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EDITORS

Debasis Bhattacharya
Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, India

Carlo Bianca
Laboratorie de Physique Statistique, Paris, France

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NBA: QUALITY ASSESSMENT PARADIGM FOR MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

DR. VAISHALI AJOTIKAR AND DR. PALLAVI INGALE

ABSTRACT

Accreditation is a quality assessment tool that ensures excellence for management education. External governing body evaluates the course/program in context to various criteria. National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is a governing body under AICTE. It is playing a very significant role at present and has shifted paradigm for management education. The paper attempts to examine various criteria enclosed in NBA accreditation. Each criterion is a reflection of the quality enhancement in management education by setting standard benchmark to be achieved by institutes. The motivation, opportunities, challenges, of NBA accreditation is examined.

Keywords: NBA, Accreditation, Criteria, motivations, challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation is a formal verification and assessment process undertaken by an institution to meet the required quality standards by any recognized competent authoritative body. Accreditation is a quality assessment tool that ensures excellence for management education. In today's competitive era, Management institutes ensure a seal of quality assurance to its stakeholders. The higher grades or a rank of an institution is a reflection of its credibility. National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is one of the accreditation bodies set up under AICTE, for assessment of management institutes. The paper attempts to examine various criteria or parameters enclosed in NBA accreditation. Each parameter is a reflection of the quality enhancement in management education by setting standard benchmark to be achieved by institutes. How NBA motivates the institutes and offers opportunities is elaborated and the challenges faced by the institutes are examined.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The popular rise of college rankings can be attributed to four drivers of social change i.e. Transition to a knowledge-intensive economy; Global pursuit of talent; Importance of higher education to the economy; and Consumerist student attitudes toward higher education (Meredith Davis, 2016). With the dawn of new millennium, while there was phenomenal growth in the number of B-Schools, the benchmarks were also on the rise. Quality in higher educational institutes has become a necessity for the Indian educational system. The education system of India is considered as the reason for the economic rise of India (Gupta & Gupta, 2012). Under the AICTE, a separate Board of Management Studies (BMS) was set up to 'advise' the executive committee of the Council on issues like 'norms, standards, model curricula, model facilities and structure of courses' for management institutes (AICTE Act, 1987). It plays a significant role in shaping management education in India but has been criticized for its engineering centricity Since, it cannot deal with complexity and divers. Hence, to be able to monitor quality of management institutes, National Board of Accreditation (NBA), was set up to achieve 'assurance of quality' under section 10(u) of the AICTE Act in 1987 and from January 7, 2010, was given an autonomous status (NBA, 2013). Also, many management institutes have mushroomed across the country without any quality standards in teaching and research as a result academic standards are compromised (T V Raju, 2016). Hence, emphazing critical role played by NBA. Accreditation provides measure of quality assurance for the educational institutes. (Vasudevan N a, SudalaiMuthu Tb, 2019). Due to the intangible factors such as knowledge of faculty, faculty qualification and teaching pedagogy of the education services, it is quite difficult to identify the actual quantitative data. Thus, identification and assessment of quality parameters is not a simple task (Parri, 2006). NBA focuses on the Program accreditations rather than accrediting institutes (Gholap, Kushare 2019).

RESEARCH GAP:

The above pertinent literature study elucidates on the importance of the evaluation process in higher education institutions, the role of accreditation bodies, etc. However, no study so far has detailed the parameters of NBA in the context of its opportunities and challenges. This study is an effort to examine the details of various parameters enclosed in NBA accreditation, the motivations for the institutes and probable challenges. The paper emphasis on the opportunities to be tapped by the institutes by overcoming challenges for quality assurance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To examine the various criteria enclosed for NBA Accreditation.

2. To find out the motivational attributes for the management institutes to seek NBA accreditation.

3. To understand the challenges faced by institutes seeking NBA accreditation.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The research paper attempts to understand the various criteria enclosed in NBA accreditation. The points for criteria assessment are detailed. The topical scope of paper is confined to Quality assessment governing body i.e. NBA and for management institutes only. The geographical scope undertakes the management institutes in the Indian context. The functional scope is to critically examine various parameters of NBA accreditation, the motivations for organizations to seek quality assurance and the challenges faced by them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The outline of the paper revolves around the quality assurance benchmark parameters set by National Board of Accreditation (NBA). The source of data collection is on the bases of secondary data. The key words related to 'quality assurance', 'National Board of Accreditation', 'Management institute and Accreditation', 'Institute Rankings' were searched on the websites. The relevant articles/papers were considered and reviewed for the present paper.

NBA

The key body for accreditation of management programmes is the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), set up under section 10(u) of the AICTE Act in 1987. With effect from January 7, 2010, it was given an autonomous status to achieve 'assurance of quality' and 'relevance of education' (NBA, 2013). Apart from the NBA, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), also accredits institutions of management education in India (NAAC, 2013)

NBA Regulatory Model

NBA consists of ten criteria. Each criterion is a reflection of quality parameter. Each Parameter is sub-divided into sets of items to be judged and evaluated. These quality parameters are converted in a quantitative metrics, by means of attainment of score or allocation of marks. Compliance with the set benchmark of standards will ensure adherence to quality assurance.

