellectual freedom and transparency tools in the best of the universities the world over have been student evaluation and feedback. The assurances that such inductions will hold for the system are:

1. a continuous evaluation of the factoring in of intellectual tools and
2. a bridging of market forces with cultural imperatives.

As of now, the higher education system in Karnataka has already accepted implementation of the following:

- Student Feedback on Courses and Teachers
- Student Evaluation of Teaching
- Exit Questionnaire: Campus Experience
- Overall rating of Programme of Study.

However, not many institutions are neither committed nor have applied their mind to make these exercises mandatory. Even when the feedback is received it has been done so tardily and rather insensitively. Such a situation has led to a lack of constructive action. The following have been the findings of a survey conducted specially for this presentation:

1. 68% of the students did not know precisely why they were being asked for the feedbacks, how the data was processed and used, Nor were they aware as to what happened to their feedback.
2. More than 40% of the students were doubtful of their contribution being taken seriously. Their previous experience said that it had no impact at all. Moreover, they were unhappy at not being informed of the action being taken. 13% of the students interpreted the move to collect the feedback at the end of the term as inconsequential and ritualistic.

Secondly, Student feedback and Student Evaluation of teachers and their teachings have given rise to debate, considerable anxiety and tension. There are instances of misusing the Student Evaluation for attitudinal and judgmental purposes as well as prejudicial decision-making by the administration. Instances of using it for development purpose and for counseling are rare. Instances of coercing students into favorable assessment abound. In other words, there needs to be both a genuine acceptance of the process as well as a respecting of it by the people administering it. The students themselves must be taught to value their rights as well as the significance of their participation in setting the house in order.

With these preliminary remarks let me move on to the question of feedback mechanism and the feedback questionnaire, which are being used at the moment in my part of the state. The colleges and universities have been using (directly or slightly modifying it) standard questionnaires developed by NAAC as part of its evaluation and accreditation of institutes of higher education. While I am greatly appreciative of the fact that NAAC intervention has introduced an evaluation culture in a system where there was no

mechanism to ensure accountability, I'm afraid the feedback questionnaire and the model developed by NAAC lacks theoretical clarity and conceptual framework.

That it lacks theoretical clarity is evident by the fact that it does not define the terms and references of evaluation anywhere. It doesn't spell out why, when, how and how much data needs to be collected. It does not specify how the data needs to be processed and interpreted and used either. The follow-up action, strategies of counseling are left to the mercy of individual institutions.

That it lacks a well-defined conceptual framework to situate the evaluation process is evident by the fact that it prescribes four separate feedback questionnaires, which are thought to be unrelated to one another. Let me cite here what the teachers have to say in this regard:

1. The teachers question the validity of student feedback on courses. "Do the institutions have authority to change the course in an affiliating system"?, they ask.
2. According to more than 50% of the teachers caste/community, gender, age group and, to some extent, expected grade influence the student feedback.
3. Some of them pointed out that the feedback questionnaire is intrinsically "against" lecture method. Questions are framed to force negative responses alone. They feel that while their curriculum makes "transmission of knowledge" imperative, the feedback questionnaire does not take into account the course design. One such classic example is a core paper called "Communication Skills and Personality Development". Though the paper is eminently suited to do away with the lecture method, the course content and the evaluation pattern emphasize "theory" of communication - definitions, types and theories of communication and thus compels the instructor to resort to the lecture method.

As a result the following conclusions are drawn:

1. A formal mechanism needs to be evolved to educate the students about the importance of feedback system and about the ways in which the data would be used. It is important to evolve a method of conveying to them the follow-up actions.
2. Processing, analyzing and interpreting the feedback are as yet not adequately developed. We are not clear about the exact percentage of the factors that affect student rating and consequently interpretation of the data remains highly subjective. An extensive survey / research is essential to evolve a formal methodology of interpretation.

3. It is important to situate evaluation within the institutional environment and the environment of teaching and learning. The Classroom is affected by

    1. physical environment(spaces and resources),
    2. personnel policies(transparency of policies and rewards/ otherwise)
    3. availability of academic leadership
    4. assumptions of the curriculum and its perceptions of teaching.

    Therefore, it is very necessary to view the four different questionnaires mentioned above as of a piece and a scaled feedback interpretation, follow-up actions and counseling need to be evolved.

