

Report on the  
International Seminar  
on

# Quality and Excellence in Higher Education

**N.V. Varghese  
Anupam Pachauri**

Jointly organised by  
Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE)  
National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)  
and  
British Council

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**Quality**  
and  
**Excellence**  
in Higher Education

**N.V. Varghese**  
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N. V. Varghese  
Anupam Pachauri

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# Introduction to the International Seminar on Quality and Excellence in Higher Education

22-23 February, 2018

## 1. Introduction

Higher education has become an influential factor in promoting economic growth, personal income and social development. The sector experienced a revival and an unprecedented global expansion in this century. It is no longer an exclusive privilege that elites enjoyed but has become an experience that every eligible youth should have. The massification of higher education reflects this change in the approach to higher education and paves the way to equal opportunity to all. Whilst the developed countries have taken decades to universalise their higher education systems, the developing countries are fast-tracking their efforts to catch-up with their counterparts in the developed world.

Enhancing quality of this expanding and diverse system has become the major challenge faced by most countries across the globe. The traditional practice of relying on internal mechanisms and resources to improve quality has been replaced by external quality assurance (EQA) arrangements. The need for flexible, contextual, and innovative learning approaches and delivery methods to address diversity is to be married with the global standards that, very often, determine national policies and institutional priorities. Hence, discussions on quality are centered on improving global rankings, creating world-class universities, enforcing accreditation and EQA standards, and promoting internal quality assurance mechanisms. The focus of quality assessment is shifting from indicators of improving access to enhancing learning outcomes.

The low learning levels and poor employment outcomes after graduation have invited criticisms on the quality and relevance of higher education

provisions. The quality assurance efforts also help institutions to re-establish their credibility and people's confidence in institutions of higher education. The EQA and internal quality assurance mechanisms have played a crucial role in this regard. It is expected that an effective intervention to improve quality will ensure curriculum coherence, productivity of teachers, and learning outcomes to reinfuse confidence and credibility in the sector.

Internationally, efforts for quality enhancement could be formally organised at the regional level. These regional systems formulate QA guidelines, to which several national QA systems are affiliated. Although at the regional level, affiliation to the quality standards could be voluntary, several national governments are proactively devising regulations pushing institutions within their jurisdiction to undertake reforms and opt for institutional assessments as a mandatory condition for federal funding. In such a situation, capacity of the national Quality Assurance and Assessment (QAA) agencies to address the demands for external quality assurance in the context of large systems comes to test; especially so when there are only few QAA agencies to cater to the demand of the system. In addition, the autonomy of QAA agencies and the practices that they are able to affect at the institutional level are issues of discussion.

Rankings, regulations, and external quality assessments through external QA agencies and regulatory bodies have an important role to play in terms of evolving and maintaining the standards and indicators of institutional quality. However, external assessments hardly take into account the experiences of the students from diverse backgrounds, schooling systems, economic strata, and change in linguistic and scholastic capacities once they are in the college/university, and relative improvement in learning outcomes. Institutional data are seldom organised and managed to capture such evidences so as to substantially help develop informed institutional practices. Moreover, there are not enough indicators and processes to capture teaching learning in classrooms, which is the key to improve quality.

The management 'of' and management 'for' quality at the institutional level is crucial and requires institutional efforts through devising policies,

structures, mechanisms, processes, funding and accountability frameworks to this effect. Besides the statutory bodies and institutional leadership, the institutional culture determines the outcomes of the reforms and quality initiatives. The internal quality assurance cells (IQAC) linked to institutional governance for quality could play a vital role in achieving excellence.

In the context of changing labour market conditions, the degrees awarded by the higher education institutions may not necessarily reflect what the graduates can do or are competent to do. The national qualification frameworks (NQFs) focusing on learning outcomes and competency-based training are seen as measures to regain confidence of the employers and public in the national system of education. The NQFs also serve an important function of enabling comparisons of systems and qualifications, thus facilitating cross-border movement of students.

National governments aspire to make their higher education institutions globally competitive and academically attractive to international students and researchers. The launch of national rankings of higher education institutions are purported as efforts towards ensuring quality and excellence. Assessing the eligibility and quality of newcomers in the profession of teaching at the undergraduate level and their continuous professional development have been seen to ensure quality in higher education.

In India, the introduction of national eligibility tests (NET) in 1989 as a prerequisite for teaching in higher education institutions, establishment of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to accredit institutions, Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) at the institutional level, and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) for accrediting technical education programmes, are examples of some of the efforts towards assuring quality. There has been a lot of churning at the national level to relook at the workings of the NAAC and NBA in terms of evaluating their role and scope of work in refining the indicators for institutional assessments.

In the backdrop of the discussion above on excellence in quality of higher education and its measurement, the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE) of the National Institute of Educational Planning and

Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi and the British Council of India, jointly organised an International Seminar on ‘Quality and Excellence in Higher Education’ on 22nd and 23rd February, 2018 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The seminar brought together educationists and policy-makers from different countries.

## Objectives of the Seminar

The major objectives of the International Seminar were envisaged as follows:

- To provide a platform for experts, researchers, and practitioners to share their experiences;
- To discuss the experiences and practices for improving quality and excellence in higher education; and
- To explore the possibilities of promoting research studies in the domain of quality and excellence in higher education.

In addition to the above, the seminar was planned to form an international network of partners, researchers, experts, and policy-makers for sustainable knowledge building and sharing.

## Themes

The framework of the international seminar consisted of the following themes:

- Research and Excellence in Higher Education
- Student Diversity, Learning and Teaching
- External Quality Assurance and Internal Quality Assurance
- Resources and Funding for Quality
- World Class Universities, Global Rankings and Excellence in Higher Education
- International Quality Assurance Regimes and Regional Quality Networks
- Quality Indicators for Institutional Assessments across Systems

## Participation

The International Seminar brought together distinguished experts, policymakers and policy analysts from across the world. More than 120 delegates from around 14 countries participated in the seminar. The participants included academics, policy-makers, and senior managers of higher education institutions.

## Organisation of the Seminar

The international seminar on Quality and Excellence in Higher Education was jointly organised by the CPRHE/ NIEPA and the British Council of India.

## 2. Inaugural Session

The International Seminar on Quality and Excellence in Higher Education set off with the welcome address by Professor N. V. Varghese, Vice-Chancellor, NIEPA on 22nd February, 2018. Professor N.V. Varghese, in his welcome speech, underscored the challenges of enhancing quality in an expanding system of higher education. These challenges are more critical in the context of massification of higher education, especially in the developing countries.

In her statement, on behalf of the British Council, Ms. Manjula Rao highlighted some of the contemporary concerns in higher education, such as non-traditional academic courses and the courses being offered by non-traditional providers, balancing access and affordability, English language skills and employability of students. She emphasised on the need for improvement in quality of higher education and highlighted the factors that hamper its achievement, both globally as well as in India.

Professor Judith Eaton, President, Council of Higher Education Accreditation, USA in her keynote speech discussed two foremost issues namely, (a) global trends in higher education and, (b) quality assurance mechanisms in higher education. She highlighted some of the important changes in the higher education sector and focused her address mostly on

global issues related to the quality and excellence in higher education. She highlighted ten global trends in higher education and emphasised on the global trend towards massification of higher education and the important role the private sector is playing in it. Many countries, which traditionally relied on public institutions and public funding, have increasingly moved towards private institutions and household funding to finance higher education.

The other global trends she drew attention to were the diminishing public trust and confidence in higher education and the consequent surge in demand for accountability of the sector. Institutional performance and accountability measures have become a regular feature in the discussions on reforms in the sector. New providers of higher education, such as MOOCs, provided an alternative to institutionalised higher education by introducing non-traditional courses. Enrolment in MOOCs is expanding very fast and it poses challenges to the brick and mortar system of higher education.

Employment of graduates is a major concern in many countries. In an effort to improve employability, the students are opting for short term courses in addition to their regular studies in the universities. In addition, many countries are introducing short term certificate courses at the diploma level. Facilitated by technology and imparting the job skills required in different industries, these professional courses are being taken up by more and more students. Another area of concern is the process of teaching-learning and learning outcomes. Digital technology has not only influenced the planning and implementation of study programmes, but also impacted the teaching-learning processes followed in institutions and the institutionalised structures of providing higher education.

Higher education is passing through turbulent times. The changing social values and concerns about equity are serious challenges to be dealt with in university campuses. Whilst the need for quality higher education is an ideal goal agreed upon by all stakeholders, the politics of achieving these goals vary among countries and also among the politicians within the same country. It is important to sustain core values like institutional autonomy and academic freedom in improving the quality of higher education.

In the context of massive expansion of higher education around the world, it is important to set benchmarks of quality and excellence in higher education. Enabling the quality assurance mechanisms to respond to the changes such as the emergence of new quality assurance bodies and alternative higher education providers, rethinking ‘what counts’ as evidence of quality, and adopting innovative practices for measuring quality alongside greater focus on public accountability are the primary measures for improving quality of higher education. The issue of public accountability is paramount in the context of a diversifying and growing higher education system where different expectations and interpretations of quality are required to be addressed.

Dr. Anupam Pachauri, faculty member at the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education at NIEPA and the convener of the international seminar proposed a vote of thanks at the end of the inaugural session.



