

QUALITY AWARENESS PROGRAMMS IN MAHARASHTRA

Note : It is gratifying to note that quality awareness programs have already been launched by (i) Engineering Education Foundation, Pune for all the Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics in Maharashtra and (ii) by the Pune University for all its affiliated colleges.

Reports on these programmes are given below :-

1. "THE QUALITY MOVEMENT" LAUNCHED BY ENGINEERING EDUCATION FOUNDATION, PUNE

1. Why Quality :

Globalisation, Liberalisation and privatisation have transformed our economic, and industrial scenario and require us to be more competitive rather globally competitive. This in turn demands **Quality** in Industrial production as well as in all service industries. Education can be viewed as service industry with certain distinctive characteristics wherein new concepts, ideas, procedures and processes, are to be adopted. This will help the students to acquire new knowledge, skills and develop positive attitudes to constitute and provide the technical manpower to help the industry grow and acquire a competitive edge on the global plane. Manufacturing industries and Service sectors have to function in a harmonious way to raise the standards of living and quality of life of the common man. To achieve this, the emphasis has to be on Technical Education, with a thrust on quality aspects. A search for quality and determination to induct, monitor and enhance quality in all walks of life is imperative. Hence, an urgent need to make quality a mission, a vision and to launch a Quality movement in Engineering Education, as well.

With massive expansion in

Engineering Education, the Quality has to be ensured with preplanned efforts. If engineering education has to play its role meaningfully, effectively and fruitfully, the thrust of Engineering Education Policy has to be on its Quality aspects.

2. What is Quality? :

Quality in the context of Industry has been widely debated and discussed. ISO 9000 and TQM have become the tools of the Industrial and service organisations for quality. In the context of Engineering Education, we have yet to arrive at the meaning of quality, constituents that make up quality and the efforts needed to sustain and enhance it. It is a part of this pursuit that we launch a quality movement.

Quality has to be a continuous process involving each and every individual, Dept, all categories of staff and management of an Institution. Institutions cannot sustain their Quality unless the whole system is involved. Hence, a network for quality movement is the need of the day.

As such, it has been decided by **Engineering Education Foundation, Pune** to launch the quality movement in Maharashtra, involving all engineering

colleges and polytechnics. The quality aspects in the context of Engineering Education will be analysed and steps for induction, sustainance and enhancement will be developed involving all components of the system, namely the DTE, BTE, University and the Govt.

3. A Planned Quality Movement :

- i) One-day seminar on quality will be held universitywise, involving all Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics in that area. The object will be :-
 - a. To explain the meaning of quality, workout steps to induct, monitor its progress and get a feedback.
 - b. To form a network of the Institutions.
 - c. To form a regional quality council to guide these Institution. There are 8 Universities in the state and therefore 8 such regional university-wise seminars will be organised.
- ii) To arrange a state level conference on the same topic and to form a state level quality council.
- iii) Steps can be taken up to organise seminars on similar lines in other states and to form a quality council for each state.
- iv) Later on national level quality council

can be formed. Depending on the response and experience, plans for the Quality Movement will be reviewed and the march on the path of Quality & Excellence will continue.

4. Quality Topics :

Topics to be discussed in seminars and conferences on Quality in Engineering Education are indicated below by way of suggestion only :-

1. Concept of quality in the context of engineering education
2. Quality and accreditation.
3. Applicability of ISO 9000 certification to engineering education.
4. Quality and TQM.
5. Induction of quality in engineering education.
6. Critical success factors and performance indicators for quality in engineering education.

So far as Maharashtra State is concerned, Engineering Education Foundation, Pune, has already launched this Quality Movement. So far, 6 one day seminars have already been held covering 7 universities. One day seminars in the remaining 2 Universities - Shivaji & Bombay Universities will be held in August/September 99.