CRITERIA AND STANDARDS:

Criterion 1:

Criterion deals with the vision, mission and program educational objectives and has 50 grades. These grades are spread across the parameters which include vision and mission statements, program educational objectives (PEOs), framing its process, How effectively the institutes disseminates this information among its stakeholders, A matrix of mapping of Program educational objectives(PEOs) to elements of mission statement by marking level of relevance is expected. This point has provoked many institutes to rethink about the vision and mission statements (elements), as it is expected to be shaped by program educational objectives and relevance has to be mapped. The institutes should siege this opportunity to redesign these drivers that defines the path ahead. These statements are the reflection of mark of quality assurance to be communicated to the society. The challenge lies in transforming the broad vision and mission statement into items of program educational objectives and in quantifying them.

Criterion 2:

The second criterion encloses the parameters of Governance, leadership and financial resources and the scores assigned are 100. The governing structure of the organization, administration bodies, their memberships, details of minutes of meetings, the transparency maintained with employees with reference to service rules and policies updated to faculties and students. Formulation and implementation of the strategy is crucial task. The organization should frame policies to motivate faculty members for their continuous development. The distribution of financial and administrative responsibility and authority has to be specified. Various committees, like Grievance redressal committee, anti-ragging committee, etc are formulated and transparency is ensured by uploading the relevant information on the website. The staff selection process has to be in conformity with the norms and rules of the organization/university. The stability of the employees has to be ensured. Summary of the financial resources available and its utilization by proper allocation of budget has to be prepared. The audited reports should be uploaded on the institute's website.

The platform of accreditation plans for upliftment of faculty development and motivates the institutes to frame a policy for the faculty excellence. Permitting paid leave for attending FDPs, their travel and allowance, financial aid in attending workshops, winter schools, publications, etc to name a few. This aspect definitely helps in quality enhancement of faculties. The faculties are stuck up in day-to-day routine of teaching, assessment,

completion of administrative work. The documentation, report generation and its maintenance serves as a proof, Hence, becomes mandatory.

Criterion 3:

The program outcomes are mapped with course outcomes and the level of relevance is mapped. Each course faculty evaluates the students by assessing them through various assessment tools, like mid-semester exam, case study, MCQs, quiz, presentation, report writing, projects, etc. A tedious task of recording PO attainment and CO attainment is accomplished. This task is time consuming for a faculty to achieve, who teacher more than 3-4 courses. Many a times, a visiting faculty (expert) ensures completion of syllabus for that particular course and is not more involved in this task. In such scenario the responsibility for this criterion rests on in-house faculty and here lies the challenge. An ERP software proves to be helpful in this regard. Institute have to allocated fund for ERP implementation and maintenance.

Criterion 4:

The fourth parameter is dealing with Curriculum & Learning Process followed in the institute. This criterion evaluates the progarmme curriculum development as per industry to bridge the curium gap as well as achievement of the outcome of programme. The number of sessions conducted for practice or tutorial help to achieve course outcomes gets measured. This parameter measure how the institute have implemented the system to assess each course for quality improvement. This Criterion check implementation of program core, electives subject and summer projects, dissertation, seminars if any. If the course is affiliated with any university, then the institute has to present how institute ensures the compliance as per university programme outcome, the action plan adopted to bridge the gap etc. Here institute is guided to prepare an academic calendar to plan activities. These activities will lead to the planning of guest sessions and workshops, seminars, etc. Institute also guided here to implement a comprehensive mechanism for summer projects and dissertations to enhance quality in the project report and learnings of students.

Criterion 5:

This fifth parameter has given more emphasis on student quality and performance in programme. The admitted students having excellent entrance scores signifies their progress. As well as admitted students' geographical diversification indicates the reach of the institute in a state or in the nation. The gender ratio of admitted students signifies the preference of students to get enroll in the institute course. The final grade obtained by students presents an increasing trend, then it is more favorable to the institute. The fifth criterion is the link with the ninth criterion to measure the student's inclination towards higher studies as well as towards competitive exams. This parameter ensures how many students got a placement through the institute. This parameter also gives emphasis on how students got involved in different organized events of institute and research of students.

Institutes face a challenge to get geographically diversified students in university-affiliated courses. The autonomous institutes are facing challenges to admit more girls.

Criterion 6:

The sixth parameter is dealing with faculty attributes and contributions. This parameter gives more focus on the quality of teaching faculties working in institutes. This parameter gives importance to the qualification of faculty, the experience of faculty, research of faculty. To enhance more quality features, the emphasis has given on permanent/ contract faculty members, adjunct faculty and retention of faculty. This criterion guided faculty members to adopt innovative ways to conduct sessions with help of information and technology. The institutes were guided to motivate faculty members to do more research and consultancy services. It is presumed that institutes have a provision of funds for the participation of faculty in faculty development programmes, workshops, and conferences to sharpen their skill set to develop cases.

