Higher Education------ TQM

Higher education imparts in-depth knowledge and understanding so as to advance the students to

new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life (subject domains). It develops the student

ability to question and seek truth and makes him/her competent to critique on contemporary

issues. It broadens the intellectual powers of the individual within a narrow specialization, but

also gives him/her a wider perspective of the world around. According to Ronald Barnett (1992)

there are four predominant concepts of higher education.

i) Higher education as the production of qualified human resources: In this view,

higher education is seen as a process in which students are counted as “products”

absorbed in labour market. Thus, higher education becomes input to the growth and

development of business and industry.

ii) Higher education as training for a research career: In this view, higher education is

preparation for qualified scientists and researchers who would continuously develop the

frontiers of knowledge. Quality within this view point is more about research

publications and transmission of academic rigour to do quality research.

iii) Higher education as the efficient management of teaching profession: Many strongly

believe that teaching is the core of educational institutions. Thus, higher education

institutions focus on efficient management of teaching-learning provisions by improving

the quality of teaching, enabling a higher completion rate among the students.

iv) Higher education as a matter of extending life chances: In this view, higher education

is seen as an opportunity to participate in the development process of individual through

a flexible, continuing education mode.

Interestingly, all these four concepts of higher education are not exclusive; rather they are

integrated and give an overall picture of higher education. If we look at the activities of colleges

and universities, we will realize that teaching, research and extension form the three main

functions of higher education.

**Role of higher education in the Society**

Higher education is generally understood to cover teaching, research and extension. Scientific

and technological advancement and economic growth of a country are as dependent on higher

education as they are on the working class. Development of indigenous technologies and

capabilities in agriculture, food security and other industrial areas are possible because of our

world-class higher education infrastructure. Higher education also provides opportunities for

lifelong learning, allowing people to upgrade their knowledge and skills from time to time based

on societal needs. The Kothari Commission (1966) listed the following roles of the universities

(Higher education institutions in the modern society)

 To seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage vigorously and fearlessly in the pursuit

of truth, and to interpret old knowledge and beliefs in the light of new deeds and

discoveries;

 To provide the right kind of leadership in all walks of life, to identify gifted youth and

help them develop their potential full by cultivating physical fitness, developing the

powers of the mind and cultivating right interests, attitudes and moral and intellectual

values;

 To provide the society with competent men and women trained in agriculture, arts,

medicine, science and technology and various other professions, who will also be

cultivated individuals, imbibed with a sense of social purpose;

 To strive to promote quality and social justice, and to reduce social cultural differences

through diffusion of education; and

 To foster in the teachers and students and through them in the society generally, the

attitudes and values needed for developing the “good life” in individuals and society

Defining Quality

The British Standard Institution (BSI) defines quality as “the totality of features and

characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy the stated or implied

needs” (BSI, 1991). Green and Harvey (1993) identified five different approaches to defining

quality:

Garvin (1998) classified the various definitions of quality into five major groups:

(1) Transcendent definitions: These definitions are subjective and personal. They are

eternal but go beyond measurement and logical description

(2) Product-based definitions: Quality is seen as measurable variable. The basis for

measurement is objective of the product.

(3) User-based definitions: Quality is a means for customer satisfaction. This makes these

definitions individual and partly subjective.

(4) Manufacturing-based definitions: Quality is seen as conformance to requirements and

specifications.

(5) Value-based definitions: These definitions define quality in relation to costs. Quality is

seen as providing good value for costs ( Largosen et al, 2004)

Quality has a few central ideas around which the whole concept revolves: Quality as absolute,

Quality as relative, Quality as a process, and Quality as culture. When we consider quality as

absolute, it is given and considered as the highest possible standard. The Egyptian Pyramids and

the Taj Mahal are works of high standards and quality. In product terms, they are attached with

high “brand” values, status and positional advantages. Educational institutions such as Oxford,

Cambridge and Stanford in the west have this absolute quality standard, though in the case of

education it might still be perceptual. Quality as relative suggests that the quality of a product or

service can be described in relative terms. Quality here can be measured in terms of certain

specifications. According to Mukhopadhya (2005) the adherence to “product specification is

actually, the minimum condition for quality but not the sufficient condition”. The sufficient

condition is customer satisfaction and beyond”.

**Why Higher Education Institutions should worry about Quality**

As teachers, principals, heads of the department and policy makers in education we should worry

about quality of teaching, programmes, and institution because of the reasons

(1) Competition: We are entering a new regime, where competition among educational

institutions for students and funds will be highly significant. With globalization and

GATS (Global Agreement on Trade in Services), the educational environment will be

seized by increased competition. In order to survive in such situation, educational

institutions need to worry about their quality

(2) Customer satisfaction: Students, parents or sponsoring agencies as customers of the

educational institutions are now highly conscious of their rights or getting value for their

money and time spent. They are now demanding good quality teaching and receiving

employable skill set and thus we should constantly worry about the relevance of our

courses and programmes to the needs of the market.

(3) Maintaining standards: As educational institutions, we should always concern about

setting our own standard and maintaining it continuously year after year. In order to

maintain the standard, we should continuously make efforts to improve quality of

educational facilities

(4) Accountability: Every institution is accountable to its own stake holder in terms of the

funds (public or private) used on it. Concern for quality will ensure accountability of

funds utilized and inform the stake holders about taking appropriate decisions. Thus

quality can be considered as a monitoring mechanism.

(5) Improve employee morale and motivation: Concern for quality as an institution will

improve the morale and motivation of the staff in performing their duties and

responsibilities. If quality system is in place, the internal process would be systematic

making every department complementing each other‟s service domain and helping in

developing internal customer satisfaction leading to high morale and motivation.

