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PREPARATION FOR NAAC: STRENGTHENING WITH APPLICATIONS OF ICT

Krishnappa S. Singe¹ and Dr. M. Venkatesh²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Development Studies,
Kannada University, Hampi Vidyaranya .

²Principal, D.V.S College of Arts, Science & Commerce Sir M. V. Road,
Basaveshwara Circle, Shivamogga.

ABSTRACT :

National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India has revised its process of submission of Self Study Report that the higher education institutes are required to undertake as a part of Assessment and Accreditation (A & A) by NAAC. As the entire process has become ICT driven, this paper focuses categorically on those metrics under each Key Indicator of all the criteria that deals with ICT related infrastructure, activity, etc. Various suggestions are given to improve the ICT infrastructure, initiate new ICT based activities in accordance to NAAC A & A process. The colleges can strengthen their environment and also allocate the funds appropriately for the ICT related activities like - e-resources in the library, Internet bandwidth, and number of computers available for teachers and students, enterprise resource planning (ERP) software's, Digital Lab, comprehensive and up-to-date website of the institute, etc. The benefits of A & A to the institute, students and other stake holders are also discussed in the paper.



KEYWORDS : *Benefits of NAAC, Higher Education Institutes, ICT in colleges, Key Indicators.*

INTRODUCTION :

India has one of the largest education systems not only in the Asia Pacific region but also in the world. Though there is not a single governing body for the diversified education unfolding in terms of various faculties, subject and disciplines however, there are certain agencies which act as regulatory authorities like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), etc. Increased autonomy and introduction of programs in new subjects or disciplines have resulted in improved access to higher education in the society. Nevertheless, while making efforts to improve the overall Gross Enrollment Ratio, there has been a serious concern on the quality of education and its productivity in terms of making the students industry ready. To address these issues, the government has devised certain mechanisms for qualitative and quantitative assessment of higher education institutes. As a result, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 by UGC.

The core values of NAAC which form the back bone for the entire accreditation framework are- (i)Contribution to national development (ii) Fostering global competencies among students, (iii) Inculcating value system in students, (iv)Promotion of ICT and (v)Quest for excellence. To enable the

students to contribute to national development, it is necessary for the higher education institutes to do the capacity building of students. Global competencies can be developed in the students by the way of providing them global platforms through establishing collaborations with industries and other institutes involved in innovation and research. It is essential that the students imbibe proper value system.

As Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has grown by leaps and bounds in terms of its availability, affordability and ease of use, it is imperative for the higher education institutes to make use of various tools and technologies of ICT in their teaching, learning and research. The governance and the administration of these institutes should also adopt state-of-the-art educational technologies. NAAC Assessment and Accreditation (A & A) provides a golden opportunity to the higher education institute to know their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges through a well-documented inspection process. It also helps the institutes in allocation of their funds effectively.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the aspects of NAAC Quality Indicator Framework (QIF) where metrics that are related with ICT have been mentioned.
2. To give suggestions to improve the total outcome of the Higher Education Institutes with the use of ICT under each criteria of NAAC QIF.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anthony has done the impact analysis of NAAC on Higher Education Institutes. She observed that institutes have started copying the top-bracket institutions which will result in decrease in diversity. She has further opined that in developing countries like India, which has a long way to go in increasing access to higher education, linking assessment with basic funding may not be appropriate. Sandeep Kumar in his article "Quality Parameters for Teacher Education in India" has observed that the teaching education system needs to be overhauled making them more lucrative. The teachers are required to be thorough professionals, fully equipped with high academic standards, values etc. He further emphasized on quality indicators that need to be identified and implemented to maintain the quality of teaching education. The NAAC Manual "Manual for Self-study Report Affiliated/Constituent Colleges" has brought about guidelines for A & A of Affiliated/Constituent Colleges in accordance to the revised norms which has been adopted from July 2017 across India. This manual extensively gives the data requirements for Self Study Report (SSR) along with description of essential metrics. Miglani & others⁴ in their research paper titled "A Graph Theoretic Approach for Quantitative Evaluation of NAAC Accreditation Criteria for the Indian University" have focused on evaluation of assessment criteria using graph theoretic approach and fuzzy treatment of data collected from the students. Miglani & others⁵ in their research paper titled "Interpretive Structural Modeling of NAAC Criteria" have evaluated NAAC criteria for university education quality using interpretive structural modeling techniques. This model helps to explain the inter relationships between the criteria.

DISCUSSIONS

On detailed analysis of the "Manual for Self-study Report Affiliated/Constituent Colleges" which has been brought out by NAAC along with giving new guidelines and norms of NAAC in June 2017, an attempt has been made to bring at one place all those metrics under each Key Indicator of all the seven criteria of A&A which are about or related with ICT activities in the higher education institute.

ICT Related Metrics

The onus lies on the Higher Education Institutes to transform their administration with effective use of ICT. The NAAC has laid down seven criteria for A & A of higher education institutes which are:

1. Curricular Aspects
2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

3. Research, Innovations and Extension
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources
5. Student Support and Progression
6. Governance, Leadership and Management
7. Institutional Values and Best Practices

The quality indicator framework which includes above seven criteria has also identified different set of key indicators under each. The key indicators describe different sets of metrics. Let us have a look at each criterion and find out various areas wherein the higher education institutes can improve their performance with the use of ICT. Within "Curriculum Aspects", as the colleges do not have a significant direct role in design of curriculum, however, they are entrusted to implement the curriculum effectively. Various initiatives can be taken by the colleges for incorporating ICT as mentioned below:

- Preparation of audio video and textual lectures by eminent teachers of the college.
- Submitting them to e- PG Pathshala , NDL, NPTEL, Vidya Mitra and other such platforms.
- Providing links on college website.
- Adoption of MOOC and SWAYAM courses.
- Taking online feedback from stake holders regarding strengths and weaknesses of curriculum.

The second criteria of A & A, namely "Teaching, Learning and Evaluation" deals with the endeavors of teachers in their methods of teaching as also the learning environments provided to the students in the classrooms. It further includes the modernization of examination and Evaluation system which is mainly executed by the universities. The colleges do have some role here in terms of internal assessment and evaluation. Some suggestions are given below wherein applications of ICT will bring about efficiency in Teaching, Learning and Evaluation. i. Use of smart boards, interactive boards.

The third criteria, namely, "Research, Innovations and Extension" asks the Higher Education Institutes questions regarding policies, practices and outcomes related with research activities, initiatives and innovations and steps taken regarding community services through extension. ICT can play a major role during various stages of research. Therefore, Higher Education Institutes can undertake the following initiatives: i. Establishing Network resource center ii. Use of E- resources and Digital documents iii. Publish the research articles in indexed journals or peer- reviewed journals iv. Have collaborations with reputed institutes like IITs, IIMs, etc. v. Becoming online and making their research visible and more cited one.

CONCLUSION

There has been a paradigm shift in the way the Higher Education Institutes are expected to render themselves for A & A by NAAC. The data capturing by NAAC has become ICT enabled while the submission of documentary proof and evidences have been made more precise and available in terms of scanned copies available on URLs. Therefore, it is observed that with the use of technology in education, it is easier to create easy-to-manage learning environment were the delivery of information is faster and easily available. ICT has emerged as a tool that cannot be ignored at all by the Higher Education Institutes. The growth of the colleges is directly related with the quantum of latest technologies used by these institutions. The students are the ultimate beneficiary. It becomes easier for them to choose a college and simultaneously, it also gives a signal to the institutions whether they should move forward or perish.

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