4. Instead of standard questionnaire it is better to frame a question bank on the basis of which feedback questionnaires can be developed locally to suit the individual institutions and individual departments.

5. If the students are asked to record their "learning experience" rather than their "evaluation" / "rating" of teacher / teaching, tension surrounding the process could be reduced. The feedback on learning experience of the students would naturally be a reflection on teacher/teaching as well. However, a feedback interpretation (FI)scale must be evolved.

6. In the survey referred to above, the students unanimously felt that they were uncomfortable with teacher assessment. They were reluctant to see themselves as clients / customers and teachers as part of a business. They particularly expressed their uneasiness in answering questions like the knowledge base of their teachers or how well they were prepared for their classes or their ability to integrate course material with environment.

It is important to collect the feedback on learning experience in the first half of a semester so that necessary corrections can be effected during the semester.

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Promoting Student Participation In Quality Enhancement

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Abstract

The success of a higher education system depends to a great extent on the student participation. It is only with their active participation that a truly creative educational environment could be built up in the institutions of higher learning. But unfortunately, there is a strong notion in the minds of the students as well as the teachers that the quality enhancement of the institution in which they operate is basically the concern of the management and the principal. The success story of some of the institutions in the country, however, has shown that it is only when the students take an active part in the affairs of the institution; the institution could make a mark.

This paper tries to identify and analyze some of the practices and activities involving students in various capacities. These examples are culled from the experiences of the undersigned as a student in a college in coastal Karnataka back in the past and as a faculty of NAAC at present and also from the experiences shared by the faculty of the some of the accredited colleges. This paper assumes that student participation means participation of the whole gamut of student community of the institution in one or the other activity which is contributive to the enhancement of quality in the campus experience of the students. Particular departments of an institution may involve students in batches in field work; the students may submit a case study in a stipulated time; the students may be involved in preparation of the website of the college or even maintenance of the website. How to involve more number of students is a challenging question. Moreover, there are several barriers which need to be addressed to. Prominent among them is the mindset of the Indian students, which is often not inclined towards demanding opportunities of participation from the institutions. The relationships such as teacher-student; administration-student; principal-student; management-students, etc., come into picture while promoting quality consciousness. Secondly, there are different levels of students on a campus and their abilities too vary. Despite these barriers, if we involve the student community in various activities, we can certainly build in them a spirit of team work, discipline; add positive values in their life style.

Introduction

Student participation in the higher education institutions for quality enhancement is truly a creative in an educational environment, which could be built up with the support of institutions of higher learning.

Student participation

Student participation means that the whole gamut of student community of the institution will involve in one or the other activity of the college and contribute towards enhancement of the quality of campus experience offered by the college. Let me cite a few interesting instances by way of illustration:

- For example, the social work college near to Nagpur actively involves students in the fieldwork.
- Similarly the faculty in another institution in a remote district of Kerala, consistently involves the staff and students for the collection of plants and species. Here the students are supposed to submit a project report based on their field work in a stipulated time. This is a commendable practice because it ensures the involvement of all students of the Science group.

It is possible to multiply the instances cataloguing the best practices of student engagement. But let me quickly sketch the major areas in which student engagement can yield assured results.

1. The student may be involved in preparation of the website of the college or even maintenance of the website. A college in Kerala region takes the help of its students in designing and preparation of the website. Further, the alumni and the old students association of the institution, which has its overseas chapters too, is having more than four chapter outside the state as well the foreign countries. The Old Students Association (OSA) is maintaining the website of the institution. More importantly the OSA assists the institution financially too. The students have to be taken in to confidence before taking any work. Barriers in the institutions for participation of student community may be removed by involving them.
2. For undertaking the library related work like book keeping, binding and stacking arrangements of the books in good manner may be given to students.
3. The activities such as sports, use of gym, yoga and gymnasium will not only help the students to keep themselves fit but also enhance their capacity greatly to concentrate on the things taught in their classes. Their concentration in the classes will certainly enhance.

Thus you can spot the talents in the institution with various skill based curricular and co-curricular activities that will also ensure student participation.

