



Functioning of Internal Quality Assurance Cells in NAAC Accredited Autonomous and Non- autonomous Colleges

Dr. Susanta Kumar Giri

Lecturer & Head

Department of Education

D.K. College, Jaleswar, Balasore

Abstract

It is a fact that development of higher education and development of a country are closely related. Any country that is developed today in the world is mainly for its quality higher education. Therefore quality assurance in higher education has been one of the major challenges in the development agenda not only in India but also all over the world. In this context IQACs of NAAC accredited colleges are functioning for sustenance and enhancement of internal quality of the higher education institutions. In Odisha only 192 colleges out of 520 UGC affiliated colleges have valid NAAC accreditation status. Therefore it is significant to explore how IQACs of autonomous colleges are functioning in comparison with non-autonomous colleges of Odisha.

The exploratory survey method was adopted in the present study to identify dimensions-specific quality improvement practices adopted by IQACs and the functioning status of IQACs taking into consideration the nature of institutional autonomy as an associated factor. Total 6 autonomous and 6 non-autonomous colleges were included purposively in the sample of the study. A pilot study was conducted to identify the areas where IQACs are functioning. On the basis of pilot study a questionnaire was developed to study the functional status of IQACs. Data were collected from respondents through questionnaire and analysed by percentage and chi-square test of independence.

The researcher categorised various activities of IQACs in the five dimensions. The study has revealed that IQACs of autonomous colleges are functioning better than non-autonomous colleges. The institutional autonomy was found positively associated with regularity in functioning of IQACs in different components. Future challenges of quality higher education needs to be linked with the proper functioning of IQACs which can sustain and enhance institutional quality.

Keywords: Internal Quality Assurance, NAAC Accredited Colleges, Autonomous and Non-autonomous Status.

Introduction

The emergence of twenty first century witnessed the movements for quality assurance in higher education both at global and local levels. The utility of any system depends to a great extent on its quality. The higher education is also system. These day users as well as beneficiaries are not happy with the quality of higher education. It points out to the fact that there is a need to bring desirable changes in the higher education system namely, inputs, process, output and feedback (Sansanwal, 2012). It is widely recognised that higher education promotes social and economic development by enhancing human and technical capabilities of society. It is a fact that development of higher education and development of a country are closely related. Any country that is developed today in the world is mainly for its quality higher education. Higher education is the apex level of education, which produces knowledge leaders, technicians, teachers, professors, engineers, doctors, lawyers, scientists and other similar professionals to determine the progress of human society. Technical change and institutional change are key components of development. Higher education plays an important role in facilitating these changes by incorporating all of the various demographics of the population. Higher education has been found to be significantly related to the human development index and greater for the disadvantaged groups (Joshi, 2006). At the same time lack of quality higher education creates inverse situation in the society. Quality of higher education indicates fitness for the purpose. Improvement in quality of higher education will enhance the level of human development and greater human development influence life expectancy and GDP per capita (Tilak, 1994). Quality assurance in higher education has been one of the major challenges in the development agenda not only in India but also all over the world.

The various policy initiatives of the Government of India such as establishment of University Grants Commission, NAAC and NBA and the process of accreditation, linking development grants with accreditation are the indications of official concerns and efforts for quality management (Mukhopadhyaya, 2012). As per the guideline of NAAC every accredited institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC would become a part of the institution's system and work towards realisation of the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance. Efforts are being made on the part of NAAC accredited colleges to promote internal quality enhancement practices in respective institutions (Sahoo and

Srivastva, 2015). The National Knowledge Commission Report (2006) and the Yashpal Committee Report (2009) on renovation and rejuvenation for structural reforms of higher education are of noteworthy to visualize the futures expansion of higher education in India. We must foster a conception of quality which may be applied to every degree of ability and to every socially acceptable activity. A missile may blow up on its launching pad because the designer was incompetent or because the mechanic who adjusted the last valve was incompetent. The same is true of everything else in our society. It is in this context of fast changing global development in the domain of higher education the learners' need to have updated knowledge resources and adequate knowledge for their utilization (Das, 2012).

