

## BEST PRACTICES BENCHMARKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Dr. Padmashri R. Bhoje

D. B. F. Dayanand College of Education, Solapur.

### ABSTRACT

Benchmarking is an increasingly popular tool in industry and is used extensively by both manufacturing and service organisations. From the 1990s benchmarking has become a management watchword. Benchmarking is an ongoing systematic means for measuring and comparing the work processes of an organization.

### KEYWORDS :

Higher Education, Quality Enhancement.

### INTRODUCTION

In the early days of benchmarking, the emphasis was primarily on measurement, and on relatively straightforward comparisons of suitable performance



parameters within and between companies. Such parameters were usually simple productivity and efficiency measures. This was followed by a gradual shift in attention to processes within a more diverse range of functions which influenced overall performance. Today, the main focus of benchmarking activity is based on best practices, discerned from active collaboration with the best-in-class companies having comparable processes, wherever

and in whichever industry they may be situated. The overall purpose and intent of the Best Practices Benchmarking can be summarized as the - development of an understanding of the fundamentals that lead to success, - focus on continuous improvement efforts, and - management of the overall change process to close the gap between an existing practice of the institution and that of the best-in-class institutions with reference to the most relevant

key performance variable.

The Best Practices Benchmarking can make a meaningful contribution to quality enhancement. In order to be applied effectively to education, benchmarking may be seen as an ongoing systematic means for determining the best practices of the best-in-class institutions, and using the information as basis for goals, strategies and implementation. More simply best practices benchmarking for quality enhancement would be 'finding and implementing the best practices which would lead to significant improvement in the quality of educational provisions'. Establishing benchmarks through best practices is not a new concept in higher

education.

### BEST PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Clubs are then required to submit a written report, along with supporting data from the university's existing documentation, which highlight any perceived strengths or weaknesses. As regards the assessment process, the assessors award scores on the basis of the strengths thus identified. The reports detailing acknowledged strengths and areas for improvement are provided to each member, together with a composite model of the good practice. The NAAC has identified the elements of the best practices that contribute to the efficient and effective functioning of the institution and they are called *criterion statements*. They serve as benchmarks. Instead of identifying the practices of the 'best-in-class' institution, the criterion statements focus on the norms that generate the practices. Under ideal conditions, the best practices we can expect an ideal institution to adopt are identified as *criterion statements*. They serve as best practices benchmarks. The institution has clearly stated goals and objectives that are communicated systematically to all its constituencies.

- The programmes of the institution are consistent with its goals and objectives.
- The institution has a wide range of programme offerings that provide adequate academic flexibility.
- The institution facilitates the effective running of the teaching-learning programmes.
- The institution has a well-conceived plan for monitoring student progress continuously.
- The student assessment procedures and systems are reliable and valid.
- The institution has an effective mechanism to recruit qualified and adequate faculty.
- The institution has an open and participative mechanism for evaluation of teaching, research and work satisfaction of the faculty.
- The teachers have opportunities for continued academic progress and professional development.
- The institution promotes research culture among faculty and students.
- The institution encourages faculty to publish in academic forums.
- The institution promotes faculty participation in consultancy work.
- The institution is responsive to community needs and conducts relevant extension programmes.
- The institution has adequate physical facilities to run the educational programmes efficiently.
- The growth of the infrastructure keeps pace with the academic growth of the institution.
- The institution has effective mechanisms for maintenance and optimal use of infrastructure.
- The institution had adequate library and computer facilities and other learning resources with easy access for all its constituencies.
- The institution provides clear information to students about admission and completion requirements for all programmes, the fee-structure and refund policies, financial aid and student support services.
- The institution has sufficient and well-run support services to all its students.
- Student progression is monitored effectively.
- The institution has an effective mechanism to use student feedback for quality enhancement.
- The offices and departments of the institution are governed on the principles of participation and transparency.
- Academic and administrative planning in the institution move hand in hand.
- The institution practices relevant welfare schemes for all its constituencies.