Activities

Confidence building activities like compeering; recitation of songs may enhance the participation. If members of the staff too can involve themselves in these activities, the entire exercise could be made more interactive. Moreover, showcasing the student attainments in fine arts like the music, dance, painting, etc. will enhanced the reputation of the institution .

Personality development classes may be conducted to the second and third year students and they may train the other students in the following years. Students may be invited to take part in the maintenance of buildings rather than destroying. If students themselves are put in charge of the facilities at the college, if taken care by the management the student community certainly will not lodge into such works they will cultivate a sense of belongingness and ownership. This new image of the student as the manager of the facilities is miles away from the Victorian notion of students as intrinsically destructive.

Gardening may be undertaken by the Botany students of the college. The activities like naming of the species identifying them and contributing to their classroom will enhance the learning. If they can develop a garden of medicinal plants it will certainly be viewed as a significant contribution to the campus environment .

The examination procedure in the Indian higher education system needs to be addressed - at the earliest. Unfortunately our examination system does not take into consideration the work done by the students in different capacities and hence the certificate and the marks card issued by the colleges and universities do not reflect anything other than the academic attainment of the student. It reflects in the student participation also. The participation of the students in the academic, co-curricular activities and extra curricular activities needs to be emphasized in our educational system. Otherwise our students will not show interest in the things other than their course syllabus and this would certainly be detrimental to their career. If students' community has been identified for their strengths and trained in the areas they need to be focused may enhance the learning outcomes. The students will be in a better position to face challenges in the of life and also do better in their work places if they move beyond their curriculum when in college.

Classroom interactions

The students of today belong to what can ideally be described as the 'fast world'. Naturally they are anxious to keep pace with the fast world. They expect things fast and it is quite likely that the trend will continue in the future too. There is no reversing of this trend in the near future. This being the scenario traditional teaching has, quite expectedly in a

way, taken a beating. In this situation do we submit ourselves to the situation and allow it to deteriorate or stand-up and say we are going to do something. Taking the latter approach would mean feeling the pulse of the young mind. In other words, 'see what they see' must be the logo at the work place called a classroom. We must bring in a discernible change in our teaching folk and make them realize that the students see that we really care for them. They must be made to do what needs to be done by adopting ways that they would appreciate and be part of.

The most important first step that we need to take is to teach the students through a medium they like most. This calls for extensive use of technology in education. Demonstrations must find way in areas (wherever possible) that involve painfully laborious theoretical expositions. Modeling must therefore be an integral part of modern day teaching. Concepts must be introduced using the multi-media approach. Reading habit being what it is today with most people, this emphasis on visual aids to teaching is of utmost importance.

Students no longer want to be just receivers. They want to receive in a manner they are comfortable with and also they would like to receive only what they want and what helps them in their ultimate goal. Student-centric learning method is the need of the hour as opposed to curriculum-centric learning imposed by the giver. Curricula designed in such a student-centric manner will result in students asking for more. This is anyway the aim of good education-to make the student yearn for more. If non-classical approaches are the need of the hour then it is imperative that we adopt them quickly to bring in qualitative changes in educational methodologies and assessment. This will circumvent the need to lower standards of education delivery and assessment in order to have respectable strengths in the classes.

The alumni are one of the best sources of the income generation for the institution. Due to the NAAC accreditation many of the institution have formed the alumni association and collected certain amount. Many of the alumni who are in the better position in the society have generously contributed towards their alma matter. That shows the positive attitude of the alumni.

Conclusion:

Making a Good Beginning and Building on Field Experiences helps to achieve success in Life. If we identify the latent abilities in our students and guide them properly the learning outcome too would naturally enhance to a great extent. The students then would be better equipped to face challenges in their lives and also in their work places.

Student Participation In Quality Assurance In Mongolia

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Abstract

The author is a student delegate from Mongolia. The paper is based on his personal opinion on the good practices and experiences of student participation in quality assurance in Mongolia. It includes his view on the participation of Mongolian students in quality of higher education institutions, personal experience in the development of the school that he graduated and the organization, which helps students participate more in the quality assurance of the institutions.

Participation of Mongolian students in quality assurance and its development is very high. The author was the President of the Student Union of Mongolia International University for first three years since its establishment. For there was no foundation, it was quite challenging.

