

Implementing Quality in higher education

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ABSTRACT

Education should be autonomous and free from politics. The modernization of the curriculum and skilled personnel in the profession would help the University to achieve the set goals. Better qualified people should come to the noble profession of teacher to develop innovative mechanisms in Higher education system. The overall scenario of higher education in Indian University does not match with increased assessment of Quality of the higher education institutions. Traditionally, it was assumed that Quality could be determined the internal resources, viz., faculty with an impressive set of degrees and experience detailed at the end of the institute's admission brochure, number of books and journals in the library, and ultra-modern campus, and size of the endowment, etc., of by its definable and assessable outputs, viz., efficient use of resources, producing uniquely educated, highly satisfied and employable graduates. This view of determining Quality in higher education, popularly termed as the "value-addition" approach, does not measure the competencies students develop through the courses offered. The competencies are recall, understanding, and problem solving. "Recall" amounts to a competency of gaining knowledge by way of reading, viewing, listening, assimilating, and demonstrating it when required. "Understanding" is comprehension, which requires explanations and vocabulary development, and demonstrating it by giving ideas, predict, and evaluate cause and effect. The competency of "problem solving" can be developed by solving text-book type of problems and the expertise so developed can be used in handling real-life situations. The students may understand and accept these concepts, and the level of competency they are expected to attain may also be defined in consultation with them.

Quality concepts in Higher Education

Students, their parents, and their future employers are the customers of this product (education). In Quality managements, the customer is defined as the next person in line. In an educational institute, students directly receive the teaching services and hence are the customers of the teacher, whereas the faculty and the institute's administrators are the suppliers of the services. Even the supplier customer concept of Quality management cannot be applied in education because the customers do not understand what is to be acquired, or what is of good Quality.

- The student's definition of a Quality experience has to be found through discussions and observations of what gives them joy of learning, not just enjoyment with learning. If the teaching and learning process conforms to their ideas about what is Quality education, students enjoy learning. Teachers need to discuss such questions with the students as: Why are you here? What are you trying to do? What does it mean to you to do it well? How the teacher can help you in doing it well? A teacher has to build up a consensus in a class regarding what constitutes a Quality experience. Once a mutually agreed purpose is established,
- Quality Management concepts ensure that curriculum coherence increases, education is improved, productivity of teachers is enhanced, and teachers and students find greater joy in their work and are able to make positive contributions to the society. It is, therefore necessary that the institutes of higher education accept the mantra of 'Quality' and provide for a standardized assessment of what exactly the students are able to do (that they were not able to do before) as a result of their education.
- Institutes of higher education, through their curriculum, are expected to provide knowledge, know-how, wisdom, and character to the students."Knowledge" enables them to understand what they learn in relation to what they already known, and creates an ability to generalize from their experience. "Know-how" takes them beyond merely understanding and enables them to put their knowledge to work. "Wisdom" makes them capable of deciding their priorities.
- Character' development is the combined effect of knowledge, know-how, and wisdom, coupled with motivation. Character development is recognized by certain traits, viz., honesty, integrity, initiative, curiosity, truthfulness, cooperativeness, self-esteem and ability to work alone and in a group. However, most of the educational institutions hardly pay attention to the development of either wisdom or character. Many educators have not developed wisdom themselves and hence throw up their hands at the thought of imparting it to the students. They think that these elements are to be taken care of by someone else.

- Wisdom and character, the two important human Qualities, are best developed by making students participate in creative team activities, wherein they learn to set priorities, to work together, and to develop the social skills required in a society where teamwork is essential to success.
- The academic institutions may standardize their syllabi and align their curriculum to constitute Quality. It requires a well-designed syllabus to meet a mandated set of goals and objectives, an obligatory sequence of topics, and compulsory textbooks, which are formally approved, officially acknowledged, and collectively disseminated. Unfortunately,
- Then the question arises as to what are we trying to accomplish through grading? Whether the aim is to decide which students should be allowed to go for higher levels of educations, where are social cost of taking an inferior student is high and resources for such education are scarce.
- Examination results should only help the teacher and the student to jointly decide how to improve the educational processes in the classrooms. We need to turn our attention to a more fundamental issue: What are we trying to do? What are we looking for? What do we expect from our institutes of higher education? These questions lead us to the more important question, i.e., how should an institute define its purpose and then stick to it?
- It is important to know what proportion of the pass-outs has been accepted elsewhere for pursuing higher degrees. How many pass-outs have been employed in areas for which they were trained? And the most important criterion is how much did the students learn? have been employed in areas for which they were trained? And the most important criterion is how much did the students learn?

Implementing Quality measures.

- How the faculty and administration of an educational institute prepare for implementing total Quality management and assessment? How the introduction of Quality implementation influences the goals, roles, and mission of an institute?
- Who are they key players and what are their individual goals and motivations? How will the culture of an institute change in an environment of increasing demand for demonstrable Quality and outcomes? Answers to such questions should be available in the institute.
- Most of the Quality Standards for accreditation state that assessment principles are complementary to the institute's mission. Clearly defined mission, goals, and objectives guides faculty, administration, staff, and governing bodies in making decisions related to clanging resource allocation, programs and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes. These goals and objectives should focus on student learning, other outcomes, and institutional improvement.