PROGRAM OF ONE DAY SEMINARS

(I) Seminars Already Held On Quality Awareness

Sr. No.	Date	University	Place / Host Institute
1	4.4.98	Pune	Institution of Engineers, Pune Local Centre, Pune
2	26.12.98	North Maharashtra	College of Engineering, Jalgaon
3	28.2.98	Amravati	College of Engineering, Shegaon

Sr. No.	Date	University	Place / Host Institute
4	27 & 28.3.99	Nagpur	RKN College of Engineering, Nagpur
5	26.4.99	Marathwada & S.R.T. Nanded	SGGS College of Engineering, Nanded
6	10.5.99	Dr. B. A. Technological University, Lonare	University, Lonare

(II) Seminars to be held

Sr. No.	Date	University	Place / Host Institute
7	28 & 29.8.99	Shivaji	KIT's College of Engineering, Kolhapur
8	-	Bombay	Date & Venue yet to be finalised

The State level conference on Quality is proposed to held in November 1999 at Pune. The formation of State Level Quality council & a network of Engineering Colleges & Polytechnics who wish to join the Quality Movement will be established at the end of the deliberation of this state level conference.

The Foundation has already approached the ISTE with a suggestion that ISTE initiate similar Quality

Movements in all the States. The Foundation is directly approaching organisations & individual Engineering Colleges/Polytechnics to initiate similar movements; in other states as well.

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President,

Engineering Education foundation,
Pune.

2. QUALITY MOVEMENT IN EDUCATION :

A CHALLENGING PROGRAMME OF PUNE UNIVERSITY

In the Golden Jubilee Year of the University of Pune, a programme of Quality Improvement in Higher Education has been undertaken by the University under the initiative and leadership of Dr. Arun S. Nigavekar, Vice-Chancellor, University of Pune. It is a very challenging programme and perhaps

the first of its kind being implemented on a large scale with participation of a large number of colleges affiliated to University of Pune as well as the postgraduate departments on the University Campus.

Dr. Nigavekar is the Founder Director of Natioal Assessment and Accreditation

Council (NAAC), Bangalore. NAAC is an apex body in India founded with the prime objective of helping the Universities and the Colleges/Institutes to assess their performance as well as guide and help them to bring about continuous improvement in the quality of education being imparted in these institutions. It is very satisfying to note that there is a very good positive response to this programme from a large number of colleges. Already more than 175 colleges have volunteered to take part in this programme.

In spite of many achievements that we have made as regards higher education since independence, it is to be noted that there is a rapid decline in the 'Quality' of education. As we know it is very difficult to define the concept of quality in education. Still everyone knows as to what the quality is in education. Most people who are concerned directly or indirectly unanimously agree that the quality of education has deteriorated considerably as the number of students in higher education has increased. This deterioration is due to various factors. Those who are directly concerned with higher education are students, teachers, non-teaching staff, managements, policy makers, parents, well wishers and donors, prospective employers etc. Even the meritorious students admit that the present educational system does not cater to the excellence in quality of higher education.

If this state of affairs as regards the quality of education continues, it may be difficult for us to survive in the fierce competition particularly when privatization is coming in big way even in the system of higher education. Foreign universities from countries like USA, Canada, UK, Australia, etc. are making

inroads into the Indian educational system. The rate of their intrusion is increasing every year. There is also tremendous progress in terms of technology being used for imparting education. Therefore, the conventional methods of imparting education may not be sufficient to give quality education and compete with foreign universities. It is, therefore, necessary to concentrate our efforts to improve the quality of higher education throughout the country.

In view of the above, the establishment of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 at Bangalore was a significant step taken by the Government of India. We can say that the 'Quality Control' will be monitored in future in a very effective and efficient manner by this apex body. As the Founder Director of NAAC, Dr. Nigavekar has contributed a lot in initiating the quality improvement programme of higher education in India and giving it a scientific and methodological base. As per the NAAC scheme, there are well defined procedures of the assessment of the performance of teachers, departments, colleges, institutes and the universities. It is because of these procedures that those who are concerned with higher education become accountable to the society at large. This is being done regularly in many foreign universities. In our country, no attention is being paid to the aspect of accountability. Quality and assessment are closely related to each other. Quality and efficiency are also related to each other. Therefore, it is necessary that quality improvement in education is given prime importance and efforts are made in that direction. We are almost in the state of crisis in higher education as regards the quality. If we want to address

this issue it has to be '**now or never**'. It will be very difficult for us to survive in the competition if we fail in our pursuit of excellence in quality education.