The importance of student organizations at universities and institutions: There are over 160 higher education institutions in Mongolia. Since 1996, many people started to make a business by higher education for it has enough number of students graduating from high school. Anyhow, the qualities of the colleges that are established today are not yet matured to give a good and systematic education to students in a comfortable environment. That is why many student organizations are established at each institution to run activities for students, but actually, the main job of them is to protect the rights of students and improving the quality of the education. Leaders of the primary student organizations do the following activities:

- run support, entertainment, academic activities develop individual student's talents and academic ability
- give feedback on the education quality to the school administration
- share good practices and experiences in its success to influence the school administration with student leaders of other universities
- report the education quality of its own to Union of Mongolian Students, which is the head of all primary student organizations and legally support the primary student organizations
- participate in domestic and international students' meetings, offered by Union of Mongolian Students and other NGOs for the benefit of students' career development

For it was three years of experience in leading the students at the school and participated in the development of the university that accredited from college since its establishment in 2002, so am I the first graduate of Mongolia International University. Beside this, I was the first President of the Student Union of MIU. The president participated in the development of the school by leading the students positively to develop themselves and influence the administrative level people to increase the quality of education. In three years, the Student Union made a lasting friendship between all the grades of students at MIU, deep relationship with other student organizations of other universities and NGOs in Mongolia to support its public activities further. It has its own **Student Constitution** and run the activities in nine various ways by its nine councils (entertainment, music, career, global network, English speaking, information technology, charity, sports, press) with 15 active clubs (such as newspaper, dancing, design, radio, media ...) that truly based on students' interests. For the open communication between student, faculty and staff, the Student Union has suggested the transformation plan for the school for its upgrade. All the jobs that are done by Student Union promoted the school in public so much that every person felt they are the part of its development and quality assurance of good education. Now, the school has a good atmosphere of educating students in fellowship of ***Family Spirit*** and ***open communication*** between three core parts of the school; students, faculty and staff. In first three years since establishment of the school, many students complained about the education quality of the school, but now, the students started to participate in the development of the school for its final achievement by power of teamwork.

Likewise, many other student organizations have their different roles, depending on the given circumstances, to participate in quality of the education. Not many student organizations do the same as the student union to bind every one at school together because of people at administrative level of the institutions are not good all the time. That is why; many student organizations do the strike and oppose the administrative people to protect the rights of students in getting good education and studying in comfortable environment.

As far as I have been at the heart of the university life, without leader students in Mongolia, many developments in quality assurance of higher education institutions would not be made as today's. Of course, there are many things to develop, but those student organizations at institutions need more support to develop the school further in quality assurance and growth in organizational behavior. Nevertheless, none of the above successes would be enabled if we had no Union of Mongolian Students. This is the core NGO that really binds the primary student organizations together and enable them to share the practices and experiences to succeed more by the strength of one another.

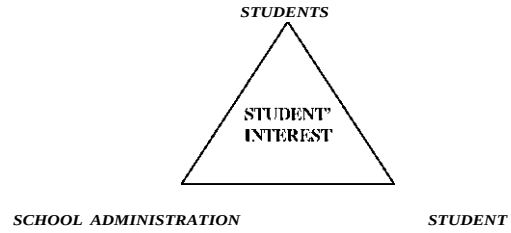
Union of Mongolian Students (UMS) is a non-government organization, which protects the rights of students in college's, universities, MSYT-secondary and proficient schools

and over 147,000 students from Mongolia, which are studying domestic and abroad involved in its activities. UMS was established in October 5 of 1942, it was registered to the State by transferring to non-government organization. Goal of UMS has been to consider true facts in accordance with the function of "Students development program". The vision is to build up a cooperative work relationship with primary student governments in higher education institutions, and give them capability to execute supervision liability, trusted organization and strategy to develop for accomplishing the designated goals and ambitions.

In our day, UMS has associated with 274 colleges, universities and MSYT the first student's organization, 28 in directed independent non government organization which has united fundamental limits in all sorts of branches, direction, concerned estate in all types have been executed. From 2001 to 2004, it has offered 839 types of part time jobs to 2, 970 students. With the help of sponsoring and supporting organizations, companies and institutions, UMS has served over 452000 students, 175 citizens, 580 organizations in numerous kinds of activities.