The 12th five year plan suggests a range of reforms in higher education to change the role of the Central Government from “command and control” to “steer and evaluate” giving more autonomy and accountability to the state and to the higher education institutions themselves with the goal of improving quality. In the context of Odisha immediate attention on the part of regional government is required not mere as the concurrent responsibility but as an unaltered major player of regulating and development of higher education institutions (Dansana, 2013). So, according to demands and needs there has been substantial development in higher education in different regions of India. To respond to the present situation the State of Odisha has taken many initiatives in the recent times. It has well organized system of higher education supported by internal and external agencies. There are 520 degree colleges in Odisha, out of which 472 colleges come under section 2 (f) and 12 (B) of the UGC Act, 1956 and 48 colleges come under section 2 (f) only but are not included under section 12 (B) of the UGC Act, 1956, (UGC, 2018^A). Out of these total degree colleges 44 are autonomous colleges (UGC, 2018^B). Up to 27th November 2017 there were 14 university and 192 colleges in Odisha having valid NAAC accreditation status. (NAAC, 2017^{A and B}).

Internal Quality Assurance Cell is UGC sponsored scheme to be established in all its affiliated colleges with the financial support to plan, guide and monitor quality enhancement and assurance activities at institutional level. Some of the major functions expected from IQACs are:

- Enhancement and implementation of quality benchmarks in various activities of the institutions.
- Documentation and dissemination of quality related activities.
- Organisation of seminars, workshop and promotion of quality circles.
- Monitoring quality activities of the institutions.

- Acting as a nodal agency of the institution for quality related activities.
- Preparing and uploading Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR).

IQACs are functioning to attain excellence in NAAC accredited colleges in the state of Odisha. Especially it is significant to know how autonomous status of the colleges have made special use of this scheme in comparison to non-autonomous colleges. This paper is based on research conducted in 12 NAAC accredited colleges in Coastal Odisha. Here an attempt has been made to present dimensions-specific quality improvement practices adopted by IQACs precisely and the functioning status of IQACs taking into consideration the nature of institutional autonomy as an associated factor.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been conducted with the following objectives:

- I. Identify dimension-specific quality improvement practices adopted by IQACs.
- II. Explore the functioning status of IQACs taking into consideration the nature of institutional autonomy as an associated factor.

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of the study was stated as:

There is significant association between the functioning status of IQACs and the nature of institutional autonomy.

Methods and Procedures

All NAAC accredited colleges of Odisha having IQACs were considered as the population of the study. Out of 12 NAAC accredited colleges of Coastal Odisha 6 autonomous and 6 non-autonomous colleges were included purposively in the sample of the study. The sample respondents covered 60 members i. e. five from each sample institution. A pilot study was conducted in two autonomous and two non-autonomous colleges to identify the areas where IQACs are functioning. On the basis of pilot study conducted a questionnaire was developed to study the functional status of IQACs. Data was collected from the sample institutions through questionnaire. Collected data was analysed by percentage analysis and chi-square test of independence.

Analysis and Interpretation

This part of the paper has two sections those are section A and B. Section A deals with dimensions-specific quality improvement practices adopted by IQACs and section B deals with functioning status of IQACs.

A. Dimensions-specific Quality Improvement Practices adopted by IQACs

Empirical evidence on IQACs functioning on different elements of institutional practices were gathered through visits to different colleges and observation of various activities going on at institutional level. The pilot study of two autonomous and two non-autonomous colleges form the basis for matching different dimensions of quality enhancement interventions made under IQAC. The researcher categorised various activities of IQACs in the five dimensions viz, i) evolvement and adoption of quality parameters ii) curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research iii) feedback response from stakeholders iv) professional development of teachers and v) documentation and dissemination of quality related activities for quality enhancement and assurance at institutional level. Dimension-specific functioning of IQACs explored on the basis of pilot study have been presented below.

Evolution and Adoption of Quality Parameters

Functions of IQAC related to evolution and adoption of quality parameters cover several activities like revising curriculum in a relevant intervals, revising curriculum according to CBCS guidelines, making curriculum skill based, including continuous assessment practices in academic evaluation, making curriculum with provision of research components, taking feedback from stakeholders and making quality improvement a continuous process.

Curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research

Different activities are organised by IQACs to improve the quality of curriculum, teaching- learning process, evaluation and research. These activities cover wider base like curriculum transaction in the direction of students' centeredness, integrating technology in curriculum transaction process, making teaching learning interactive and participative, implementing continuous assessment practices in evaluation and conducting field study/action research at under graduate level etc.

Practices for feedback response from stakeholders

IQACs of higher education institutions adopted several practices for feedback response from stakeholders to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wide range of activities like collecting students feedback on teaching learning activities, encouraging peer assessment of teachers, preparing students feedback analysis report, organising PTA meetings and seeking their feedback, installing grievance redressal box at department level, arranging remedial coaching for slow learners and using stakeholders' feedback in quality improvement practices.

Professional development of teachers

IQACs of higher education institutions adopt several practices for professional development of teachers to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wider range of activities like opportunities for orientation and refresher course, encouraging publication of research work in journals, encouraging faculty members to undertake research projects, giving financial incentives for research publication in books and journals, encouraging participation and organisation of seminars and workshops, encouraging e-learning based continuous professional development of teachers.

Documentation and Dissemination of Quality related Activities

IQAC's functions related to documentation and dissemination of quality related activities covers several activities like preparing and uploading Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) in institutional website, publishing quality related activities in a bulletin, documenting teachers' achievement and preparation of self-appraisal report, publishing research journals and publishing magazines with creative articles of teachers and students.

B. Functioning Status of IQACs

Functioning status of IQACs in identified five dimensions of 6 autonomous and 6 non-autonomous colleges of Coastal Odisha are analysed and interpreted in the succeeding section.

Evolution and Adoption of Quality Parameters

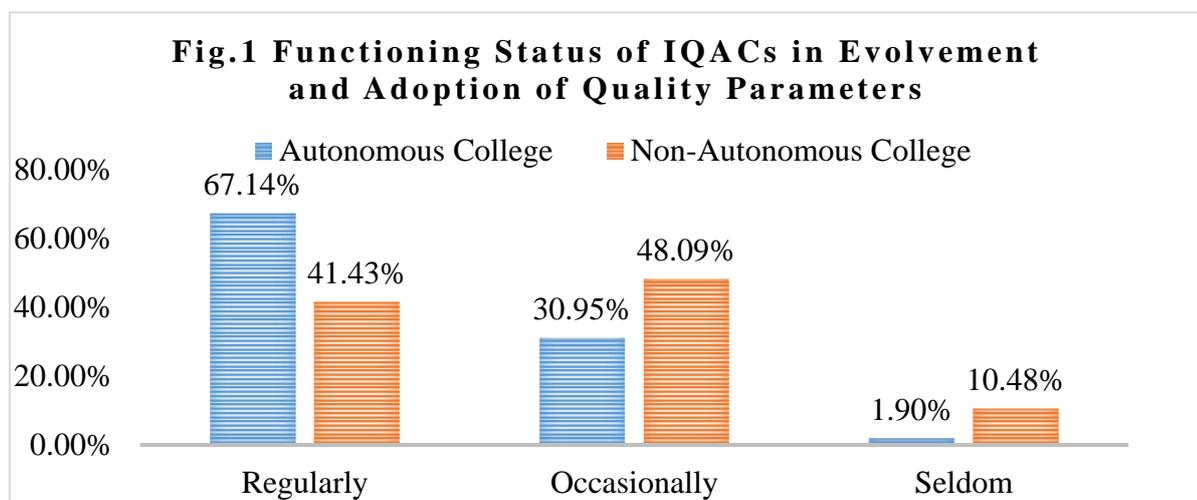
Functioning of IQACs related to evolution and adoption of quality parameters covers several activities like revising curriculum in a relevant intervals, revising curriculum according to CBCS guidelines, making curriculum skill based, including continuous assessment practices in academic evaluation, making curriculum with provision of research components, taking feedback from stakeholders and making quality improvement a continuous process. On these aspects of evolution and adoption of quality parameters, It

is evident from Table-1 and related figure that IQACs of different colleges were found more regular (54.29%).