### 3. Résumé of Discussions

The deliberations of the seminar focused on conceptualisation of quality, quality assurance systems, and measuring quality, excellence, and equity as the means to sustain quality in diverse and massifying systems. What are the global trends in higher education and how do they relate to quality assurance? Who measures quality? What is considered when quality is assessed? How do institutions respond to external quality assurance? How do institutions organise internal quality assurance? How does quality assurance relate to graduate outcomes at the undergraduate level and the global concerns? What is the role of quality assurance networks in implementing standards of quality in national and regional contexts? These were some of the questions raised during the thought-provoking discussions in the seminar. The following paragraphs attempt to present some of the important points that emerged during the discussions.

#### 3.1 From Equity in Access to Equity in Quality and Excellence

There have been unending debates between quality and quantity on the one hand, and quality and equity on the other. It is argued at times that an expansion of the system leads to declining quality of higher education. In this line of argument, concern about quality is counterposed against quantity; as if both of them cannot go together. Many public funded systems of higher education have been a victim of this belief. The committees and commissions in India repeatedly highlighted the need to keep the higher education system away from expansion to protect quality.

The entry of market forces changed this view. An expansion of the higher education system was necessary for the growth and survival of the private institutions for higher education as the profitability in this sector depended upon the number of students. Therefore, the market based systems accorded lesser importance to quality in comparison to their preoccupation with the enrolment numbers. Therefore, enrolments in private institutions for higher education in India, like in other developing countries, increased very fast.

Quality-related issues assume a different dimension in a situation where the system is getting bigger each day. Whilst expansion is a necessary

condition to make access to higher education more equitable, questions about its impact on quality in an already expanded system remain a constant concern among policy makers in the developing countries. Therefore, how to ensure quality in an expanding higher education system is still a burning issue in many countries.

Massive expansion and the massification of the sector are also accompanied by growing diversity of institutions, sources of funding, and student bodies. The Indian experience shows that whilst massification has led to improvement in access to higher education across all segments of population; the disadvantaged groups still continue to lag behind. The achievements in equity in access are not reflected in terms of providing quality higher education, especially to the marginalised sections. In other words, equity in higher education is overshadowed by inequalities in the quality of higher education provided. The problems related to quality of higher education in many countries need to be addressed along with the efforts towards addressing diversity in the system and moving towards an inclusive system of higher education. Therefore, the ways and means to move towards achieving equity in quality and excellence remains an important concern and challenge for higher education systems across the globe and in India. The initiatives to set up external quality assurance agencies and accreditation becoming mandatory in many countries are a reflection of serious efforts to progress towards bringing equity and quality of higher education together.

### **3.2 External Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

Discussions on quality of higher education are centered on accreditation, global rankings, and creation of world-class universities; which help enforce quality standards as prescribed by the external quality assurance (EQA) agencies and promoting internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms. Improving quality in the context of massification is a major challenge facing most countries across the globe. The external quality assurance (EQA) mechanisms evolved in response to the urgent need for assuring quality in an expanding system. In many countries, EQA agencies were established and accreditation became a regular feature. Some countries

focus on institutional accreditation whilst others on programme accreditation or both.

The EQA and IQA mechanisms have played a crucial role in improving the confidence and credibility of higher education institutions. The EQA systems also helped ensure curriculum coherence, improvement in teaching-learning processes, and enhancement of learning outcomes. Internationally, efforts for improving quality are formalised through national systems of EQA. In many countries, accreditation is a mandatory condition for public funding. In some others, accreditation is a necessary condition to attract students.

Quality of education is also one of the foci of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In November, 2018, UNESCO organised an International Conference in Paris with the objective of debating on how quality assurance can contribute to Sustainable Development Goals. In 2010-11, the CHEA/CIQG launched 'quality platform' based on four standards : a) learning outcomes; b) ensure post- secondary level standards; c) curricula to facilitate opportunity for credit transfer; d) and the education provider provides readily accessible information to the public. The self-review of the provider is on the basis of the template provided by CHEA/CIQG covering these four standards, followed by external review and site visit by experts.

In 2015, CHEA/CIQG articulated International Quality Principles. The seven principles include quality in conjunction with higher education providers; students; society; government; accountability; QA & accreditation bodies; and change. QA can meet the new challenges of higher education in a changing world by focusing on SDGs, re-establish society's confidence in higher education, meet the need of all community sectors, bridge divisions, and evolve alongside the development of higher education agenda.

### **3.3 Regional Quality Networks**

Many regional networks are active in the area of quality assurance. These EQA networks contribute immensely to address concerns about quality

assurance globally. Some noteworthy QA networks active worldwide include the Quality Assurance of Cross Border Higher Education (QACHE) as part of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and funded by the European Union, the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE), and the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). Cooperation among QA networks helps foster trust and facilitates dissemination of information and resources sharing across nations. The Bengaluru Statement 2016 on Next-Generation Quality Assurance of Higher Education, a congregation of QA agencies from 20 countries also underlined these factors.

In Africa, Nigeria was the first country to put the system of quality assessment in place, through Nigeria University Commission (NUC) in 1990. In South Africa, the EQA system started in 2001. In several African countries, QA is organised under either the commission or council for higher education. Similarly, in other countries, the ministry responsible for higher education is in charge of QA in this vertical. In 2015, only half of 48 Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries had dedicated national QA agencies.

The regional QA initiatives in the African region were first started in 2003, with the Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa (HEQMISA). The East African HE QA Network was launched in 2012. Between 2005 and 2014, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) was started with the support of Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst/ The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which brought together five East African QA systems. In 2006, the Association of Arab Universities (AArU) was established as a council for QA accreditation to assist Arab university in quality improvement. In 2007, Arab network for QA in HE (ANQAHE) was established and received funds from the World Bank/UNESCO for supporting QA agencies in Arab countries. In 2013, DAAD launched Enhancing West African QA Structures (EWAQAS) in West & Central Africa. In 2014, Southern African QA Network (SAQAN) was established. In 2009, the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) was launched and hosted by Association of African Universities (AAU) for capacity building of QA agencies and also HEIs. The network was initially supported by World Bank/UNESCO.

The QA systems at the country level are undergoing several changes. For example, the UK QA system started since 1997 is a well-established system that mandated higher education institutions to follow best practices based on self-evaluation backed by peer review. The basic principles of QA are now questioned due to structural changes in the direction of higher education policy in the UK. The funding for higher education, particularly the rising share of cost for higher education borne by students, is becoming an important concern. The UK government's White Paper titled 'Students at the Heart of the System' published in 2011 brought a marked change in this respect. It recommended increase in student fee from £3000/year to £9000/year and had a dramatic impact on allocation of resources by the government in areas like block grants for institutions and funding for teaching. An income contingent loan scheme which allowed students to borrow money from the government was launched. Here, accountability of students to pay money back after graduation is also essential for QA.



The second development was the move to a market orientated approach to manage higher education for greater competition. The desire to have variable

fee structures that reflect status, quality, and reputation of institutions has been debated since. The third element in policy development is the risk-based approach to quality assurance. Now, the focus of QA agency has shifted to areas that are deemed to be riskier. Under the recently enacted Higher Education and Research Act 2017, two significant proposals, amongst others, were made. The first is to establish an Office of Students as the new and direct regulator that replaces the former Higher Education Funding Council; along with greater emphasis on funding for STEM subjects, and the second proposal is maintaining register of recognised higher education institutions.

The new teaching excellence framework shifts focus from review of quality processes to student outcomes. The framework uses matrices, which draw upon student satisfaction survey, institutional data on student retention and progression, and also the employment destinations for students. In future, student employability will have significant bearing on how institutions are perceived in terms of their success. Thus, the strategic shift judges accountability of institutions not in terms of what the institutions do for placing quality systems but how well-placed their graduates become. This paradigm shift from processes to outcomes in QA is something that higher education systems across the globe are undergoing.

The EQA is beginning to take shape in Nepal as well; although the institutional assessments started way back in 2007 in view of expansion of higher education. External peer review experts are invited to give feedback to the institutions undergoing assessment. Implementation of QA mechanisms is a big challenge in Nepal. In the upcoming five years, all higher education institutions in Nepal are set to undergo self- accreditation. Cooperation among countries and learning from best practices around the world is the key to establish credible quality assurance systems and refine QA mechanisms.

### **3.4 EQA in Branch Campuses**

The evolution of education hubs is a recent phenomenon. They did not exist when EQA systems were developed. Education Hubs are promoted and developed in several countries. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is

one of the good examples of well-developed education hubs with branch campuses established by many foreign universities. The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), a government agency established in 2008, is responsible for the regulation and quality assurance of all foreign higher education providers in Dubai. It is pertinent to note that Dubai has a unique QA model. The University Quality Assurance International Board (UQAIB) has a team of eleven international members, which has come up with a validation model whereby every operating institution is compared with its respective home university in terms of its 'academic standards and performances. This model has been in operation since last 10 years in partnership with different countries and has helped KHDA navigate the difficult question of institutional diversity. With an aim to connect, communicate, and collaborate better to improve QA around branch campuses, KHDA has set up 'Quality Beyond Boundaries Group' (QBBG) — a network of international quality assurance agencies which brings together major countries for transnational higher education, Australia, United Kingdom and United States with the major receiving hubs including Dubai, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. Several major areas focused upon through projects undertaken by QBBG are: (i) student engagement, (ii) academic integrity, (iii) QA of online education, and (iv) happiness and positivity.