This organization does everything for the students and makes them future leaders of Mongolia. The idea can be shown clearly from following diagram, which shows three main bodies are codependent to one another to educate students. UMS considers the ***service*** to students ***above all,*** and then school administration, which is to enable the primary students organizations work.

"Triangle of Students' Interests"



Why Union of Mongolian Students?

This NGO has many specialities that students distinguish it from others:

- UMS visit all the universities in Ulaanbaatar city every autumn to discuss about the problems that students are facing and encourage students' participation in quality assurance of the school
- It is an independent organization, which means that UMS do things only for the interest of students. We have some other powerful student organizations but they are supported by political or business people, that's why they depend on the sponsors' opinion rather than students' interests

- UMS is not protected by political leader, yet protected by the students of Mongolia. Therefore, UMS is getting stronger influence over the government decisions and law for the best of students' interests and quality assurance of universities.
- UMS protects rights of students in learning, working, and living in a good environment
- UMS oppose the bad administrative and presidents of the colleges directly if students' feedback on them is negative.
- UMS is doing many things that enable many students to study hard by making 2002 - Student Year by government, discounting the tickets of transportation, asking more scholarships from government, giving cheap medical service to students and training leader students to lead the other students for the active participation in development of the quality education

What are the areas that UMS involve students to participate in quality assurance of the higher education?

1) **Union of Mongolian students and Youth:** Unite primary student organizations into one body to oppose any negative decisions made by government or school administrative and protect the rights of students. Through the union of this great number of students, we together able to complete the "Mongolian National Youth Programme", "Master Plan of Education" with the help of government.

2) **Work for students:**

    a. Professional organization to monitor and control over the higher education by the help of students' participation, depending on the students' feedback on education.

    b. Train leaders in leadership, organizing, and self-control skills to implement the "Students Development Programme" from 2005 - 2010.

3) **Protect the rights of students**

    a. Do the research on people who are disregarding the students' rights. By the review of last research, administrative were the people who did many things against students' rights. UMS defends the rights of students legally.

    b. Not just to require school to be good at educating, but also motivate and encourage students to study hard by themselves, which means the student-centered education.

4) **Working environment:** UMS takes care of the primary student organizations so well that additionally support the facilities and office tools for their better

participation in the quality assurance of certain universities. It is to keep the stability of the student organizations in running their activities in comfortable environment and invites more students in quality assurance.

5) **Tuition fee:** In our day, UMS is concerning much about the growth of tuition fee while we have not yet seen the improvement in quality of the education. Many of the higher education institutions in Mongolia do not have qualified professors, but ask high tuition fee from students which is not fair at all. Therefore, UMS requires higher education institutions to give as quality education as the tuition fee.

6) **Health:** While students are educating, being healthy is very important. However, those eatery places around and in the institutions are not qualified to give fresh food. Our body is determined by what we eat. Therefore, UMS also concerning much about the food consumption of students' by stopping the eateries that are not well equipped to give healthy foods.

Campus education: For last few years, UMS became well-known NGO in Mongolia and running the activities in accordance with Mongolian government. UMS has a status of consultant to the President of Mongolia. In addition, UMS is working with the Prime Minister continuously, permanent member of the National Universities Council. This reputation of students enabled us to ask the government to establish universities with campus where real convenient environment exist because the future of Mongolia will be determined by the youth of Mongolia, especially the education of students.

