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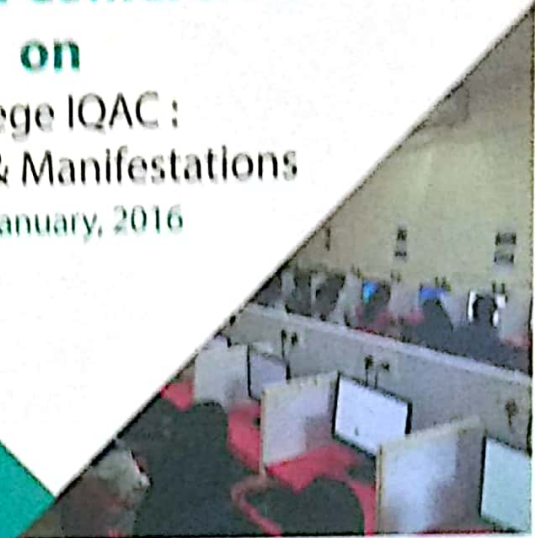
College IQAC :
Meaning & Manifestations
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EVOLUTION OF IQAC AN ENDURING NAAC PERSPECTIVE A CASE FOR SURVIVAL INITIATIVE TRANSFORMING INTO BEST PRACTICES

Divya Sharma

K J Somaiya Comprehensive College of Education Training and Research
divyamsharma23@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Internal Quality Assurance Cell is conceived as a mechanism to build and ensure a quality culture at the institutional level. Concept of Accreditation has led to evolution of IQAC Cell. Colleges are taking a plunge into much embellished quality initiatives in order to survive in the sea of Quality Accreditation Process. Since IQAC forms an important aspect of QA & QE, institutions are leaving no stone under turned to accelerate its activities so as to score upon the respective criteria.

This paper outlines the case of IQAC cell of K J Somaiya College of Education has expanded and innovated. In the pursuit of survival numerous initiative were chalked, many died there natural death, few survived and still fewer emerged as the best practices for the institutions. With each growing year much was learned and conversely a great unlearning also happened.

Selected practices like Faculty Forum- A Dialogue Platform for Exchange of Knowledge, Views and Research, Research Progress Meet- A Six Monthly Confluence of Research Fellows, 360 Degree Feedback – A Wholesome Reflection into the Views and Purviews of All the Stake Holders, Gyanpushpanjali- Annual Research Paper Reading Session are presented as best practices with objectives, process and challenge.

Suggestions for innovating and brainstorming for framing the best practices, ways of successfully achieving them, learnings from the practice and reflections are listed in conclusion.

Keywords: IQAC, Best Practices, Innovations, Faculty Forum

1. INTRODUCTION :

Education is considered as an important indicator for the development of the nation. Setting benchmarks for quality and deciding upon the indicators for achievement is still the more important. India has progressed a lot since Independence and this is evident from realisation of dream initiative like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and visualising and introducing still great initiatives like Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Uchattar Shiksha Abhiyan.

This progress is the realisations of the fact that the organisers are continuously striving hard and raising their benchmarks to achieve more. Thus it is clear that in order to achieve quality there is a need to continuously set new indicators and parameters. Accreditation process of Higher Education Institutes by NAAC was introduced with a vision of Quest for Excellence.

In pursuit of this excellence NAAC initiated the accreditation process and with each cycle of accreditation the bench marks and the indicators were raised. UGC proposed that, 'lasting improvements in standards cannot come about only by accreditation from outside, once in five years. An internal mechanism for sustenance, assurance and enhancement of the quality culture of education imparted by them, therefore, become essential'.

This was the inception of the movement for opening IQAC Cells. Post this proposition many HEIs already have established the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post accreditation quality sustenance activity. UGC made an important policy decision and directed all colleges to establish IQAC Cell. It is proposed that UGC will provide financial assistance for opening IQAC Cell.

The primary aim of IQAC was to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the

overall performance of institutions. It will provide momentum to generate 'good practices, ideas, planning, implementing and measuring the outcome of academic and administrative performance of the institution'. Further the functional IQAC and updated website became the important criteria for evaluating in the Re-accreditation process.

Objectives of the Paper

The main objective of the paper is to bring to forefront the process of developing ideas and practices. Further it highlights the process through which the ideas elaborated, survived and emerged as best practices.

Methodology

This is a descriptive conceptual paper and is presented in the form of analytical case study. Further it is based on the initiatives adopted by K J Somaiya Comprehensive College of Education, Training and Research

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

2.1 EVOLVING BEST PRACTICES IN KJSCCETR

Idea Generation

The inception of the work starts with the brainstorming session in which all the faculty members brain storm and contribute ideas for initiating the practice. During this session exemplars from different institutes and the best practices are taken into consideration. NAAC document on best practices is also referred for identifying the practices that have the feasibility of replication and capability of contribution towards the quality.

Building upon the Idea

The ideas that are generated in the brain storming sessions are discussed and elaborated further so as that it can take the shape of the initiative. In this step objectives of the practice are shaped and guidelines are developed for giving a sound background to the practice. Guideline development method is rigorous. They are prepared keeping in mind that the practice should have the capability to contribute to the quality sustenance measures of the institute. The objectives describe the timeline of work, work to be done and the review of the objectives achieved.

Guidelines describe the policy decisions that needs to be taken, steps of the practice that needs to be adopted, description of indicators for demonstrated and successful implementation of the practice.

Establishing the Process

This is the most difficult step because it is crucial for the success of the practice. If the practice takes of successfully then it is bound to survive the test of times and can then emerge as a practice to be followed.

Instituting Benchmarks and Standards

The benchmarks and standards though are developed during the guidelines they are bound to be revised as the process is put to practice. After the establishment of the process it needs to be reviewed initially after every month later every three month to improve it. Peer and Stake holder review can prove to be effective in establishing the benchmark.