The quality assurance in institutions such as British University in Dubai is under the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) and follows the CAA framework for EQA, which is different from the UQAIB. Established in 2004, the university has around 60 faculty members from different countries and more than 2000 students pursuing Masters and research degree programmes. The objective of best of quality may not be achieved without compromising on inclusiveness. Nevertheless, diversity brings lots of opportunities and challenges. Each programme offered by the university is tied to one of the British universities, thus bringing in quality dynamics that engage diverse stakeholders such as employers, foreign academic advisors for doctoral students, and external examiners, in the quality assurance processes. Other measures to strengthen programme quality are the annual programme review, accreditation through local accreditation

agency, fine tuning programme quality according to the collaborating British university, and validation through various professional bodies.

### 3.5 Internal Quality Assurance

In the initial stages of the evolution of quality assurance in higher education, the focus was on EQA and accreditation. It was soon realised that the EQA process and accreditation takes place once in five years and it was not sufficient to maintain the quality levels with the accreditation processes alone. The IQA systems were introduced in institutions in order to support EQA and make quality assurance a regular process. The IQA cells in most universities collect information on various quality parameters including teaching-learning; prepare a report annually, and discuss the report with the departments.

The research at the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-UNESCO), Paris, looked at the IQA systems in different countries, identified good practices in IQA, and also studied the effects of IQA on graduate employability, enhancement of teaching and learning, and university management. There is an increasing evidence on the mismatch between skills required in the labour market and skills acquired by the higher education graduates. The research conducted at IIEP is based on case studies in eight universities i.e., two each from Europe, Asia and Anglophone Africa, and one each in the Arab region and Latin America. The findings of the study indicate that IQA practices enhance university reputation, and therefore, have an indirect positive influence on graduate employability. There is also a direct link whereby IQA helps build strong relationship between academics and labour market, which helps revise study programmes according to the expectations of the labour market.

The research includes regular graduate tracer studies, employer satisfaction surveys, internship in the labour market to monitor employer, professional, and alumni as a part of the academic programme, and an analysis of graduate employment rate. Some universities have introduced a system of annual surveys and discussions. For example, the University of Bahrain has a Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), which meets once a year to discuss the employer satisfaction survey and the graduate

tracer study results. The PAC makes suggestions to the department council for programme revision. Likewise, University of Duisburg-Essen in Geneva organises quality assurance conference for students and evaluates programme modules along with the results of graduate trace studies, so as to make recommendations for changes in the curriculum.

### **3.6 Effects of EQA and IQACs on Quality Improvement**

To what extent do the EQA and IQAC systems positively influence quality improvements at the institutional level? The CPRHE/NIEPA studies based on large scale, multi-state studies<sup>1</sup> have shown that achieving quality should be the primary responsibility of the providers and they should be flexible and innovative. The exercises of institutional assessment and accreditation highlight the areas of improvements for the institution in consultation with the peer review. The EQA impacts the institutional workings and has considerable effects on quality. Preliminary impact of EQA can be traced back to have begun even before the institutions formally applied to the external quality assurance assessor i.e., the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) for accreditation. The impact of EQA is reflected in the changes/increase in documentation-related activities, improvements in infrastructure, and revisiting various institutional activities and structures aligned to the indicators across the seven key aspects assessed by NAAC. The key aspects are - i) curricular aspects; ii) teaching, learning, and evaluation; iii) research, consultancy, and extension; iv) infrastructure and learning resources; v) student support and progression; vi) governance, leadership, and management; vii) innovation and best practices.

Since 2013, the institutional accreditation has been linked to several public funding sources, especially the funds from Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) i.e. the National Mission for Higher Education. The promise of increased funds tied to improved accreditation scores serves

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<sup>1</sup> The CPRHE/NIEPA study to understand the impact of EQA on the higher education institutions in India was conducted by Dr. Anupam Pachauri at ten Higher Education Institutions across five states, namely, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, and Telangana. The selected institutions included one Central University i.e., North Eastern Hill University, four State Universities, namely,

as a motivation for the institutions to improve their functioning and get themselves assessed by external quality assurance agencies. Although there is a promise but actual release of increased funds to the institutions by the government following the improved scores by the institutions has not taken place.

The key institutional leaders have a major role in mobilising the institutions to prepare for institutional assessment. The key leaders such as the vice-chancellors and principals convened frequent meetings in their respective institutions with faculty members, department leaders, and the teams working on reports and data for accreditation in the year prior to application for accreditation. However, the frequency of activities/ consultations decreased in the subsequent two–three years after the results of accreditation were declared. At the same time, absence of leadership at the institutional level led to deterioration of quality.

In its value framework, NAAC expects the institutions to improve quality by encouraging quality cultures at the institutional level. This requires the institutions to have decentralised mode of functioning. However, while making provisions to prepare the application for accreditation, the institutional functions tend to become increasingly centralised and are regulated by the key institutional leaders, mainly the vice-chancellors and college principals assisted by a core team. Institutions also collect student feedback, which is essentially used for the purpose of NAAC compliance rather than affecting teaching-learning in the institutions.

The burden of documentation, as reported by the department heads, increased across the institutions. Increased mindfulness and recording of the vast range of non-teaching activities undertaken by the departments and faculty members were reported as the positive aspects of documentation. Systematised documentation is effective for improving

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Mysore University, Devi Ahilya Vishvavidyalay, Mohan Lal Sukhadia University, and Osmania University; and a college affiliated to each of the five selected universities. All the selected universities had earned 'A' grade in the latest institutional accreditation cycle and had established internal quality assurance cells (IQACs) since last five years, which is a requirement for the institutions applying for the second and subsequent cycle of accreditation from NAAC. Till recently i.e., before March 2017, the NAAC accreditation validity was for five years.

accountability and building reputation and image of the departments and institutions. However, there are no measures to assess the improvements in the programmes being offered, pedagogical practices, and classroom processes. Major workload of teaching at the institutions is shouldered by guest and contractual faculty who have no access to faculty development programmes. Although, appointment of guest and contractual faculty fulfils the NAAC-prescribed guideline for a balanced teacher-pupil ratio at the institutions, the vacant positions for regular and permanent faculty members ranged between 40-60% in the universities included in the case study. Similarly, there were up to 75% staff vacancies. The shortage of faculty and staff poses a challenge in terms of maintaining and enhancing quality of the institution.

The internal quality assurance cells mainly focused on preparation of institutional self-study reports for the purpose of applying to the external quality assurance assessor i.e., NAAC for accreditation. IQACs also prepared the annual quality assurance reports of the institutions which are ideally expected to be submitted annually to the NAAC. IQAC, in any of the institutions which were a part of the case study, did not have any statutory status either at the university or the college level. IQAC, by design is defunct, and there is a strong need to strengthen it to realise the quality mandate of the institutions as well as to fulfil the expectation of quality improvement by the higher education regulators and external assessors.

Unless structure and function of IQAC is integrated into the institutional /departmental structures, it would be unreasonable to even imagine that IQAC could make any contribution beyond data collection at the institutional level. Aligning IQAC with the mechanisms of institutional governance is of crucial importance for improvements in quality and institutionalisation of quality culture.

Institutionalisation of changes, reforms, and quality initiatives is a long process which can unfold over a period of time and needs wilful involvement of stakeholders. Institutions require time to absorb and respond to the expectations of the regulators and EQA assessors. The drivers for wilful involvement are situated in creating conditions for positive experience.

The pattern of grading or CGPA score that has been developed by the EQA agencies may appear an objective assessment. But, it is an undeniable fact that the data collected by the institutions as part of the exercise for institutional assessment and accreditation remains largely unutilised for quality improvements at the institutional level. The grades and scores create a league-tables kind of situation where an institution might take pride in gaining more points and moving ahead of some other institutions in their neighbourhood; but, overall experience of students learning may not actually change.

The HEIs have to seriously check 'for the sake of formality' operations and focus on mechanisms that create a collegial environment for the students, teachers, administrators, and assessors to reflect on the practices and then develop a plan to move ahead. Many times institutional mission, preferences, and internal quality assurance system could be at variance vis-a-vis demands of the EQA. Therefore, EQA agencies also need to revisit their indicators based on the feedback from institutions. A standard QA template cannot address the complexity of the notion of quality, its dynamic nature, approaches to achieve and improve quality, approaches to measure quality as well as complexity of the institutions in terms of their mandate, aspirations, and student diversity. The conditions of improvements reside with the regulators and funders of the institution as well as the institutional participants and leaders. The study raises questions whether increased regulation and domination of market principals lead to quality with equity.

The CPRHE/NIEPA case study of Mohanlal Sukhadia University (MLSU), Udaipur, Rajasthan, India shows that EQA and IQA have made several positive changes in the university. It has given impetus to initiatives such as improvement in infrastructural and physical facilities and implementation of changes as advised by the peer review teams. However, more evidence is required to understand their effect on improvements in the pedagogical practices and enhancement of student learning. Although the institution made its best effort and succeeded in securing good grade by NAAC, promise of increased financial allocations to the institution is yet to be realised. There is a need to reward the institutions on the basis of the higher scores they receive in the accreditation.

The CPRHE/NIEPA case study of the EQA and IQA systems in Osmania University, Hyderabad, India shows that NAAC has impacted the university to become more quality-conscious in terms of its various practices and their outcomes. More concerted and sincere efforts are required to make IQAC more functional and given the responsibility to coordinate, monitor, and take certain important decisions for quality enhancement and sustenance at the institutional level.