(6) Credibility, prestige and status: If institutions are concerned about quality,

continuously and not once in a while. It will bring credibility to institutions and

individuals because of consistency leading to practice, status and brand value.

(7) Image and visibility: Quality institutions have the capacity to attract better stake holder

support, like getting merit students from far and near, increased donation / grants from

funding agencies and higher employer interest for easy placement of graduates.

TQM in education

The globalization of education, student‟s migration from one country to another are causes for

concerns to educationists. The use of new teaching and learning methodologies, changing

patterns of education delivery, course content, the concept of quality has become an essential

component of the educational process for its success. Continuous improvement and self

evaluation among stake holders such as top management, students, faculty etc is required and

development and encouragement of leadership among the stake holders in the organization

should be made as an ongoing process as well as a system. Synergistic relationship among

faculty: students, Industry: Faculty and students: Industries to ensure the strategic quality .

**Total Quality Management**

The total quality management (TQM) has evolved as an overriding concept in the field of quality in

recent years. It is a philosophy that subsumes earlier methods of inspection, quality control and quality assurance. TQM assumes that quality is what the consumer of the service/ product perceives. “TQM is a people driven process. It involves changes in people’s attitudes primarily. In addition, it deals with process orientation and continuous improvement of the process. It strives for empowerment and autonomy . National Assessment and Accreditation Council of the people involved in using production processes. It asks people to continuously look for new ways to adapt to the changing environment. It is a continuous improvement plan, with an effort to bring out the best for the stakeholders as well as for the institution” (NAAC, 2003).

**The above definition/explanation of TQM has five components**:

customer, continuous improvement, training and development, teamwork and measurement.

• The customer can be anyone who receives or is affected by the product, process or service, and

thus customer can be external or internal.

• For innovation and excellence to come, continuous improvement is highly important. Improvement should aim towards ‘zero defects’.

• In order to successfully implement TQM, the staff should be open minded and continuously

updated and trained. The focus should be to reinforce employee commitment and have a positive

effect on morale leading to productivity gains.

• Teamwork and involvement of all stakeholders is key to success.

• The success of TQM implementation is the ability to monitor the progress and review the objectives.

For more details about TQM, please refer NAAC publication on “Total Quality Management for Tertiary

**NAAC Model**

In India, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has identified seven criteria to

serve as the basis for the assessment of higher education institutions in the country. Assessment is a

voluntary process. However, some State Governments have made it mandatory for their colleges. It

follows a four-phase process of assessment of a unit (Institution or Programme/Department) covering:

The self-study report is expected to highlight the functioning of the institution with reference to these criteria.

**Self Study**: The Institution seeking assessment prepares a self-study report as per the guidelines

formulated by NAAC. The report consists of two parts – data about the organisation on various parameters; and a critical self-analysis based on the available data. The self-study is supposed to be a tool for critical reflection on institutional practices and facilities to identify its own strengths and weaknesses. The selfstudy report enables the NAAC and the peer team to understand the institution better.

**Peer Team Visit**: Based on the self-study report, NAAC constitutes a team of peers in consultation with the institution. The peer team visits the institution and looks for “pattern of evidences” to validate the claims in the self-study report through interaction with the senior management, heads of the departments, teachers, staff and students of the institution. The institution is provided an opportunity for withdrawal at the end by the peer team, before finalizing the draft report. The draft assessment report of the peer team is shared with the institution at the end of the visit. The peer team makes the assessment of the institution based on a suggested scoring pattern. This is submitted to NAAC as a confidential score.

**NAAC Decision**: The Executive Committee of NAAC after reviewing the report takes a decision on the

grade of the institution based on the nine-point grading system. Institutions receiving equal or more than National Assessment and Accreditation Council 55% receive “Accredited Status” and institutions which do not attain the minimum 55% point for accreditation are intimated that the institution is “Assessed and Found Not Qualified for Accreditation”.

NAAC grading is valid for a period of 5 years. Institutions that complete five-year accredited period may volunteer for re-accreditation.

NAAC recommends every accredited institution to establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) to sustain the best practices.

**seven criteria to** serve as the basis for its assessment procedure:

1. Curricular Aspects

2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

3. Research, Consultancy and Evaluation

4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

5. Student Support and Progression

6. Organisation and Management

7. Healthy Practices

Thus, the institution is the unit of assessment.

Criteria and key indicators used by NAAC

I. Curricular Aspects (150/150/100)

• Goal Orientation

• Curriculum Development

• Programme Options

• Academic Flexibility

• Feedback Mechanism

II. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation (250/300/400)

• Admission Process

• Catering to Diverse Needs

• Teaching-Learning Process

• Teacher Quality

• Evaluation of Teaching

• Evaluation of Learning

• Evaluation Reforms

III. Research, Consultancy and Extension (150/100/50)

• Promotion of Research

• Research Output

• Publication Output

• Consultancy

• Extension Activities

• Participation in Extension

• Linkages

IV. Infrastructure and Learning Resources (150/150/150)

• Physical Facilities

• Maintenance of Infrastructure

• Library as a Learning Resource

• Computers as Learning Resources

• Other Facilities

V. Student Support & Progression (100/100/100)

• Student Profile

• Student Progression

• Student Support

• Student Activities

VI. Organization Management (100/100/100)

• Goal Orientation and Decision-Making

• Organisation Structure, Powers and

• Perspective Planning

• Human power Planning and Recruitment

• Performance Appraisal

• Staff Development Programmes

• Resource Mobilisation

• Finance Management

VII. Healthy Practices (100/100/100)

• Total Quality Management

• Innovations

• Value-Based Education

• Social Responsibilities and Citizenship Roles

• Overall Development

• Institutional Ambience and Initiatives