Differing perceptions

In general, both the faculty and the administration believe that Quality measures should be implemented in their institution, but the movement suffers because of their considerably different perceptions.

- ✓ The administrators may feel that they are already doing those kinds of things in their curriculum and outcomes assessments merely establishes criteria for success and making any additional changes are not essential. But the faculty's perspective is quite different, as some of them feel that there has to be a continuous campaign of reinforcement from the top administrators, that they are totally committed to Quality implementation and assessment programmes.
- ✓ Faculty resists on the issue of measuring learning and the tenets of a Quality education, because they misunderstand the goals of Quality and assessment and their potential to compliment the mission of the institute. Even when the decision is taken, perceptions differ on how the institute should prepare for implementation of Quality and assessment and what should be the motivating factors for different key players.
- ✓ Administrators feel that the preparation should comprise evolving administrative infrastructure, organizing conferences, bringing coordinator. On the campus, and advertising for a new assessment coordinator. On the other hand, the faculty perceives that title or no genuine planning is underway. Faculty and administration in most of the institutes functions independent of one another.
- ✓ Faculty feels that all the activities related to imparting knowledge viz., teaching, learning, and assessment, etc., are their exclusive domain, while the administration is merely responsible for running the organization. The Administration thinks that Quality implementation and outcomes assessment is an instructional matter that is not emanating from the faculty. It result in the administration exerting influence over intellectual matters, forcing the faculty of defend their intellectual territory.
- ✓ The difference in perceptions becomes a major source of faculty-administrator conflict and is one of the foremost contributors to the culture of resistance in most of the institutes. Teachers and administrators require in most of the institutes. Teachers and administrators require special competencies, both knowledge and know-how, for implementing Quality Management practices. Persistent culture of resistance can be handled by convincing people to change their long held values, beliefs, and attitudes and adopt new ones, which produce long-lasting positive effects on product Quality and customer satisfaction.

Faculty's role

- ❖ Educational institutes are a system of inter-dependent processes, comprising of collection of highly specialized teaching faculty, linked within a functional hierarchy. Faculty is viewed as a "commodity", employed on the basis of perceived needs of the institute.
- ❖ Through they form the institute's true competitive edge, teachers have very little autonomy, are generally passive contributors, and do nothing beyond what they are told.
- ❖ Every faculty is a process manager, provides students with opportunities for personal growth and presides over the transformation of inputs to outputs of greater value to the institute and to the ultimate customer.
- ❖ Students enjoy and take pride through learning and accomplishment, and hence they are active contributors in the process, and are valued for their creativity and intelligence. Teachers work 'in' a system, whereas the Head of an institute works 'on' the system and continuously improves the Quality with the help of teachers.
- ❖ Students study and learn 'in' a system, and the teachers have to continuously work 'on' the system to improve the teaching Quality with the help of students. Quality education is what makes learning a pleasure.
- ❖ Some measures of student's performance may be increased by competitions for grades, or by prizes, but such learning would be unhealthy. It takes a Quality experience to create an independent learner. Teachers must discuss with the students of what constitutes a Quality experience for them. The objective of Quality management is to continuously seek a better way of imparting education to the students. Everyone in the system is expected, invited, and trained to participate in the improvement process, rather than just dictated from the top administration.

Develop of work culture:- More involve anent of all faculty in departmental affairs would enhance aca, excellence. Due to shortage of faculty, there is a situation of one-man-many posts.

Make one man-one-post mantra for success.

Too much of admin response given to inexperienced staff is taking them away from academics causing a grave loss to University a depart ants.

- The institute's administration manages various departments, functions' faculty, and the students, who do not appreciate that they are interdependent. They also exercise managerial leadership through participative management in playing their roles as mentors, facilitators, innovators, etc.
- Quality results from the institute's education managements systems. people working in the system cannot do better than the system allows. problems arise when the individuals, singly as

well as jointly, do not do their best. Such a situation could only be prevented when people understand where they fit in and have the knowledge to maximize their contributions to the whole.

- Administration must create an environment that nurtures a team-oriented culture, which can prevent problems and make continual improvements. Performance appraisal, recognition and reward systems place people in an internally competitive environment.
- Aim of the long-term administration faculty-student partnership is innovation, reduction in variation of critical characteristics, lower costs, and better Quality.
- They should encourage competition, which is inevitable and inherent in human nature, but pitting one person or one group against another is not a natural state of competitive behavior. The competition should be against the environment, or to please the customer, or to eliminate waste of resources.

Conclusion

The impetus for improving Quality of higher education and scrutiny by the accreditation agencies and the corporate employers is gaining momentum in India. There are many important Quality management tools and techniques, fully tried out in the industry, which could be adopted in the field of education, to diagnose a system and identify potentials for improvement. Now people have started realizing that there is no other activity that promises more leverage in the improvement of society than the development of a generation that understands Quality and remains equipped to improve it.

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