Challenges to the adoption of quality practices in colleges are pointed out in a study of 20 NAAC-accredited colleges with grade 'A' or above in West Bengal against St. Xavier's College, Kolkata—the benchmarked college for this process. Nearly half of the colleges studied had not developed their annual quality assurance reports (AQARs), a reflection of inactive IQACs in those institutions. Similarly, academic audit as a quality assurance mechanism is relatively absent, teaching is not student-centered, and opportunities for faculty development are nil. All these indicate that these institutions have to go a long way to achieve the objectives of IQA.

In Kerala, selected colleges have been granted autonomy. A study of IQACs to understand the impact of IQAC on learning outcome in eight of these autonomous colleges in the backdrop of academic autonomy shows that majority of the IQACs have become functional at the institutions. Of those institutions where IQACs are functioning, there is no resultant substantial improvement in the level of learning outcomes of students. The reasons could be attributed to the poor functioning of IQACs, limited infrastructure, lack of finance and administrative support. The focus of plans of IQACs has not yet included the solutions to concerns about improving learning outcomes for students. The IQACs require both internal transformation as well as external reinforcement so as to enhance student-learning outcomes.

Experience shows that learning outcome is the key to internal and external quality assurance processes. However, there is limited empirical evidence to show the positive effect of EQA and IQA on improving learning outcome. The National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) are relied upon to identify learning outcomes in terms of skills to be acquired and competencies to be achieved by the graduates. The NQF can help revise the curriculum to achieve the learning outcomes, set levels and recognition of learning

outcomes. Many institutions list learning outcomes in the documents explicating the programme of study.

### **3.7 Research Study Programmes and Quality in Higher Education**

Teaching learning process and research carried out by the institutions of higher education are related. Research and excellence in higher education are also part of the global reputation building. The global rankings gave an added emphasis on research and its quality. However, what is more important is to develop a quality culture at the institutional level. This will help improve the level of research and teaching-learning in higher education.

The quality of research carried out in the universities varies. Some universities in India continue to engage in high quality research. However, a larger number of universities where research is on low priority and research output is of low quality. This is true not only of the research carried out by faculty members but also of the PhD theses by the doctoral students. There is need to establish better links between teaching and research. Research should become an integral part of teaching and it should become a necessary responsibility of each faculty member.

The research carried out at the doctoral level assumes importance as the training received by the doctoral students now will decide the future of research in the universities and research institutions. A recent survey on social science research at the doctoral level in India found the following reasons for the deteriorating quality of research. First reason highlighted by the study is the competency related issues of the teachers who guide doctoral students. There is a lack of disciplinary and methodological expertise among the teachers/ guides/ supervisors. Most of them do not have clear and in-depth understanding of the rigorous methodologies to be followed to design a doctoral study, to operationalise data/information collection, to process and analyse the data, and come out with findings relating to the theoretical dimensions of the theme.

Second, with too many accountability measures, priority has shifted from quality to quantity of theses and research papers produced by individual researchers. The minimum requirements to become a university teacher

and the API score for promotions have shifted the attention to quantity. Third, there is an influx of information due to the expansion of digital technologies. Consequently, enormous amount of useless and unreliable information is now accessible to students for preparing research reports--without any significant efforts on their part to do the actual research. The reflection, analysis, and discussion have turned merely descriptive rather than analytical pieces. Fourth, the types of students opting for PhDs have also diversified and many of them are not well-prepared enough to seriously take up PhD research. The recent rush to achieve higher API score has resulted in dubious journals, which are promoting a pseudo research culture. There should be mechanisms to check the quality of doctoral research and faculty research.

### **3.8 Ranking, World Class Universities and Excellence in Higher Education**

The global ranking of universities became a systematic and annual feature with the publication of Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) in 2003. The ARWU attracted worldwide attention from universities, governments, and media and was initially considered the most influential international ranking system. This was followed by the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings from 2004 onwards. These were based on the data collected and analysed by Quacquarelli Symonds. In 2010, the THE & QS rankings split and each of them started releasing separate rankings. These three--ARWU, THE, and QS--are the most commonly cited global rankings of universities. The Center for World University Rankings (CWUR), which started as a project in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 2012, annually publishes ranking of 1000 universities. Moscow International University Ranking is a new academic ranking founded by the Russian Union of Rectors. They started bringing out rankings from 2017 onwards.

The QS ranking gives around 40 percent weightage to reputation, while others give 30 percent to it. ARWU gives high weightage to research, but its relative share is low in the THE and QS rankings. The THE rankings give equal weights to teaching in research, the QS ranking gives relatively less weightage to teaching. Employer reputation occupies a high share in

CWUR rankings. The Moscow Ranking evaluates universities on three of the most important parameters: education (45 percent weightage), research (25 percent weightage), and, in a first for academic ranking systems – interaction with society (30 percent weightage). The Moscow Ranking uses only objective data; reputation surveys are not considered at all. The first issue of the ranking featured 200 universities from 39 countries.

University ranking is a topic of heated debate in both countries-- where the universities appear on the top positions and in those countries where the universities do not appear on the list at all. The weightage assigned to various variables and the approach of calculating ranks has been criticised since the explanations for assigning the weightage are not always convincing. At times, the discussions center on decision makers' authority in deciding weightage and the extent to which one can pose confidence in the outcomes.

Despite the criticism, rankings do hold importance and influence the choice students make while looking for the right institution for pursuing higher education, affect employment opportunities, and earning-related outcomes for graduates of the institutions ranked high and low. Better ranks are used to justify the high fees levied by the institutions. Resource allocations to institutions, departments, and for programmes, are affected by rankings.

An interesting development is the fact that countries ranked low started national rankings for their higher education institutions. Today, many countries have their own national ranking systems. Not being an exception to this trend, India initiated a process of national ranking of its HEIs. The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was developed and ranking process was launched in India by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2015. The NIRF ranks universities and colleges, technical institutions, management institutions, and pharmacy institutions separately. The ranking parameters broadly cover five areas: a) research and professional practices, b) teaching, learning and resources, c) graduation outcomes, d) outreach and inclusivity; and e) perception. Whilst these parameters remained the same for all ranking exercises, the

weightage assigned to each of the parameters varied across categories of institutions depending upon the focus of their engagement. The results of the first ranking exercise of Indian higher education institutions were released in April 2016 and are subsequently published every year in April.

Although one of the key objectives of NIRF is to improve quality of higher education institutions in India, it also intends to address the issue of improving the status of Indian institutions in the global rankings. India is in the process of identifying 20 institutions to develop them as Institutes of Eminence. It is expected that a focused attention on these institutions will help the country to gain position among the world's top 100 universities.

The focus of ranking parameters should be on diversity of Indian higher education. The massification of the system is also accompanied by diversity of providers and student bodies. Whilst ranking and developing world-class universities are important, it should not be at the cost of diversity and inclusiveness in institutions.



### 3.9 Diversity and Inclusion

Whilst discussing diversity and inclusion, it is imperative to ask- ‘inclusion to what?’ Identifying potentially excellent students is a major concern for institutions. In order to combine excellence and inclusion, institutions need to engage in critical inquiry i.e. institutional research.

The major focus of the discussions on quality is always on perspectives of stakeholders like teachers and administrators. Students’ perspectives on quality are often neglected. A study conducted on engineering colleges in the UK considered the following four important aspects of student perspective - 1) Teaching methods in classroom; 2) Evaluation pattern; 3) Skills acquired; and 4) Involvement of students in activities other than classroom teaching. Lecturing is the main method of teaching in engineering colleges. Other methods such as demonstration, fieldwork, group work, industrial visit, and presentation by students are practiced less. Problem-solving based assessment of learning is comparatively lesser than other methods of students’ learning evaluation. Students in public institutions, as compared to those in private colleges, are more likely to get involved in learning-activities which go beyond learning in the classroom. Course provides little inputs for developing entrepreneurial skills, writing skills, communication skills, confidence and knowledge about global issues. However, majority of students from private institutions report that they have stronger technical skills. The UK study also shows weak interactions amongst various stakeholders such as the institutions, government, and the industry. Overall findings raise serious concerns about country’s potential to remain competitive in global knowledge economy and lacuna in improving the quality of private institutions.

Tamil Nadu Teacher University in India took up specific strategies to impart 21st century skills to teachers. The university makes periodic assessment for teacher-educators and provides various opportunities for professional development of teachers. Counselling services, life-skill education, activities to promote self-and creative thinking skills are also a part of the curriculum at the university, so as to help students grow holistically. However, there are many issues that need to be focused upon. Improvement in research skills of teachers is a critical area that requires

urgent attention. It is also important to strengthen doctoral degree programmes. Introduction of software to check plagiarism in research papers and theses may have positive impact on quality of doctoral research outputs.

Quality of faculty is an important determinant of the quality of higher education. Regulators have adopted the Academic Performance Indicators (API) to assess teachers in universities and colleges in the Indian higher education system. Promotions of faculty members are decided by gains in API scores by individual teachers. However, what does quality stand for in the profession of teaching is not adequately defined. Without defining profession, one cannot develop tools to develop professional performances. Since minimum level of learning is not defined yet, assessing performance of teachers poses challenges. Relative nature of quality and performance is not in tune with the static nature of index of API. Moreover, since resources are not equally distributed, criterion-based API raises questions. Besides, API was formulated mainly by experts without consulting the actual stakeholders. On top of all the above-mentioned concerns, API is deficient on crucial dimension of higher education such as equity, access, affordability, accountability, and quality indicators. There is a need to revisit the idea that activities of the teachers can be easily quantified. Measurement of quality of academics must be aligned with goals of higher education.