Table-1: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of Evolvement and Adoption of Quality Parameters and Nature of Institutional Autonomy

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square value df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Autonomous	141(67.14)	65(30.95)	4(1.90)	210(100)	33.04**
Non-Autonomous	87(41.43)	101(48.09)	22(10.48)	210(100)	
Total	228(54.29)	166(39.52)	26(6.19)	420(100)	

Note: - ** significant at 0.01 level. Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage



Going by the nature of institutional autonomy it is evident that majority of respondents from autonomous colleges (67.14%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in evolvement and adoption of quality parameters than that of non- autonomous colleges (41.43%). From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in evolvement and adoption of quality parameters was significantly associated with nature of institutional autonomy at 0.01 level of significance. However, within the significant association from the frequencies of responses it was found that there is positive association between autonomous status and evolvement and adoption of quality parameters in terms of curriculum aspects as more regular than the non-autonomous colleges.

Curriculum Improvement, Transaction, Evaluation and Research

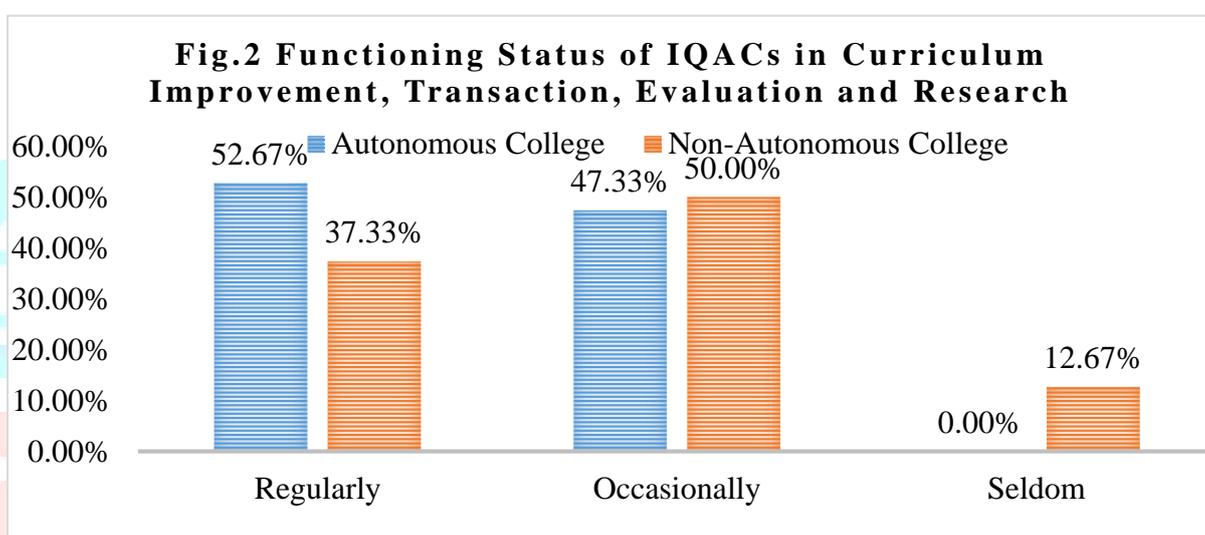
Different activities are organised by IQACs to improve the quality of curriculum, teaching- learning process, evaluation and research. These activities cover wider base like curriculum transaction in the direction of students' centeredness, integrating technology in curriculum transaction process, making

teaching learning interactive and participative, implementing continuous assessment practices in evaluation and conducting field study/action research at under graduate level.

Table-2: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of Curriculum Improvement Transaction, Evaluation, Research and nature of institutional autonomy

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square value df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Autonomous	79(52.67)	71(47.33)	0(0.00)	150(100)	23.02**
Non-Autonomous	56(37.33)	75(50.00)	19(12.67)	150(100)	
Total	135(45.00)	146(48.67)	19(6.33)	300(100)	

Note: - ** significant at 0.01 level. Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage



On these aspects of curriculum development, teaching- learning process, evaluation and research the IQACs of both autonomous and non-autonomous colleges were found to be more occasional (48.67%) in functioning as evident from the Table-2 and the related figure. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from autonomous colleges (52.67%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research functions whereas majority (50.00%) of respondents of non-autonomous colleges opined that IQACs are functioning occasionally in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research was significantly associated with nature of institutional autonomy at 0.01 level of significance. However, within the significant association from the frequencies of responses it was found that the association of autonomous colleges and curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research is more regular than the non-autonomous colleges.

