

13. Academic and Administrative Audit: A Parameter of Quality Education

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Abstract:

Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA) is a system to control and maintain high standards in the field of Higher Education. It is playing vital role in providing quality education to the learners all over the world. In addition to the developed countries, even the developing as well as underdeveloped countries, are now-a-days coming forward in opting the AAA. It is a continuous process of self-introspection for the better growth of the institution. The present paper proposes to focus on the role and significance of AAA in the present day globalized Indian academia.

Key Words and Phrases:

Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA), Parameter, Quality, Education, Benchmark

Introduction:

Twenty first century has witnessed rapid changes in all walks of life. Considering these changes respective governments in the various countries have proposed various methods and measures to enhance the quality of education at higher (college / university) level. What so ever is the name, but these are all attempts in Academic and Administrative Audit. In India along with central government some states like Gujrat have not only volunteered but made Academic and Administrative Audit a mandatory measure for the institutions of Higher Education. Centre has assigned the responsibility to National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NNAC) where as State Government of Gujrat has established Knowledge Consortium of Gujarat (KCG).

Academic Audit:

Academic Audit is a mechanism to examine and enhance the quality of academic aspects of institutes of Higher Education. Defining Academic Audit B. L. Gupta states that, “it is a systematic and scientific process of designing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the quality of academic systems, i. e. inputs, processes and outputs. ... It emphasizes on reviewing the performance of the academic inputs with respect to quality assurance (P. 1).”

What is an Administrative Audit?

M. Rajendran defines Administrative Audit as “A method of assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the operating system of the administrative procedures, policies, decision-making authorities and functionaries, strategies, process, feedback, control mechanism and so on. The AA would certainly make the functionaries to ascertain the strength and weakness of the operating system in general and pin out the areas in particular, and to ascertain where the function is stagnated and affected, and where special attention is required along with man and material resources.” (P. 54)

A Brief History of AAA:

Academic and Administrative Audit is a standard strategy for quality enhancement of Institutes of Higher education. Respective state governments have introduced external quality audits in various countries as part of reforms in higher education. According to Shah and Nair, “in countries such as United Kingdom, various European countries, and in New Zealand, external quality audits have been in place since 1990s. In countries such as India, South Africa, Australia, some Middle Eastern countries, Hong Kong, Malaysia they have been in place since early 2000s (P. 20)”.

Aims and Objectives of AAA:

The aims and objectives of AAA can be stated as follows:

1. The setting and maintenance of academic standards.
2. The quality of students’ learning opportunities.
3. Developments in quality enhancement.

4. The need for greater integration between academic planning, research assessment and quality assurance.
5. The recognition and use of the outcomes from professional association activities.
6. The recognition of the importance of quality enhancement.

AAA: Its Necessity:

The Academic and Administrative Audit is needed for following:

- 1) To confirm that the arrangements for quality assurance are fit for purpose and conform to the institution's role and mission.
- 2) To provide assurance that the standards of higher education (at degree level and above) align with expectations.
- 3) To ensure that students have access to appropriate learning opportunities through taught provision, private study and supported learning.
- 4) To promote and enhance high quality teaching and learning.
- 5) To confirm that students are fully supported in their academic and personal development.
- 6) To advance the highest possible levels of student achievement.
- 7) To encourage strategic developments that enriches the curriculum and enhances students' opportunities for employment and career development.

NAAC as a National Agency for AAA:

As per the guidelines of University Grants Commission, the apex body on Higher Education in the country the task of AAA is assigned to an independent institution established by Ministry of HRD in called as National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). UGC has made NAAC evaluation as mandatory for HEs in India. Though NAAC is located at Banglore its reach is nationwide since it is the only authority responsible for assessment and accreditation of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in India. It has developed its own system of assessing the quality of education provided by the HEIs. It evaluates the performance of the institute that opts for evaluation on the basis of past and present contribution of the HEIs with a fixed scale common for all the HEIs in India. This scale consists of seven criteria as given below:

1. Curricular Aspects

2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation
3. Research, Consultancy and Extension
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources
5. Student Support and Progression
6. Governance and Leadership
7. Innovative Practices

AAA and Benchmarking:

Academic standards set by particular institution are called as the benchmarks of the institution about the quality it provides. In academic institutes they are always defined by student achievements. The main aspects of it are - the acquisition of knowledge, the development of capability and the exercise of intellectual skills by students. It is applicable to all disciplines and reflects the expectations established by institutions as well as the academic requirements and competencies associated with individual courses and programmes.

Conclusion:

Academic and Administrative Audit gives a standard system based on parameters for Quality education. Quality enhancement is defined in terms of institutional policies, procedures and activities that are designed to promote the learning experience and learning outcomes of students and also contribute to the enrichment of the curriculum. The approach to enhancement will involve an institutional assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of current academic practice and the identification of potential areas for improvement. It may also reflect the particular mission and strategic priorities of institutions, where enhancement is seen in terms of a strategy for driving change and promoting student achievement and capabilities. Hence it is concluded that there is a dire need to pay proper attention to institutional strategies and policies for global engagements, extending the experience and aspirations of students to participate in an increasingly global community.

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