Higher education quality is determined by multiple factors such as teachers, teaching-learning process, infrastructure, administration, research & development and students. Student support is an important indicator and determinant of institutional quality. There are varieties of student support mechanisms that exist in India. Among the many, scholarships schemes play an important role as these provide financial support to students to pursue higher education. There are three types of centrally sponsored scholarship schemes for colleges and universities (CSSSCU). They are— 1) Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students, 2) Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme for Jammu and Kashmir, and 3) Central Sector Scheme for Interest Subsidy. Awareness about the schemes is low among the eligible population. Putting a higher

limit on parental income is also a disservice to needy. An amount of INR 1000 per month granted under the scholarship is also very low. Lack of coordination among the MHRD, state nodal offices, and the institutions negatively impacts effective implementation of the schemes. There is a need to further strengthen the implementation of scholarship schemes for the benefit of students in need of financial support.

### **3.10 Student Diversity and Quality**

The session explored the nature of student diversity in higher education, quality in context of nature of student diversity, and strategies to achieve quality and inclusive excellence in higher education. It is not impossible to balance quality with diversity, but it certainly requires concerted efforts. Discussions and debates on defining student diversity in higher education refer to the following three points-- 1) Variation in academic capacity; 2) Differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, 3) Disparities in financial status and social class. In this backdrop of the range of diversities, the meaning and concept of quality also acquires various meanings. When referring to academic diversity, quality means academic success for the range of students. Similarly, with reference to race, ethnicity, and so on, quality means participation of students from all these groups in various activities of the institution including patterns of engagement with alternative providers of higher education. Finally, when referring to financial status, quality would mean students from diverse financial backgrounds and social class become achievers in higher education.

The expectations of quality are conditioned on the basis of what is being examined. Although, this may sound obvious but is not always explicit. Including student diversity in addition to teaching-learning and research for defining quality poses several questions. For example, institutions such as community colleges in the US cater to diverse groups and large number of students in contrast to institutions such as Harvard, which are highly selective. This leads to different expectations of quality and what is being examined. Whilst acknowledging reasonable variation in expectation from quality, the concept of quality now goes beyond, as previously, it was confined only to academics. This context-dependent definition of quality where there is reasonable variation in expectation of quality will serve

higher education better in the future. An extension of this argument is that a single standard definition of excellence also needs to be reconsidered in view of student diversity.

There are commonalities in how presenters in the seminar discussed and defined the issue of diversity and quality. The generic definitions focus on the several sources and natures of diversity: Variations in academic capacities of students, which is related to their prior experience at the secondary level. Globalisation and internationalisation lead to students coming in from different educational systems, thus resulting in diversity of students. It is exemplified in the case of students from different schooling systems, such as British, French, and Baccalaureate, and with different scores entering the higher education system in Mauritius. Other dimensions include diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and culture; diversity in financial status, income level and social class; diversity in age whereby a far greater number of mature students are attending HE than ever before and whose expectations from the HE are very different from other students. Gender equity is another aspect of diversity wherein African countries will have to strive to cover major gaps in enrolments and learning achievement. Higher education institutions also have major responsibility to address all these forms of student diversity and also cater to the needs of students with disabilities. Where diversity is promoted by affirmative action (for example, as in India and South Africa), the students admitted through affirmative action may not have same levels of pre-college academic experience.

Besides the diversity in religious beliefs and political affiliations, when it comes to learning situations, the diversity is manifested in terms of language proficiency, learning readiness, students' needs and academic pursuits, learning speed, and abilities. Addressing this type of student diversity requires additional learning time and instructions along with preparation and readiness for assessments as some students may need more time to complete them.

In colleges, the challenge is of language of communication. Diversity in language background and medium of instruction is one of the major constraints on achieving excellence and improving learning outcomes in

higher education. This form of student diversity has two implications. Data suggests that a large share of students from economically poor sections, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other disadvantaged groups are concentrated in disciplines of social sciences, arts, and humanities. When language becomes a barrier to teaching-learning in the classrooms; it contributes to the process of filtering.

Quality in the context of student diversity is then defined as responsiveness of the education programmes to the learning needs. Equity and inclusiveness are parts of the social responsibility of the higher education institutions. Quality is about academic success which can be realised across a range of students described earlier. Quality education programmes are those which are- a) equitable and inclusive; b) relevant and responsive to learning needs or demands of diverse groups of learners; c) effective in meeting the stated objectives and equipping them with required competency profiles; d) supported by an environment which is conducive for learning; e) mediated by adequate and appropriate inputs and teaching-learning assessment processes; and f) capable of ensuring achievement of expected learning outcomes by all the students. In other words, success of students from diverse backgrounds, despite the differences mentioned above, is one of the most important indicator of quality.

### **3.11 Strategies to Achieve Quality and Inclusive Excellence**

Steps to meet the needs arising out of student diversity should include measures which help achieve social democracy and inclusive excellence in the classroom. This calls for re-distribution of learning opportunities in the classrooms. But many times, diversity measures are mainly focused only on getting students into the university through reservation. In terms of learning conditions, the current scenario reflects 'one-size-fits-all' approach: same instructions, same assignments, and same assessment procedures. As a precondition, students are expected to have skills for learning in HE such as technical and discipline specific vocabulary and higher levels of language competency amongst others. If they do not have the pre-requisite skills, then they are seen as misfits in the higher education system and are held responsible for poor achievement scores. Curricular transactions are based on what might be preferred by the faculty and institutions or is logistically

easier for both colleges and universities. Assessment schedules are also pre-fixed, that is, all have to take examination at a given time. In order to ensure equity in learning outcomes and bring about inclusive excellence, unequal inputs and focusing on what students' learning needs are required. The opportunities for learning in the classrooms have to be made more equal. Inclusive excellence cannot be attained through inclusionary measures related to admissions alone as these do not automatically guarantee inclusive excellence. To achieve inclusive excellence, policies have to be reframed to include strategies for providing unequal inputs and re-distribution of learning opportunities in the classrooms.

Few steps that institutions should take to achieve inclusive excellence may include: admission system that ensures equitable access; providing financial assistance and scholarships to meritorious students; on-campus facilities such as residences and disabled-friendly infrastructure; instituting a system of recording and analysing drop-out rate, failure rates, and employability in terms of diversity of students and an assessment of measures that are taken to manage it effectively; a well-functioning, responsive, and prompt grievance redressal system; ensuring proficiency in language(s), and compensatory education. The Linguistic Empowerment Cell (LEC) of JNU which conducts English language classes at the beginning of the semester to help students achieve command over language, is a good example of concentrated efforts to remove language barrier.

### **3.12 Reflections and Observations**

The concerns related to quality of higher education do not derive only from the expansion of higher education sector and growing acknowledgement of the crucial role of higher education in the progress of knowledge economies. These concerns also relate to the realisation that expanding systems are also diversifying in terms of its participants, providers, and its relationship with historically marginalised population and their participation in the mainstream. This realisation therefore calls for revision of constructs of quality, expectations from the higher education systems, and appropriate institutional responses. Besides the increasing mobility of students, emerging technologies for teaching-learning and competition for funding in view of market crises have made it imperative to develop a

shared and comprehensive understanding of quality, excellence, and their measurement. At the same time, the issues of accountability and autonomy continue to be of pressing focus while devising policies for reforms to improve quality of higher education.

The international seminar on quality and excellence in higher education served as an intellectual platform where more than 120 delegates including researchers, policy makers, quality assurance professionals, and educationists from 14 countries came together to reflect and debate on the urgent and emergent concerns related to quality and excellence in higher education. The richness of the design of the event and the eye-opening discussions is evident from the presentations, critical discussions, and the commentaries by the participants on a variety of themes. Notions of quality, measurement of quality, higher education policy reforms and institutional responses, indicators of institutional assessments, ranking and their methodology, external and internal quality assurance, branch campuses, regional quality networks, sustainable development goals, employability, quality of research, teaching-learning, curriculum, learning outcomes and qualification frameworks, and diversity and inclusion were some of the themes that were discussed. In addition, the event also led to the emergence of a consensus on the need to redefine and benchmark quality in view of diversity and its emergent demands and expectations from the higher education institutions.

Extending the concept of quality beyond the notion of academic quality to include diversity is extremely useful in the context of sustainable development goals. Discussions on quality tend to focus mainly on internal and institutional factors. However, in the context of internationalisation, home institutions need to understand the effects of student intake (which also comprises increasing number of foreign students) on institutional quality. Quality thus includes managing diversity through inclusive pedagogy and classroom practices.

Benchmarking for quality is an ongoing process and contingent upon the notions of quality being considered, weightages given to the constructs, and overall methodology. The different purposes, weightages, and approaches for benchmarking therefore restrict the feasibility of comparisons. On one

hand, benchmarking and standardisation are pertinent to ensure quality of cross-border supply of higher education through branch campuses. On the other hand, standardisation of indicators has a limitation as it may leave little scope for innovation and creativity.

