

**A CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF IQAC MEETING HELD ON 04.09.2015
REFERENCE NO. 14-19/NEP/DO/2015 DATED 26TH AUGUST, 2015.**

A special meeting of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla was convened on 4th of September 2015 at 11:00 am under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. A.D.N. Bajpai to deliberate at length on the theme "***Ranking of Institutions and Accreditation***" for New Education Policy consultation by NAAC as per letter No. F.No.14-19/NEP/DO/2015 dated: 26th August 2015, seeking specific inputs on various points as given in Annexure A and B of the letter.

Critical accounts of inputs/observations after deliberations by the members of IQAC are as follows:

Annexure – A (Ranking of Institutions and Accreditation); Questions for Discussion

- *Should India focus its resources on research universities, including liberal arts and social sciences so as to improve the country's position in the global ranking:*

Teaching and research both are the important and inseparable determinants in the process of ranking and accreditation of institutions of higher learning. Therefore, successful operation of the teaching – research process of worthwhile results demands a great deal of focus on resource allocation to strengthen the basic infrastructural facilities and human resources to all universities, instead of confining these to few research universities only. Philosophy should be let thousand flowers bloom. Moreover, and importantly, institutes of the country exclusively involved in research are seeking to incorporate teaching in their activities not only leading to academic degrees, but also to enrich their own research programmes.

- *Should not India develop its own ranking system relying on indicators more suitable to Indian situation as other ranking systems have heavy weightage for perception / subjective factors in which Indian Universities lose out:*

Ranking of Universities must be made on the basis of universally accepted criteria, as this would facilitate improvement in the performances of the institution in the competing environment globally. System evolved for the evaluation of the institution should be put in place locally as well, to provide a context for an institutes' evaluation so that the prevailing limitations and constraints are appreciated while

formulating the metrics and these should further facilitate better performance in international rankings.

- Accreditation has been made mandatory for all institutions (whether the Institution is publicly funded or not)? Is this approach correct or not?

Accreditation should be mandatory as it involves lot of processes to do self-introspection at the institutional level vis-a-vis best practices in the university sector with transparent inputs from the peers who come as members of NAAC peer team. Further analysis of the peers team undoubtedly makes it clear that desired goals have / or have not been reached. However, regional / local constraints – impediments must be duly taken into account while accrediting the institution.

- How should we facilitate the process of accreditation to make the process more objectively verifiable and transparent?

To make the process of accreditation objective and verifiable, the committee recommends as following:

- The NAAC proforma needs to be restructured with purposeful thrust on highly relevant issues of the higher education policy.
 - The NAAC should lay down a follow-up system so as to reassure the institution that its hard – work is not undermined by the unyielding rigidity of the NAAC.
 - Yearly follow-up of action on the recommendation of the NAAC should be made mandatory.
- *Should we focus on programme accreditation or institutional accreditation or both?*

The IQAC recommends that both programme and institution accreditation should be carried out together to bring a sense of competitiveness with in the University and bringing out institutional role models of quality in practice.

Annexure – B (Ranking of Institutions and Accreditation)

As far as the Ranking of Institutions and Accreditation is concerned, the members unanimously made the following recommendations:

- Autonomy in the functioning of all the existing accrediting / regulatory agencies such as NAAC, NBA, UGC, AICTE, COA, DECI, NCTE etc. must be preserved at all costs.

- A unified Higher Education Qualification Frame-Work is desirable but regional nuances and diversities must be taken into cognizance so as to devise a nationally applicable and acceptable Unified Higher Education Qualification and Ranking Frame-Work.
- State Higher Education Council must not merely be in form only but should be made functional as well with participation of academics as envisaged in the *Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan* Document and should be directly responsive to the quality parameters of NAAC. Also, SHEC should not be reduced to another government department of education.
- Objectivity and verifiability must be enforced through ICT enabled templates.
- There is a wide range of scope for mutual cooperation internationally both at the level of students and teachers under various exchange programmes, and this aspect needs to be explored at the level of apex statutory bodies of the country with due administrative and financial provisions to facilitate the process.
- To enrich the academic curricular and academic reforms, where needed/applicable expertise from the professional domain must be brought in as members of various academic bodies for which a review needs to be made in the acts and statues of the Universities.
- Inter – University Consortium should be developed so as to promote inter – state, intra-state as well as inter and – intra – region collaborations and sharing of best practices.
- Faculty mobility, interdisciplinary research as well as academic activities demands immediate attention to strengthen the academic standards of the institution and help to establish a healthy human resource pool.
- Skill and entrepreneurship development courses must be initiated by expanding the list of specified degrees at the national level by agencies such as UGC, AICTE etc. and by providing autonomy to float such courses with due weightage given during ranking by accreditation bodies.