Practices of Feedback Response from Stakeholders

IQACs of higher education institutions adopt several practices for feedback response from stakeholders to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wide range of activities like collecting students feedback on teaching learning activities, encouraging peer assessment of teachers, preparing students feedback analysis report, organising PTA meetings and seeking their feedback, installing grievance redressal box at department level, arranging remedial coaching for slow learners and using stakeholders' feedback in quality improvement practices.

Table-3: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of feedback response from stakeholders and nature of institutional autonomy

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square value df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Autonomous	119(49.58)	103(42.92)	18(7.50)	240(100)	35.82**
Non-Autonomous	57(23.75)	146(60.83)	37(15.42)	240(100)	
Total	176(36.67)	249(51.86)	55(11.46)	480(100)	

Note: - ** significant at 0.01 level
Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage

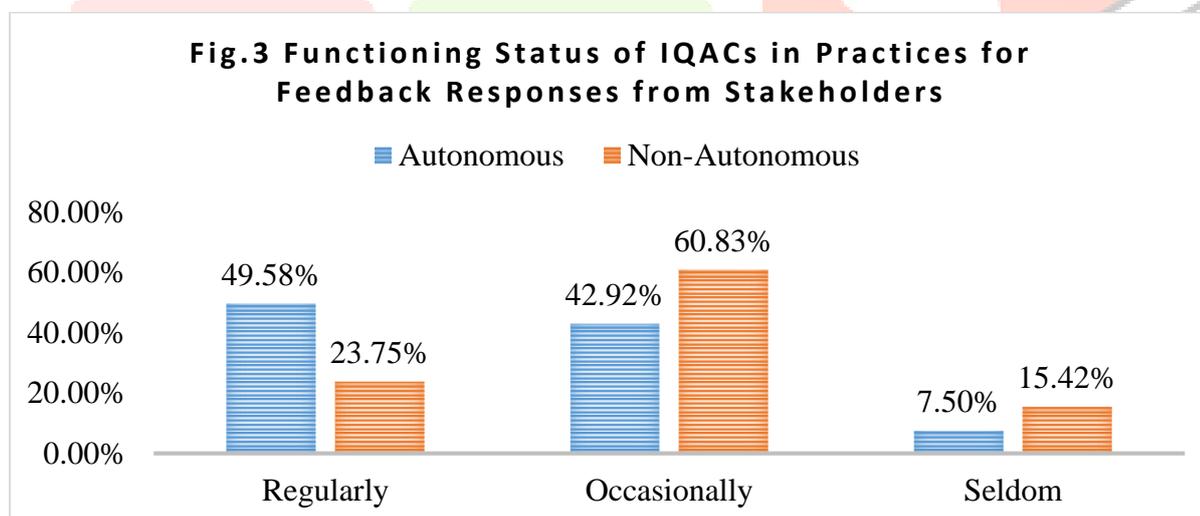


Table-3 and the related figure reveal that in all around 52 per cent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about practices for feedback response from stakeholders on occasional basis irrespective of their institutional autonomy. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from autonomous colleges (49.58%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in practices for feedback response from stakeholders where as in case of non-autonomous colleges majority of respondents (60.83%) opined that IQACs are functioning occasionally in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the

regularity in functioning status of IQACs in practices for feedback response from stakeholders was significantly associated with nature of institutional autonomy at 0.01 level of significance. The IQACs of autonomous colleges were found to be more regular in functioning for feedback response from stakeholders than the IQACs of non-autonomous colleges.

Professional Development of Teachers

IQACs of higher education institutions adopt several practices for professional development of teachers to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wide range of activities like opportunities for orientation and refresher course, encouraging publication of research work in journals, encouraging faculty members to undertake research projects, giving financial incentives for research publication in books and journals, encouraging participation and organisation of seminars and workshops, encouraging e-learning based continuous professional development of teachers.