Quality assurance is a resource-intensive exercise in terms of funds, ideas, approaches, expertise, and political considerations. Ideas on assessments and QA may travel across borders but have to be applied according to the systemic peculiarities of specific country contexts. There is a spurt of QA agencies in several parts of the world. New networks are emerging amongst QA agencies. The relationship between QA agencies and federal governments is an important indicator of whether the governments take QA of the higher education institutions seriously. At the same time, challenges to the QA are posed by under-resourced provisions for higher education. USA could be an example of a country where all systems were first put in place before the QA agencies came into picture.

The commitment of international bodies such as UNESCO towards QA within the contexts of strategies for social and economic development adds value to higher education. National qualification frameworks (NQFs) help identify issues that need attention while specifying learning outcomes and serve as a tool for strengthening quality assurance. The role of regional networks in QA is of particular import in supporting national initiatives. Linkages between external and internal QA systems are important to bring focus on learning outcomes. Even at the country level, various QA initiatives combined with internal and external systems and schemes are required to be integrated as well as interlinked. Such linkages are perhaps important to affect regional development.

When adopting international QA frameworks, it is imperative to consider the questions around the ways, approaches, and perspectives that go into making a framework--who adopts and who undertakes QA, and how are the QA initiatives sustained.

In higher education systems expanding with Brobdingnagian proportions, quality has to be seen in terms of quantity or access alongside equality and social justice. Assuring quality at the levels of processes and outcomes

requires substantial costs to be incurred. With governments curtailing public funding for higher education sector, the burden of rising cost of education naturally falls upon students or the households. Therefore, QA initiatives must include an analysis of the impacts of costs on students from disadvantaged section of the society and need to make inclusionary provisions like fellowships, scholarships and fee waivers for such students.

Discussions also focused on the relative importance of internal quality assurance through specific cells and external quality assurance through external agencies. The cases where IQACs rely on EQA agencies and derive their mandate from the EQA expectations add only limited value to the institution in its journey towards enhanced quality. IQAC has to be the major driver for quality improvement and implementation of various practices towards quality mandate. However, it is still being debated whether an internal system of QA at the institutional level has to be implemented through the structure of a cell, or is it more effective through a distributed mechanism that covers all the structures and processes at higher education institutions.

Although there is growing consensus and understanding that the concept of quality has to be contextualised, the focus of QA assessments has been on improvements in administrative quality, which in practice may not be sufficient in raising overall institutional quality including the academic progress.

The thrust on curriculum in higher education institutions is expected to bring the following positive changes. Emphasis of teaching on 'how to make learn better' rather than keeping the focus only on content; continuous assessments staggered over a period; variety of learning pathways; shift in the learning environment from competitive to cooperative; more focus on institutional management rather than system management; and emphasis on empowerment of learners rather than supervision. Quality thus means honouring diversity and requires institutional response through restructuring and reconfiguration of curriculum, ways of assessment, and learner -responsive pedagogy.

# Appendix 1

## Detailed Programme

### Day 1: Thursday, 22 February (Venue: Jacaranda Hall)

9:00	<b>Registration</b>
9:30 - 10:45	<b>Inaugural Session</b> <b>Welcome Address:</b> Professor N.V. Varghese, Vice Chancellor, NIEPA <b>Opening Remarks:</b> Ms. Manjula Rao, Director, Higher Education and Society for British Council, India <b>Keynote Address:</b> Professor Judith Eaton, President, Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) <b>Vote of thanks:</b> Dr. Anupam Pachauri, Assistant Professor, Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education, NIEPA <b>Chairperson:</b> Professor N.V. Varghese, Vice Chancellor, NIEPA <b>Rapporteur:</b> Dr. Pradeep Kumar Choudhury, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
10:45 - 11:15	<b>Coffee and Networking</b> (Venue: Pre-function Area)
11:15 - 13:00	<b>Plenary Session:</b> Ranking, World Class Universities and Excellence in Higher Education <b>Chairperson:</b> M. Anandkrishnan, IIT Kanpur, India

11:15 - 12:30	<p><b>Paper Presentations/Panel Discussion</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Furqan Qamar, Association of the Indian Universities, India</li> <li>2. Marguerite Clarke, World Bank, India</li> <li>3. Pankaj Mittal, University Grants Commission, India</li> <li>4. Kirill Ivanov, Moscow International University Ranking, Russia</li> <li>5. G.D. Sharma, SEED, India</li> <li>6. Emon Nandi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India</li> </ol> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Saumen Chattopadhyay, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India</p>
12:30 - 13:00	<p><b>Open for Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur:</b> Anuneeta Mitra, CPRHE/NIEPA, India</p>
13:00 - 14:00	<p><b>Lunch (Venue: Pre-function Area)</b></p>
14:00 - 15:45	<p><b>Plenary Session:</b> External Quality Assurance</p> <p><b>Chairperson:</b> J. Veeraraghavan, Former Secretary, MHRD, India</p>
14:00 - 14:15	<p><b>Keynote Address:</b> Stephen Jackson, Quality Assurance Agency, United Kingdom</p>
14:15 - 15:15	<p><b>Paper Presentations/Panel Discussion</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Michaela Martin, International Institute for Educational Planning, France</li> <li>2. Nitesh Sughnani, Knowledge &amp; Human Development Authority, United Arab Emirates</li> <li>3. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya, University Grants Commission, Nepal</li> <li>4. Solomon Arulraj David, British University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates</li> </ol> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Jagannath Patil, National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India</p>

15:00 - 15:45	<b>Open for Discussion</b> <b>Rapporteur:</b> Jinusha Panigrahi, CPRHE/NIEPA, India	
15:45 - 16:00	<b>Coffee and Networking</b> (Venue: Pre-function Area)	
16:00 - 17:15	<b>Plenary Session:</b> Internal Quality Assurance, Indicators and Reforms	
	<b>Parallel Session 1</b> <b>Chairperson:</b> Mohammad Miyan, Former Vice Chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, India	<b>Parallel Session 2</b> <b>Chairperson:</b> Namita Ranganathan, University of Delhi, India
16:00 - 16:45	<b>Paper Presentations/  Panel Discussion</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anupam Pachauri, CPRHE, NIEPA, India</li> <li>2. Sanjay Lodha &amp; Neha Paliwal, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Rajasthan, India</li> <li>3. Mrunalini Talla, Osmania University, Telangana, India</li> </ol> <b>Discussant:</b> Mohd. Muzammil, University of Lucknow, India	<b>Paper Presentations/  Panel Discussion</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manasi Thapliyal Navani, Ambedkar University Delhi, India</li> <li>2. P. J. Sabu, St. Thomas College, Kerala, India</li> <li>3. Pijus Kanti Bhuiin, Bhatter College, West Bengal, India</li> <li>4. Asha Gupta, Formerly with University of Delhi, India</li> </ol> <b>Discussant:</b> Sudhanshu Bhushan, NIEPA, India

16:45 - 17:15	<b>Open for Discussion</b> <b>Rapporteur:</b> Nivedita Sarkar, CPRHE/NIE-PA, India	<b>Open for Discussion</b> <b>Rapporteur:</b> Neeru Snehi, NIEPA, India
17:15	Heading for Reception Dinner at British Council India, 17 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi - 110001(TBC)	

## Detailed Programme

### Day 2: Friday, 23 February (Venue: Jacaranda Hall)

9:30 - 11:00	<b>Plenary Session:</b> Research and Quality in Higher Education <b>Chairperson:</b> Niraja Gopal Jayal, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
9:30 - 9:45	<b>Keynote Address:</b> N. Jayaram, National Law School of India University, India
9:45 - 10:30	<b>Paper Presentations/Panel Discussion</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Morshidi Sirat, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia</li><li>2. Anitha Kurup, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, India</li><li>3. Udaya S. Mishra, Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, India</li><li>4. Paul Roberts, Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research, University of Sussex, United Kingdom</li><li>5. A. Mathew, NIEPA, India</li></ol> <b>Discussant:</b> Mark O' Brien, Educational Development in the Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom
10:30 - 11:00	<b>Open for Discussion</b> <b>Rapporteur:</b> Sayantan Mandal, CPRHE/NIEPA, India
11:00 - 11:15	<b>Coffee and Networking</b> (Venue: Pre-function Area)
11:15 - 13:00	<b>Plenary Session:</b> Student Diversity, Teaching and Learning <b>Chairperson:</b> Karuna Chanana, Formerly with Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

11:15 - 11:30	<b>Keynote Address:</b> R. Govinda, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, India
11:30 - 12:30	<b>Paper Presentations/Panel Discussion</b> <b>Speakers:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Paul Blackmore, King's College, United Kingdom</li> <li>2. Pradeep Kumar Choudhury, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India</li> <li>3. J. Jhonsi Priya, Meston College of Education, Tamil Nadu, India</li> <li>4. Veera Gupta, NIEPA, India</li> <li>5. V.P.S. Raju, NIEPA, India</li> </ol>
12:30 - 13:00	<b>Open for Discussion</b> <b>Rapporteur:</b> Malish C.M., CPRHE/NIEPA, India
13:00 - 14:00	<b>Lunch</b>
14:00 - 15:30	<b>Plenary Session:</b> Quality Assessment and Regional Quality Networks <b>Chairperson:</b> Deepthi Bandara, Quality Assurance & Accreditation Council, UGC, Sri Lanka
14:00 - 14:50	<b>Paper Presentations/Panel Discussion</b> <b>Speakers:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Goolam Mohamedbhai, Former Secretary-General, Association of African Universities, Mauritius</li> <li>2. Stamenka Uvalic Trumbic, Higher Education Expert, France</li> <li>3. Libing Wang, Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Thailand</li> <li>4. Jagannath Patil, National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Karnataka, India</li> </ol> <b>Discussant:</b> Stephen Jackson, The Quality Assurance Agency at Higher Education, United Kingdom