Students Feedback Systems for Quality Assurance

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Abstract

Quality assurance in higher education is gaining a good deal of momentum all over the world. Quality assurance systems are at different levels of maturity and capacity, in various countries, but there is an overall agreement for the necessity of effective and efficient quality assurance mechanism. In this context, students being an integral part of higher education system, promotion of their active participation may be one of the key indicators in quality assurance system. NAAC's process of assessment and accreditation has made institutions realise that quality is the responsibility of the institutions themselves. This realization has made the institutions initiate quality management procedures. For example, institutions introduced peer appraisal and student evaluation of teachers, issues that still continue to be the bone of contention in many countries. Collecting feedback from parents, alumni and students for improving the educational experiences and consultations with peers to overcome the weak links were initiated in many institutions. In particular, the attitude of the institutions towards the reliability of student feedback and the competence of the students to provide meaningful feedback underwent a tremendous change. This paper discusses the impact that has been made by this attitudinal change, which in turn facilitated the institutions to move towards quality sustenance and enhancement.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 and its programme of action evolved a series of strategic plans to focus on quality of higher education. One of the strategies recommended was the establishment of an independent council to promote institutional assessment and accreditation, which culminated in the establishment of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 as the apex body to accredit institutions of higher education. The methodology of NAAC is a combination of self-study and peer review, in line with the international trend. In general, NAAC's process of accreditation has made institutions realise that quality is the responsibility of the institutions themselves. This realisation has made the institutions take up initiatives beyond the mandatory requirements of the much criticised affiliating system. Quality management procedures were introduced in some institutions. For example, institutions introduced peer appraisal and student evaluation of teachers, issues that still continue to be the bone of contention in many countries. In particular, the attitude of the institutions towards the reliability of student feedback and the competence of the students to provide meaningful feedback underwent a tremendous change. This paper discusses the impact that has been made possible by this attitudinal change.

Student Feedback

Attitude towards student feedback varies among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). One group of academia who support student feedback shares the belief that if our goal is merely to deliver the lecture, feedback is extraneous. If, however, we wish the students to learn effectively then feedback is imperative. Faculty members who agree with this point of view collect feedback for their courses, even if the institution does not have a formal mechanism for that. In HEIs, where the leadership has understood the benefits of student feedback, the institutional efforts are well established.

The way in which feedback is collected by these institutions also varies, some have structured formats and some have open ended questions. We have come across institutions that collect student feedback in a very simple way by asking the students to give their comments about what they don't like in the campus life and their suggestions to improve the student life that could be shared with the rest of the institution.

Aspects on which feedback is collected and the perceived benefits also vary. Interaction with the members of faculty reveals that the perceived benefits for faculty are: information for course design and, further development of teaching skills. A similar interaction with students indicates the benefits as follows:

- They take more responsibility in academic decisions like choice of courses, about the activities of the institution.
- They feel valued and 'listened' to
- They become better informed
- Helps the students to express their genuine needs
- They are able to reflect on the extent to which their needs are met.
- They become more clear of learning objectives

Although the credibility of student feedback for decision-making is still debated, considering them as sources of information can not be undermined. Students are appropriate sources of information on teachers when they are describing or judging the following:

- the student-teacher relationship;
- their views of the teachers' professional and ethical behaviour;
- their workload;
- what they have learned in the course;
- the fairness of the teachers
- the teachers' ability to communicate clearly.

In fact, the areas in which students, because of their direct classroom contact with the teacher, are uniquely able to answer questions are:

- pedagogical methods;
- fairness;
- the teacher's interest in the student;
- the teacher's interest in the subject;

The academia who do not appreciate the value of student feedback argue that students are not competent enough to assess the course quality or competence of their teachers. But the research findings quoted by this group are being proved to be defective. Matthew Kaplan, et. al. of University of Michigan conducted a study in 2001 on student feedback. To quote their argument: "Early experiments indicated that instructors who were 'entertaining' or 'expressive' (witty, enthusiastic, theatrical, or engaging) received high student ratings even though they delivered very little information in their lectures. Later analysis revealed serious flaws in these studies and showed the relationship between expressiveness and ratings to be exaggerated. More recent studies indicate that expressive instructors receive higher ratings because their expressiveness helps students learn. When students are not highly motivated (e.g., in introductory, required courses), instructor expressiveness has a larger effect on student achievement than does the amount of content covered. Expressive instructors stimulate and maintain student attention, and students learn more when they are engaged in the subject. Students and faculty agree that instructor enthusiasm is an important element of effective teaching".

It is not appropriate to relate the reliability and acceptability of student evaluation to their ability or immaturity to assess. For that matter even peer evaluation is not accepted by the faculty. Some researchers have viewed colleague or peer ratings negatively as sources of information, regarding them as highly susceptible to prejudice and often inaccurate. (Ramsden, 1983) It has been argued that in reality academics typically have scanty and biased knowledge of their colleagues' teaching abilities and their judgments correlate poorly with other measures. One of the more rigorous reviews rejects peer review completely as input into personnel decisions about university staff. (Marsh, 1987)

In a review of the findings and research designs used to study students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness, Marsh concluded that class-average student ratings have a number of characteristics that make them appropriate for such assessment. (Marsh,1984) Student ratings were generally found to be:

- Multidimensional;
- Relatively valid against a variety of indicators of effective teaching;

- Reliable and stable;
- Relatively unaffected by a variety of variables hypothesised as potential biases;
- Primarily a function of the instructor teaching the course rather than the course itself.