Table-4: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies in professional development of teachers and institutional autonomy

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square value df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Autonomous	88(48.89)	78(43.33)	14(7.78)	180(100)	9.50**
Non-Autonomous	71(39.45)	76(42.22)	33(18.33)	180(100)	
Total	159(44.17)	154(42.78)	47(13.06)	360(100)	

Note: - ** significant at 0.01 level
Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage

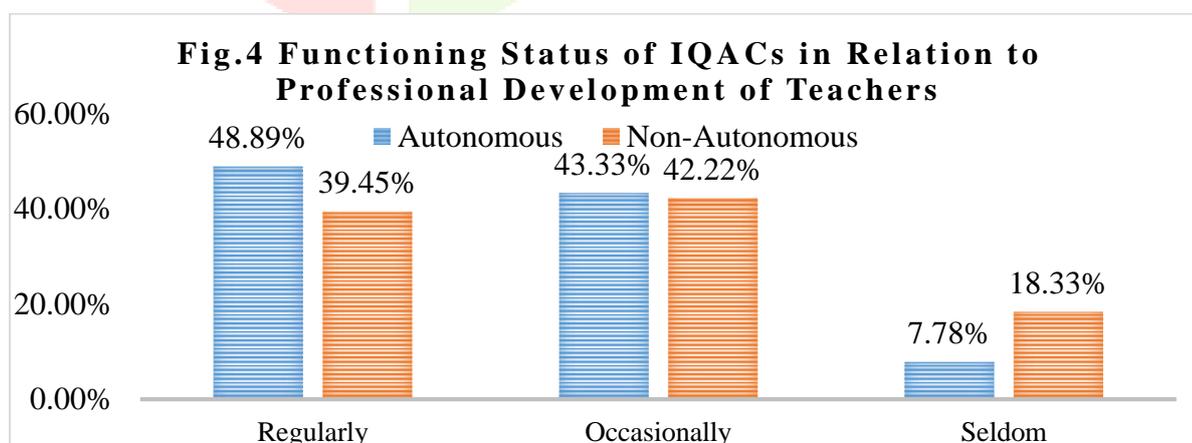


Table-4 and the related figure reveal that in all around 44 per cent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about practices for professional development of teachers on regular basis irrespective of their institutional autonomy. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from autonomous colleges (48.89%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in practices for professional development of

teachers where as in case of non-autonomous colleges majority of respondents (42.22%) opined that IQACs are functioning occasionally in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in practices for professional development of teachers was significantly associated with nature of institutional autonomy at 0.01 level of significance. The IQACs of autonomous colleges were found to be more regular in functioning for professional development of teachers than the IQACs of non-autonomous colleges.

Documentation and Dissemination of Quality related Activities

IQAC's functions related to documentation and dissemination of quality related activities covers several activities like preparing and uploading Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) in institutional website, publishing quality related activities in the form of a bulletin, documenting teachers' achievement and preparation of self-appraisal report, publishing research journals and publishing magazines with creative articles of teachers and students.

Table-5: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of Documentation and Dissemination of Quality related Activities and nature of institutional autonomy

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square value df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Autonomous	96(64.00)	40(26.67)	14(9.33)	150(100)	10.88**
Non-Autonomous	71(47.33)	48(32.00)	31(20.67)	150(100)	
Total	167(55.67)	88(29.33)	45(15.00)	300(100)	

Note: - * significant at 0.05 level; ** significant at 0.01 level

Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage

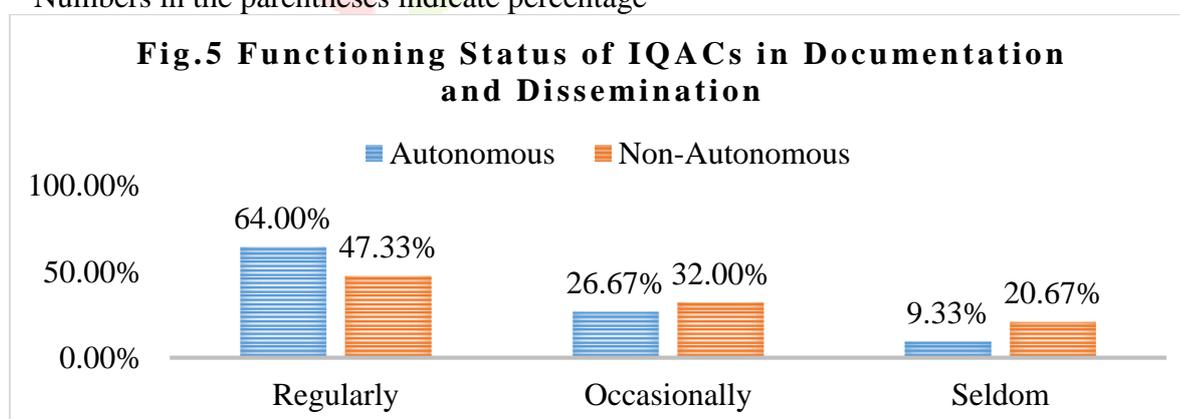


Table-5 and the related figure reveal that in all around 56 per cent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about documentation and dissemination of quality related activities on regular basis irrespective of their institutional autonomy. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from autonomous colleges