14:50 - 15:15	<p><b>Open for Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur:</b> Anubha Rohatgi, CPRHE/NIEPA, India</p>
15:15 - 15:30	<p><b>Coffee and Networking</b> (Venue: Pre-function Area)</p>
15:30 - 17:30	<p><b>Open Panel:</b> Student Diversity and Quality  <b>Chairperson:</b> Manjula Rao, British Council, India  <b>Panelist:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Judith Eaton, President, Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), USA</li> <li>2. Goolam Mohamedbhai, Former Secretary-General, Association of African Universities, Mauritius</li> <li>3. K. Ramachandran, IAIEPA, NIEPA, India</li> <li>4. N. V. Varghese, NIEPA, India</li> </ol> <p><b>Concluding Remarks:</b> N. V. Varghese, NIEPA, India  <b>Vote of Thanks:</b> Anupam Pachauri, CPRHE/NIEPA, India  <b>Rapporteur:</b> Nidhi S. Sabharwal, CPRHE/NIEPA, India</p>
<p><b>Departure</b></p>	

# Appendix 2

## List of Participants

### International Participants

1. Mohammad Naim Azimi  
Academic Vice Chancellor  
Kabul University, Kabul  
**Afghanistan**
2. Gh. Dastgeer Khawrin  
Academic Vice Chancellor  
Shahid Rabani Education  
University, Kabul  
**Afghanistan**
3. Haji Mohammad Naimi  
Director  
Quality Assurance and  
Accreditation  
Ministry of Higher  
Education, Kabul  
**Afghanistan**
4. Shershah Rashad  
Academic Vice chancellor  
Kandahar University,  
Kandahar  
**Afghanistan**
5. Khwaja Zubair Sediqi  
Director  
Academic Programme  
Development  
Ministry of Higher  
Education, Kabul  
**Afghanistan**
6. Abdullah Yamayee  
Academic Vice chancellor  
Herat University, Herat  
**Afghanistan**
7. Gulghutai Waizi  
Project Manager Higher  
Education and Society  
British Council, British  
Embassy Compound  
15 Street Roundabouts,  
Wazir Akbar Khan Kabul  
**Afghanistan**
8. Brigid Freeman  
Australia India Institute  
University of Melbourne  
Vic 3010 Australia  
**Australia**

9. Michaela Martin  
International Institute for  
Educational Planning  
7-9 rue Eugene-Delacroix  
75016 Paris  
**France**
10. Stamenka Uvalic Trumbic  
Higher Education Expert  
Former UNESCO Chief of  
Higher Education Section  
2, boulevard Exelmans,  
75016 Paris  
**France**
11. Marguerite Clarke  
Senior Education Specialist  
Human Development  
Network  
The World Bank  
70, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi  
**India**
12. Shigeru Aoyagi  
Director  
UNESCO  
UNESCO House, 1,  
San Martin Marg  
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi  
**India**
13. Dennis Schroeder  
Education Specialist  
The World Bank Group  
70 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi  
**India**
14. Satoko Yano  
Programme Specialist in  
Education  
UNESCO House  
1, San Martin Marg,  
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi  
**India**
15. Morshidi Sirat  
Professor and Senior  
Research Fellow  
National Higher Education  
Research Institute (IPPTN)  
Universiti Sains Malaysia  
11800 USM, Pulau Pinang  
Malaysia  
**Malaysia**
16. Goolam Mohamedbhai  
Former Secretary-General,  
Association of African  
Universities  
Honorary President,  
International Association  
of Universities  
Former Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Mauritius  
Coucaud Lane, Sivananda  
Street, Rose-Hill 71368  
**Mauritius**
17. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya  
Technical Adviser  
University Grants  
Commission Sanothimi,  
Bhaktapur  
Post Box No. 10796,  
Kathmandu  
**Nepal**

18. Kirill Ivanov  
Moscow International  
University Ranking  
(MosIUR), Team Member  
Association of Rating Makers  
**Russia**
19. Deepthi Bandara  
Director  
Quality Assurance and  
Accreditation Council  
University Grants  
Commission  
20, Ward Place, Colombo 7  
**Sri Lanka**
20. Louise Cowcher  
Director, English and  
Education  
British Council  
**Sri Lanka**
21. Padipperuma Sedara  
Mohottige Gunaratne  
Vice Chairman  
University Grants  
Commission  
**Sri Lanka**
22. Nishika Hassim  
Manager, Higher Education  
and Education Services  
British Council  
**Sri Lanka**
23. Upali Mampitiya  
Member of the Standing  
Committee on Quality  
Assurance  
University Grants  
Commission  
Senior Lecturer  
University of Kelaniya  
**Sri Lanka**
24. Libing Wang  
Chief, Section for  
Educational Innovation and  
Skill Development  
Specialist Higher Education  
Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau  
for Education  
Mom Luang Pin Malakul  
Centenary Building  
920 Sukhumvit Road,  
Prakanong, Klongtoei  
Bangkok- 10110  
**Thailand**
25. Solomon Arulraj David  
Associate Professor & Head  
of Masters of Education  
Programme  
Faculty of Education, The  
British University in Dubai  
(BUiD)  
PO Box 345015, Block  
11, Dubai International  
Academic City (DIAC)  
Dubai  
**United Arab Emirates**

26. Nitesh Khemchand Sughnani  
Director  
University Quality Assurance  
Knowledge & Human  
Development Authority  
Block 8, Academic City  
P.O. Box: 500008, Dubai  
**United Arab Emirates**
27. Paul Derek Blackmore  
Professor of Higher  
Education  
The Policy Institute  
King's College  
London  
**United Kingdom**
28. Mark Terence O'Brien  
Senior Research Fellow  
Educational Development  
in the centre for lifelong  
learning  
University of Liverpool  
126 Mount Pleasant,  
Liverpool L69 3GW  
**United Kingdom**
29. Stephen Jackson  
Director of Review  
The Quality Assurance  
Agency at Higher Education  
Gloucester, G L1 1UB  
**United Kingdom**
30. Paul Roberts  
Assistant Director, Doctoral  
School  
Centre for Higher Education  
and Equity Research  
University of Sussex  
Brighton BN1 9RH  
**United Kingdom**
31. Judith Sheila Eaton  
President  
Council of Higher Education  
Accreditation  
One Dupont Circle NW.  
Suite 510  
Washington, DC 20036  
**United States of America**

## National Participants

32. Sajjad Ahmad  
Consultant  
Department of Higher  
Education  
Ministry of Human Resource  
Development  
Shastri Bhawan  
**New Delhi-110001**
33. M. Anandkrishnan  
Chairman, Board Governors  
IIT Kanpur  
8/15, 5th Main Road, Madan  
Apartments  
Kasturibai Nagar, Adyar  
**Chennai-600020**
34. Shafeeque Ahmed Ansari  
Director  
Center for Interdisciplinary  
Research in Basic Sciences  
(CIRBSc)  
Jamia Millia Islamia  
Room. No. 114, S.  
Ramanujan Block  
Behind Jamia Community  
Centre  
Jamia Nagar, Okhla  
**New Delhi-110025**
35. Pijus Kanti Bhuiin  
Assistant professor  
Rural Management,  
Department of Commerce  
Bhatter College, Dantan  
P.O. Dantan Dist. Paschim  
Medinipur  
**West Bengal-721426**
36. Karuna Chanana  
Sociology of Education and  
Gender  
Formerly with Jawaharlal  
Nehru University  
#307, tower I, Ujjwala HIG  
Opposite City Centre II, New  
Town, Rajarhat  
**Kolkata-700161**
37. Saumen Chattopadhyay  
Chairperson  
Zakir Husain Centre for  
Educational Studies  
School of Social Sciences  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
**New Delhi-110067**
38. Pradeep Kumar Choudhury  
Assistant Professor  
Zakir Husain Centre for  
Educational Studies  
Room No. 342, School of  
Social Sciences  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
**New Delhi-110067**
39. R. Govinda  
Distinguished Professor  
Council for Social  
Development  
D-504, Prakriti Apartment  
Sector -6, Dwarka  
**New Delhi-110075**

40. Asha Gupta  
Retired Professor & Director  
Directorate of Hindi  
Medium Implementation  
University of Delhi  
10, Cavalry Lane  
**Delhi-110007**
41. Jaya Indiresan  
Member  
4442, B 5&6, Vasant Kunj  
**New Delhi-110070**
42. Niraja Gopal Jayal  
Professor  
Centre for the Study of Law  
and Governance  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Mehrauli Road,  
Munirka  
**New Delhi-110067**
43. N. Jayaram  
Professor  
Swasthi,# 87 10th Cross  
5th Main R.B.I. Layout  
J.P. Nagar 7th Phase  
**Bangalore-560078**
44. Y. Josephine  
Former Professor, NUEPA  
H. N. 4042, B-5 & 6  
Vasant Kunj  
**New Delhi-110070**
45. Megha Kaushik  
Education Officer  
University Grants  
Commission  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg  
**New Delhi-110002**
46. Nandita Koshal  
Senior Research Fellow  
International Institute for  
Higher Education Research  
and Capacity Building  
(IIHed)  
O.P. Jindal Global University  
Sonipat Narela Road  
Near Jagdishpur village,  
Sonipat  
**Haryana-131001**
47. Phalgun Kumar  
Institute of International  
Education  
J-19, Hauz Khas Enclave  
**New Delhi-110016**
48. Anitha Kurup  
Professor and Dean  
National Institute of  
Advanced Studies  
Indian Institute of Science  
Campus  
**Bangalore-560012**