Maintaining the Documents

This is step is important not only to prove the authenticity of the work done but also for reviewing and improving upon the practice.

Boasting of the Best Practice

The successful inception and subsequent good results reveal that it's the time for you to boast the practice. Promotion of the practice is necessary for its survival and dissemination.

2.2 BEST PRACTICE OF KJSCCETR

2.2.1 Faculty Forum: Faculty Forum is a platform where the faculty members are given a chance to present their ideas and discuss their learnings.

Goal: To provide a platform to the faculty members to:

- Present on contemporary issues and ideas related with teacher education.
- Presenting the topics from the curriculum.
- Present the learnings gained by participating in seminar and workshop.

The Context: The continuous revision and up gradation of the syllabus with a multi-disciplinary approach has highlighted the need for good knowledge base of the faculty. Further there is need for translating the learnings after participating in seminars and workshops. There is a challenge where in it becomes difficult for the faculty members to keep themselves abreast with knowledge. Maintaining the quality of the papers that are been sent for publication is another big challenge.

The Practice: The faculty present

- The newly introduced topics, it serves as to way purpose of not only preparing the faculty for classroom teaching but also for disseminating the knowledge to others which can come handy in future.
- The learnings acquired by participating in a seminar or a conference, it serves the purpose of wider dissemination of the knowledge among the whole staff at the fee payed for one member

Table 1 Glimpse of Topics Discussed in Faculty Forum

Title	Context
Process Skills in Science	Constructing science attitude among faculty
Multiculturalism	Disseminating Conference learnings
CSC Leaders Meet	
Environmental Education	Disseminating Refresher Course Learnings
Silenced Dialogue by Lisa Delpit	Gearing up for 3 rd Cycle of NAAC
NAAC Calculations of CGPA	

2.2.1 Research and Publication Meet

Research and Publication meet is a forum for faculty members and research scholars for presenting their research papers and research works.

Goal: To provide a forum to faculty members and research scholars to:

- Present their research papers which are being presented in seminars for peer review.
- Present research proposals which are to be submitted for Ph.D.
- Present the progress of the work done as a research scholar.

The Context: Research is being considered as an important aspect for producing the new knowledge. The college being the recognised research centre of Mumbai University there is a need to provide an impetus to the research. Research Scholars enrolled need to be provided with research inputs.

The Practice: The faculty and/or research scholar presents:

- The research paper which is selected for presentation in seminar or conference. It serves the two way purpose of peer reviewing the paper and also preparing the faculty for confident presentation.
- The Research Proposal which are to be submitted to Mumbai University for Ph.D. Degree. It serves the purpose of critically appraising the research work proposed and in developing a better insight about the research work.
- Progress report of the research work done in every three months. This practice speeds up the process of the work being done by the research scholar and the queries that may arise during the work are being timely resolved

Table 2 Glimpses of Research Work discussed

Paper Presentations	6
Research Proposals	7
Publications	3

Thus Table 2 shows the number of presentations held for the three heads. This exercise also included discussions and decisions on college magazine, an ISBN Publication of Research Seminar Proceedings, M.Ed. Dissertation Titles

1.1 DISCUSSION :

Thus the practices discussed here appear to be simple and normal, it is not so. These were institutionalised and put into practice after several months of deliberations and course of implementations. Out of many practices that started few practices continued successfully and have become a regular feature of the college.

The purview of this paper permitted the author to discuss only two practices. To name a few others – Research Paper Reading Sessions (Gyan Pushpanjali) gave opportunity to the faculty members and students of the institution to hear about the research work done by the scholars in Tata Institute of

Social Sciences and Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education; Pratyush – A Cultural Fest provided a platform for expression of dance and drama in education. Furthermore Senior Scholars' Seminar Series provided a forum and a platform for discussion of researches and presentation of research papers. Some of these practices are decade old while other are still in their inception stage and evolving.

It becomes vital to list down the learning from institutionalising the practices. Some of the learning necessary for the success of the practice, acquired by institutionalising the practices at K J Somaiya College of Education, Training and Research are listed here.

1. Brain storm lavishly before introducing a practice. Don't bother about the number of rounds it may require but all the possible strengths and weaknesses should appear in the session.
2. Critically appraise the possible challenges that may appear while institutionalising the practice. Assess upon the ability to meet the challenge.
3. Tap upon the opportunities that may suddenly appear from nowhere. Try analysing the pros and cons during discussions.
4. Don't forget to evaluate and monitor the practice. Continuous evaluation will help in improving the practice and monitoring will help in regulating it.
5. Last but not the least don't stagnate look for additions and newer versions within the existing framework. This will improve the practice and will keep its awe factor intact.

This implies that evolving a best practice is an enduring process which requires an ambition to excel, a desire to survive and determination to be the best.

There can be many processes that are being established in quest of the quality but quality is something that is achieved by the perseverance shown by the people who exhibit it and not by those on whom it is imposed.

So and Internal Quality Assurance Cell is an Imperative attribute for maintaining the quality of and Institute because it will understand the people and comprehend the practice. These initiatives were carried on through a active IQAC Cell of the Institution.

2. CONCLUSIONS :

Thus NAAC has served as an important motivator for the aspiring institutions to continuously raise the bars that have been established by them for quality. These bars can effectively be raised by deliberations through IQAC and execution through the institutions.

There is an ardent need by the institutions for revoking and evolving systems and procedures for the IQAC Cell. Systematically defined policies with milestones for quality enhancement at small intervals will help in framing the programs and practices for the institution. These practices when developed under a strict quality control will have the possibility of being projected as the brand image of the institution. So NAAC with its endurance to bring in quality is right in placing emphasis on evolving IQAC as a fortified boundary for total quality management.

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