Criterion 7:

The seventh parameter is dealing with industry & international Connect. This parameter is more focused on industry participation in curriculum development and supervisor/assessor which will result in enhancement of students as per industry. To provide quality education apar with the foreign universities NBA guide to have international connect for students or faculty for research and development. This criterion guided Institutes to have different MOU with industry.

Sponsored project from the industry is the biggest challenge for faculties because still, Indian, corporate don't consider educating community to solve any issues or development of procedures or conduct surveys etc. Industry people on board or in assessment in this regard institute must put up effort. A strong association with alumni will be beneficial the institute for industry connect.

Criterion 8:

The eighth parameter deals with the infrastructure of the institute. The main objective of the criterion is to check the availability of best infrastructural facilities to the student like a library, canteen, hostel, medical facility, ITC unable classrooms, indoor and outdoor sports facility, etc. This criterion confirms whether the institute has all the required infrastructure with updated books and software. Institute is directed to develop or implement a learning management system. This LMS will lead to automation of documents and handling of e-content.

To provide outdoor and indoor sports facility the institute need space as well as a staff or faculty who will take care of this sports activity. Educational campus able to offer medical facility but one-course offering institute not able to offer this facility. Institute needs to update all hardware and software to offer quality ITC services.

Criterion 9:

Criterion deals with the Alumni Performance and Connect. This parameter gave importance to the registration of the alumni association and the role of alumni. The alumni of the institute must get involved in alumni association meetings, mentoring, project guidance, special session, or assist students to become entrepreneurship. Some institutes have started entrepreneurship cell which deals with creating a support system to motivate students to become an entrepreneur in coming future.

Alumni association registration and actively working of this association need the involvement of alumni. To appoint an active person to this Alumni association is challenging as well as conducting meetings.

Criterion 10:

Criterion deals with the Continuous Improvement done by the institute in relation to programme outcome, curriculum, adopt new pedagogy for programme course. Institutes are guided to conduct academic review meetings to ensure quality improvement in the curriculum as per industry needs. The employability and acceptance of students are measured through the placement of students. This criterion is giving importance to how many students choose for higher studies like Ph.d or preparing for competitive studies. The growth of placement indicated the quality of the curriculum and students. The upward trend of students' good academic records got admitted into the institute, this indicates the exitance of mechanisms of continuous improvement.

This institute has to organize a special programme or expert talk to guide students for higher education as well as for competitive exams. The challenge for the institute is the majority of the students are fascinated to get placement, very few students are inclined to higher studies.

Motivations:

Accreditations / Grades are a seal of quality mark that serves as a jewel on the crown of the educational institute. It uplifts the ranking of the institute in terms of today's competitive era. A vision and mission of an institution for academic excellence, good governance, and financial resource utilization for upgradation of the institute from all the perspectives will help in improving the status in terms of quality service. Doctorate faculties with a large pool of knowledge by means of attending FDPs, Certifications, Participations in various events, workshops, paper publications, conference proceedings, case studies, development of MOOCs courses, best research paper awards, excellence academic awards, consultancy projects, government/ non-government funded projects, academia-industry tie-ups, excellent placements records, etc proves to be an intangible asset for any educational institutes. This intangible asset ultimately sets an important factor in consideration of admissions, from parents and students' perspective.

Challenges:

Institute guide faculty members to documents all activities conducted by them as well as same faculty is playing role guardian for students. Some institutes have made research and consultancy services as one of big parameter for performance appraisal linked with increments. More weightages are given to development of teaching cases. In this regards proper FDPs as well as workshop need to be conducted where faculty will get comprehensive learning to write cases. Institute must invest in Sports activities as well as think of upgrading information technology aspect. Motivating students for higher education and to take competitive examinations. Establishment of active alumni association to get more industry involvement. Getting funded research projects from industry is again one of the challenging tasks. By overcoming challenges, the institutes can step ahead towards achieving excellence in quality enhancement for management course.

CONCLUSIONS

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) became obligatory in 2015 by the University Grants Commission (UGC) which linked it to the funding for the government-managed institutions. Then private institutes were guided to go for NAAC. Now many institutes are looking forward to getting National

board accreditation (NBA). The NAAC gave more emphasis on all documentation to ensure quality education. NBA gives more weightage to the outcome-based learning process with quality teaching and learning process to create quality employable man force.

The biggest motivational factor for the management institutes to get NBA accreditation is achieving the standard benchmarks which will create a brand name or get recognition in the educational sector. This will help the institute to get quality students admitted, following the quality mechanism to provide placement or motivate for entrepreneurship etc. The NBA needs many quality improvements in the institute, it needs investment, if the institute treats this investment as a long-term investment, then the institute will get returns on it. Faculty are more focused on research and development and adoption of new pedagogy, this will lead to improvement in the teaching-learning process. Successfully overcoming challenges of the NBA will lead to the creation of the strength of the institute.

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AUTHOR DETAILS:

DR. VAISHALI AJOTIKAR[1] AND DR. PALLAVI INGALE[2]

Assistant Professor[1], Matrix School of Management Studies
Assistant Professor[2], Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Co-operative Management (VAMNICOM), Pune