49. R. Limbadri  
Vice Chairman-I  
Telangana State Council of  
Higher Education  
Opp: Mahavir Hospital,  
Mahavir Marg  
Masabtank  
**Hyderabad-500028**
50. Vivek Mansukhani  
Head  
Institute of International  
Education  
J-19, Hauz Khas Enclave  
**New Delhi-110016**
51. Udaya S. Mishra  
Professor  
Centre for Development  
Studies  
Prasanth Nagar, Medical  
College P.O, Ulloor  
Thiruvananthapuram  
**Kerala-695011**
52. Pankaj Mittal  
Additional Secretary-I  
University Grants  
Commission  
(Ministry of Human  
Resource Development)  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg  
**New Delhi-110002**
53. Mohammad Miyan  
Chairman  
IUC-Teacher Education,  
Kakinada  
Former Vice Chancellor  
Maulana Azad National  
Urdu University  
D-194, Defence Colony  
**New Delhi-110024**
54. Mousumi Mukherjee  
Assistant Director  
International Institute for  
Higher Education Research  
and Capacity Building  
(IIHed)  
O.P. Jindal Global University  
Sonipat Narela Road  
Near Jagdishpur village,  
Sonipat  
**Haryana-131001**
55. Mohd. Muzammil  
Professor  
Department of Economics  
University of Lucknow  
Lucknow  
**Uttar Pradesh-226007**

56. Nisha Nair  
Assistant Professor &  
Assistant Director  
Centre for Law and  
Humanities  
Jindal Global Law School  
and Fellow  
International Institute for  
Higher Education Research  
and Capacity Building  
(IIHEd)  
O.P. Jindal Global University  
Sonipat Narela Road  
Near Jagdishpur village,  
Sonipat  
**Haryana-131001**
57. Emon Nandi  
PhD candidate  
Zakir Husain Centre for  
Educational Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
S4/432 RBI Officers Quarters  
Gokuldham, Goregaon East  
**Mumbai-400063**
58. Manasi Thapliyal Navani  
Assistant Professor  
Ambedkar University Delhi  
Lodhi Road Campus  
785 to 761, Aliganj  
BK Dutt Colony, Lodhi Road  
**New Delhi-110003**
59. Neha Paliwal  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Economics  
University College of Social  
Science and Humanities  
Mohanlal Sukhadia  
University  
Udaipur  
**Rajasthan-313001**
60. Jagannath Patil  
Adviser  
National Assessment and  
Accreditation Council  
P. O. Box No. 1075,  
Nagarbhavi  
Bangalore  
**Karnataka-560072**
61. J. Johnsi Priya  
Assistant Professor  
Meston College of Education  
10/33, West Cott Road  
Royapettah, Chennai  
**Tamil Nadu-600014**
62. Furqan Qamar  
Secretary General  
Association of Indian  
Universities  
AIU House, 16 Comrade  
Indrajit Gupta Marg (Kotla  
Marg)  
Opposite National Bal  
Bhawan, Near I.T.O  
**New Delhi-110002**

63. Namita Ranganathan  
Head Department  
33, Chhatra Marg  
University of Delhi  
**Delhi-110007**
64. K Sudha Rao  
Institute for Social and  
Economic Change  
S-2, Stanbury Court, 60 Feet  
Road  
Sanjay Nagar  
**Bengaluru-560094**
65. P. J. Sabu  
Assistant Professor  
Post Graduate & Research  
Department of Economics  
St. Thomas' College  
(Autonomous)  
Thrissur  
**Kerala-680001**
66. G. D. Sharma  
SEED, Flat No.56, DDA  
(SFS)  
Sector-I, Pocket-I, Phase-I  
(Near Flyover), Dwarka  
**New Delhi-110075**
67. Shailendra Sigdel  
Statistical Cluster Advisor  
UNESCO  
UNESCO House, B-5/29  
Safdarjung Enclave  
**New Delhi-110029**
68. MrunaliniTalla  
Professor  
IASE, Department of  
Education  
Osmania University  
Hyderabad  
**Telangana-500007**
69. J. Veerarahavan  
Former Secretary  
MHRD, Government of  
India  
G-15/3 DLF Phase-I  
**Gurgaon-122002**
70. Vinod Singh Yadav  
Education Officer  
University Grants  
Commission  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg  
**New Delhi-110002**

### British Council Participants

71. Tom Birtwistle  
Director, North India  
British Council Division,  
British High Commission  
17 Kasturba Gandhi Marg  
**New Delhi-110001**
72. Manjula Rao  
Assistant Director  
Internationalising Higher  
Education  
British Council India  
Senapati Bapat Marg  
Elphinstone Road (West)  
**Mumbai-400013**

73. Vishu Sharma  
Head, Higher Education,  
North India  
British Council India  
**New Delhi**

74. MalyajVarmani  
Assistant Director  
Higher Education India  
**British Council India**

75. Rittika Chanda Parruck  
Assistant Director  
Programmes, North India  
**British Council India**

76. Suruchi Pareek  
Senior Project Manager  
UKIERI  
**British Council India**

### **NIEPA Faculty**

77. N.V. Varghese  
Vice Chancellor  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg  
**New Delhi-110016**

78. Najma Akhtar  
Professor & Head  
Educational Administration  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

79. Sangeeta Angom  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Higher and  
Professional Education  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

80. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay  
Associate Professor  
School & Non-Formal  
Education  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

81. Sudhanshu Bhushan  
Professor  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

82. Sunita Chugh  
Associate Professor  
School and Non-Formal  
Education  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

83. Rashmi Diwan  
Professor  
School and Non-Formal  
Education  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
84. Veera Gupta  
Associate Professor  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
85. Mona Khare  
Professor  
CPRHE/ NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
86. Malish C M  
Assistant Professor  
CPRHE/ NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
87. Arun C. Mehta  
Professor & Head  
Educational Management  
Information System  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
88. S. K. Mallik  
Assistant Professor  
Educational Policy  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
89. Sayantan Mandal  
Assistant Professor  
CPRHE/ NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
90. A. Mathew  
National Fellow  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
91. N. Mythili  
Assistant Professor  
School leadership and  
Management  
National Centre for School  
Leadership (NCSL)  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
92. Manju Narula  
Assistant Professor  
Educational Administration  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

93. Anupam Pachauri  
Assistant Professor  
CPRHE/ NIEPA  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg  
**New Delhi-110016**
94. Jinusha Panigrahi  
Assistant Professor  
CPRHE/ NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
95. Manisha Priyam  
Associate Professor  
Policy Unit  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
96. Vetukuri P. S. Raju  
Assistant Professor  
Educational Finance  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
97. K. Ramachandran  
National Fellow  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
98. Nidhi S. Sabharwal  
Associate Professor  
CPRHE/ NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
99. Mona Sedwal  
Assistant Professor  
Training and Capacity  
Building in Education  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
100. Aarti Srivastava  
Associate Professor  
Higher & Professional  
Education  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**
101. Neeru Snehi  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Higher and  
Professional Education  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

## CPRHE Staff

102. Anjali Arora  
Centre for Policy Research in  
Higher Education, NIEPA  
**New Delhi- 110016**
103. Monica Joshi  
Centre for Policy Research in  
Higher Education, NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
104. Anuneeta Mitra  
Junior Project Consultant  
Centre for Policy Research in  
Higher Education, NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
105. Mayank Rajput  
Centre for Policy Research in  
Higher Education, NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
106. Anubha Rohatgi  
Junior Project Consultant  
Centre for Policy Research in  
Higher Education  
NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**
107. Nivedita Sarkar  
Junior Project Consultant  
Centre for Policy Research in  
Higher Education  
NIEPA  
**New Delhi-110016**

## NIEPA Administration

108. Basavraj Swamy  
Registrar  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg  
**New Delhi-110016**
109. Subhash Sharma  
Finance Officer (I/c)  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg  
**New Delhi-110016**
110. G. Veerabahu  
Administrative Officer  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg  
**New Delhi-110016**
111. Jai Prakash Dharmi  
Section Officer  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg  
**New Delhi-110016**

112. Pramod Rawat  
DPO  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg  
**New Delhi-110016**

113. D. S. Thakur  
Documentation Officer  
National Institute of  
Educational Planning and  
Administration  
**New Delhi-110016**

### **NIEPA Research Scholar**

- 114. Amar
- 115. Anjali
- 116. Shalini
- 117. Shivani Bakshi
- 118. Manika Bora
- 119. Kriti Dagar
- 120. Sajad Ahmad Dar
- 121. Aparajita Gantayet
- 122. Vartika Kaushal
- 123. Amardeep Kumar
- 124. Bagesh Kumar
- 125. Sumit Kumar
- 126. Abhishek Pandey
- 127. Dipendra Pathak



**National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)**

17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi – 110016 (INDIA)

EPABX Nos. : 26565600, 26544800

Fax : 91-011-26853041, 26865180

Website: [www.niepa.ac.in](http://www.niepa.ac.in)