(64.00%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in documentation and dissemination of quality related activities where as in case of non-autonomous colleges majority of respondents (47.33%) opined that IQACs are functioning regularly in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in documentation and dissemination of quality related activities were significantly associated with nature of institutional autonomy at 0.01 level of significance. The IQACs of autonomous colleges were found to be more regular in functioning for documentation and dissemination of quality related activities than the IQACs of non-autonomous colleges.

Conclusion

The present status of functioning of IQACs in the higher education institutions are in functional status. Regularity in different kinds of functions of IQACs in autonomous and non-autonomous colleges follow a typical order of response given by the members of IQACs in the sample institutions. The study has revealed that IQACs of Autonomous colleges are functioning better than non-autonomous colleges. The institutional autonomy was found positively associated with regularity of functioning of IQACs in different components. Future challenges of quality higher education needs to be linked with the proper functioning of IQACs which can sustain and enhance institutional quality. The objectives of mechanism like IQAC may be fulfilled through the dynamic institutional leadership and involvement of committed faculty members in the system. To make IQAC more active the committee members must be oriented to work efficiently. ICT should be used for sharing quality related experiences with other institutions.

References

- Dansana, A. (2013). *Higher Education and Sustainable Development: New Challenges and Opportunities*. New Delhi, Regal Publications.
- Das, B.C. (2012). Participative Learning, In P.K. Sahoo, D. Yadav & B.C. Das (Eds), *Quality in Higher Education: Issues and Practices*. (pp.376-388), New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House.
- Government of India, (1986). Programme of Action, National Policy on Education, 1986, MHRD, GOI, New Delhi.
- Joshi, K.M. (2006). *Human Capital and the Economic Benefits of Education: Understanding the Investment Arguments*, Working Paper No. 1/06, OSED.

- Mukhopadhyaya, M. (2012). Quality Management in Higher Education, In P.K. Sahoo, D. Yadav & B.C. Das (Eds), *Quality in Higher Education: Issues and Practices*. (pp.16-33), New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House.
- NAAC, 2017 (A). Institutions accredited by NAAC whose accreditation period is valid (Institutions assessed prior to 01st July 2016)
- NAAC, 2017 (B). National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Bengaluru Institutions assessed under new grading system of NAAC (Institutions assessed after 01st July 2016)
- National Knowledge Commission (2007) *Report to the Nation 2006*. New Delhi: Government of India. Organised by NAAC Bangalore during 2-4th March 2011.
- Pradhan, N. (2012). Quality and Vision of Higher Education. In P.K. Sahoo, D. Yadav & B.C. Das (Eds), *Quality in Higher Education: Issues and Practices*. (pp.101-121), New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House.
- Sahoo, P.K and Srivastva, M. (2015). Functioning of Internal Quality Assurance Cells in Autonomous and General Colleges. *University News*, 53 (07), February 16-22, 2015.
- Sansanwal, D.N. (2012). Internationalization of Higher Education, In P.K. Sahoo, D. Yadav & B.C. Das (Eds), *Quality in Higher Education: Issues and Practices*. (pp.137-151), New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House.
- Tilak, J.B.G. (1994). *Education for Development in Asia*. New Delhi, Sage Publications.
- UGC (2018). Status List of Approved Autonomous Colleges,
https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/colleges/autonomous_colleges-list.pdf
- UGC (2018). Status List of 2 (f) and 12 (B) affiliated colleges,
<https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/colleges/List%20of%20colleges%20as%20on%2031.05.2018.pdf>
- UGC. (2012-17). 12 Plan Guideline for Establishment and Monitoring of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in Higher Education Institutions.