Considerable evidence supporting the credibility of students as evaluators of instruction in higher education has emerged from past research. (Ellett et al, 1991) Aleamoni addressed many of the most common myths regarding student ratings and concluded that much of the criticism aimed at student ratings is unfounded. However, he warned that problems can arise from misinterpretation and misuse of these student ratings. (Aleamoni, 1987). To avoid misinterpretation, student evaluation has to be clubbed with other ratings like Peer Assessment and Self Appraisal.

Much of the criticism about student feedback is based on the assumption that students would be evaluating the teachers. In reality, student feedback can be a good source of information on any aspect of campus life. NAAC's experience also supports the view that students are capable of giving very useful and meaningful feedback on their campus experience.

The Indian Experience

In a huge set up of higher education in India, which is characterized by diversity and complexity, the concept of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) promoted by NAAC and the manual for accreditation that provides operational details has played a substantial role in promoting this attitudinal change among HEIs. The guidelines given in those manuals have facilitated the institutions to strengthen their efforts and initiatives on many key aspects of functioning of the institution. The guidelines given by NAAC for IQAC consist of various questionnaires that are meant for collecting feedback from students in a structured way. Student feedback on courses, questionnaire for students at the entry level, questionnaire for exiting students and student feedback on teachers are a few to mention. When institutions read these manuals and guidelines, they started using them.

Students may be consulted for distribution of classes, calendar arrangements, library policies and similar academic matters. Their opinion may be sought on institutions budget, physical resources, missions and goals, students' political affairs, students' publications, cultural programmes and distribution of funds for students' activities. Students feedback is helpful in designing the curriculum, restructuring lessons and lectures, evolving and developing a learning environment.

NAAC was aware that Questionnaires would be an effective way of eliciting feedback from students on the quality of a programme. The questionnaires were designed to ensure that responses from students would identify the main issues that have a bearing on the

quality of their experiences. Although it would be ideal to get the questionnaires completed by students at different stages during the programme, wherever institutions did not have such a mechanism, NAAC relied on the questionnaires that were filled during on site visit. The questionnaires were distributed at random by the NAAC staff during the on site visit and the feedback thus collected forms the basis for further interaction between the peer team and a group of students. As a healthy practice NAAC suggests to HEIs, the need to do continuous assessment of student perception.

The NAAC questionnaires address the following:

- The content of the programme of study and its completion well in time
- The effectiveness of the timetabling to provide enough flexibility for self-learning
- Efficiency of teachers in teaching and relating the knowledge to real world situations
- The spacing of assignments, and their return to students within a reasonable time
- Access to institutional resources like computers, laboratory equipment, library, hostels, play grounds etc.
- Encouraging participation of students in class discussions
- Fair and appropriate methods of evaluating students work
- Regularity and punctuality of teachers
- Encouraging participation of students in extra curricular and co-curricular activities
- Availability of information on scholarships or fellowships to the needy students

The answers to these questions provide information on whether the facilities and systems which are provided by the institution are adequate and available, how well the systems for ensuring the best delivery of the programme work out in practice that are provided. This exercise has made institutions realise that the students provide meaningful and responsible inputs on their campus experiences that could be transformed into suggestions for the further growth and development of the institution. We have come across institutions where the first questionnaire is used after the first six weeks into the programme to gain the students' initial reactions and response to the programme. A second questionnaire is requested after the completion of the year or semester's study. Further questionnaires are used at similar stages throughout the remainder of the programme. The analysis of these forms provides the summary of students' perceptions; what is good, what is unsatisfactory, and what needs to be changed.

In one of the institutions, during the on-site visit, we asked the students to give feedback on five major areas of improvement in the institution. Most of the suggestions we received from students were on issues like, additional computer facilities, augmentation of library services, access to internet facilities etc. Out of the 50 feedback sheets selected at random in another institution, not a single one mentioned about leisure time activities, although that is an important component that contributes to the holistic campus life. Rather they were all about enriching the academic ambience of the campus life. It also gives the conviction that if feedback is collected from the top twenty students in any institution, it may be more reliable, as far as academic aspects of campus life is concerned. However, campus life is much more than that and to get a realistic picture, irrespective of student achievement, a cross section of the student population should be involved.