As stated earlier the University of Pune has undertaken the programme of Academic Assessment and Accreditation of the colleges / Institutes, the Postgraduate Departments on the campus and the University Administration. This programme can be considered as '**Quality Improvement through Periodic and Continuous Quality Assessment.**' The quality improvement is to be brought out through the "**Self-Study**" of the institutes, analysis and guidance by the experts etc. Help and guidance will be extended by the university to the colleges and institutes who have volunteered and would volunteer to participate in this programme. Dr. Nigvekar initiated this programme in August, 1998 by addressing district-wise meetings of Principals in the three districts of Pune University viz. Pune, A'Nagar and Nashik. He explained the concept of quality in education at length and effectively communicated the importance of quality in education. The sincerity of his approach, the clarity of his thoughts and the methodology of implementation that he has envisaged was instrumental in convincing the Principals that now there is no alternative to quality. As a result, there was a positive response from everyone. Everyone knows that this is difficult task but still there is optimism that we can do it. We know that it is only a beginning and we have miles to go. University of Pune is largely following a NAAC model for Academic Assessment and Accreditation of the college / institutes. The important step in this programme is the preparation of '**Self-Study**' report of

the college / institute / department. The Self-Study report comprises of the statistical as well as the Analytical Information concerning the various parameters which ultimately decide the quality of education in that institute. Some of the important parameters that are used for performance evaluation of the educational institute are :

1. Goals and Objectives;
2. Curriculum, Design and Review;
3. Teaching, Learning and Reevaluation;
4. Research and Publications;
5. Consultation and Extension activities;
6. Infrastructural facilities;
7. Student Feedback and Counselling;
8. Student Support Services, etc.

The Self-Study report has to be prepared by the Principals/Heads of the institute with the help of large number of colleagues. The report has to be such that it can be considered as the '**mirror image**' of the college and its activities. It is a hard document which finally helps the peer team, the university and the college itself to find effective means of improvement of quality. The Self-Study report has to be very honest, based on the bare facts and self-analysis. It should bring about the strengths and the weaknesses, the limitations and the potentials of the college / institute to decide the Course of Action for Quality Improvement.

It was necessary to give detailed information to the Principals and others concerned about how to prepare the '**Self-Study Reports**'. A large number of Training Workshops were conducted by the members of the Core Group formed for this purpose by the Hon'able Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Nigvekar. The Group consisted of the following members.

1. Prin. V. K. Wagh, Director, BCUD
2. Dr. C. G. Vaidya, Ex-Principal, B.M. College of Commerce, Pune
3. Dr. V. Z. Sali, Ex Research Officer, S. S. C. Board, Pune.

There were only about 10-15 colleges for each Training Workshop with total number of participants restricted to about 60 or so. About 3-5 persons participated from each college. The group consisted of Principal, one or two senior teachers (Vice-Principal, Head etc.) and a member of non-teaching staff (Registrar, Office Superintendent etc.). These workshops were held at different places in each district of Pune University and information was given in a very detailed manner regarding the preparation of Self-Study Reports. Each Training Workshop was of a duration of 3-4 hours. More than 175 colleges have already participated in the Training Workshops. Few more workshops are to be organized in future as per requirement.

The Self-Study reports are now being prepared by the various colleges with the help of Coordination Committees, Sub-Committees formed by the Principals in their respective colleges. The colleges are expected to send these reports to the university in the next one or two months. The University, in turn, will appoint Peer Teams which would study the Self-Study reports critically, visit the colleges and submit their report of recommendations to the university. The spirit of the whole programme is to help and guide the colleges and other institutes and not to underline their drawbacks and weaknesses. University will then suggest steps based on the recommendations of

the Peer Team to the colleges and institutes for the improvement of quality of education. The Self-Study reports of the colleges will also enable the university to create a broad database of the information of various kinds of the colleges.

Quality movement can succeed only if there is a greater awareness among those who are directly connected with it and motivating them to contribute in this task. Those who are directly connected in the process of higher education are teaching and non-teaching staff, students, the Management, well-wishers and donors, prospective employers, parents and guardians, officials of Education Dept of the State and Central Government etc. It is necessary to make systematic efforts to see that the thought of quality in education percolates to all the levels. This has to be done by organizing meetings, workshops, speeches, discussions, seminars, publication of articles in the various press media and so on.

Creation of quality awareness among those who are connected with the field of education is the important priority task. We have to get large number of people involved in this mission. We have to find innovative methods and develop scientific procedures for achieving excellence in the quality of education. Pune University has made a modest beginning in this uphill task. I am sure that the efforts being made will bear fruits in times to come.

Principal V. K. Wagh,

Director,

C. U. D. C. , University of Pune.

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