On issues of students' involvement and their active participation and seriousness in providing their feedback, some section of the students expressed very low interest and indifference and they felt that it does not make significant difference in the existing set up. They were of the opinion that no action had been taken by the institution, after collecting the feedback from them. If it becomes only compliance with out doing any analysis of the feedback followed by necessary action, the whole purpose would be defeated.

In case of institutions, which have significant portion of internal assessment, students might be hesitant to give their real feedback on any teacher because of the obvious consequences. If students are given free hand with out any strings or inhibitions, then only feedback will be more meaningful. Here collecting feedback from the alumni may be more meaningful.

A significant number of institutions in the country have their own success stories, concerning students' partnership in quality assurance. Some have actively involved them in academic planning through representation of academic decision-making bodies. Others have made them effective partners of the institution, in extension work. Most personality development programmes are planned, funded and monitored by students. Some have involved them in the purchase committees and made them responsible for coordination activities of placement cell.

Features of effective student feedback

- Institutions collect student feedback on teaching-learning process and relates activities through questionnaires
- Student identity is kept confidential
- Mechanism for analysis and follow-up action on student feedback

- Students have to be informed of action that has resulted in the expression of their views
- Student feedback results may be published to encourage transparency
- Cash incentive / Certificate of recognition may be given to the best student feedback to strengthen the student response system.
- Mechanism to redress the grievances for the improvement of the institution.

NAAC has also observed that in a few leading institutions some of the departments were collecting student feedback due to the initiatives of a few enthusiastic members of the faculty and NAAC's process has made all departments take up student feedback as an institutional strategy. There have been instances where feedback was being collected informally and those efforts became formal mechanisms due to the accreditation experience. Accreditation gave the force needed to institutionalise the fragmented and informal departmental or individual views and efforts as formal strategies. Interaction with the peer team members during the site visit, and the evaluative remarks made by the team in the assessment reports, have also contributed to this. Most of the assessment reports make a due mention of the student feedback, either commending the existing practices or recommending further improvements, and institutions have taken them very seriously in the formulation of their future plan. The apprehension that the students do not have the competence to evaluate the teachers changed; the faith that the students can express their expectations and satisfaction of their educational experience became accepted.

The Impact

NAAC did an impact analysis on the first 100 accredited institutions that had at least six months to act on the assessment report. The analysis revealed that one of the areas where a major impact has been made was 'improvement in student support services' and more specifically on collecting and using student feedback to improve those services. The importance given to the student feedback could be seen in the introduction of need-based programmes and skill-oriented non-degree programs to fulfil the growing demand from students. The autonomous institutions (universities and autonomous colleges) that had the freedom to innovate in curriculum initiated efforts to restructure the curriculum. Institutions focused their attention on the student support services within their reach, which they had never thought of before. Student support like open access and extended working hours of the library, getting latest books and quality journals, establishing inter-

library linkage, centralised computer centre with an access to it, placement cell, campus interviews, on-the-job training, guidance and counselling and financial assistance were greatly improved. Although information technology was in the computer science departments, the analysis of student feedback made the institutions realise that the non-science students also demand computer orientation. Institutional efforts for its appropriate use and preparing its members for optimum use greatly improved. That led to the use of technology as a learning resource in the real sense by more faculty members.

In sum, the change in the attitude of the institutions towards student participation, and the ability of the students to give feedback on their educational experience has had a transformative effect on various dimensions of the educational experience in the accredited HEIs in India, to improve to improve student support services, specifically the teaching-learning process and bring in mid course corrections.

The use of student ratings, while adding a valuable element, does not provide a full picture of the teaching process. However, as far as students' educational experience is concerned, it has proven to be very effective, to evolve several institutional improvement strategies.

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The NAAC is deeply indebted to all participants and distinguished experts who contributed to this conference as Special Guests, Session Chairs, International Delegates, Authors/ Presenters, Reppourteurs, Invited Participants and Student Delegates.

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