



Research Paper

## Redefining the Role of the IQAC Coordinator in Higher Education Institutions of India

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### Abstract:

In every Higher Education Institution (HEI) of India the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is compulsorily there to create and maintain quality culture. Under the leadership of the IQAC Coordinator the IQAC works for preparation of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR), preparation and submission of Institutional Information for Quality Assessment (IIQA) and Self Study Report (SSR), and documentation of the works of the institution in many levels covering seven criteria of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accreditation. The job of the IQAC Coordinator is very responsible and his leadership and vision can immensely help the Principal or head of the institution for all round development of a HEI. However the post of the IQAC Coordinator is not made official by higher education authority with regular appointment with assigned specific duty.

New Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020) is already in the pipeline. The IQAC Coordinator is definitely going to contribute in implementation of the NEP2020 in HEI through quality enhancement. So in this emergence of new situations of NAAC assessment and accreditation there is a necessity of redefined role of the IQAC coordinator.

**Keywords:** HEI, IQAC, AQAR, SSR, coordinator, documentation, assessment, accreditation.

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National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 by the Government of India by an Act of Parliament to maintain quality in Higher Education sector of the country. Headquarters of the NAAC is situated in Bengaluru. It is almost like a regulatory agency at this time of decreased role of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

For maintenance of quality of education and best practices in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) there is an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in every HEI. Along with the Coordinator and Principal as the chairman there are a few members from different stakeholders in the committee of IQAC.

The revised Assessment and Accreditation Framework by NAAC was introduced in July, 2017. 'It represents an explicit Paradigm Shift making it ICT enabled, objective, transparent, scalable and robust. The shift is from qualitative peer judgement to data based quantitative indicator evaluation with increased objectivity and transparency.'<sup>1</sup> The Assessment and Accreditation Framework was revised in July, 2020. New guidelines of NAAC regarding assessment and accreditation for HEI are coming up time to time.

Guidelines for creation of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and submission of Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) to the NAAC by accredited institutions (Affiliated/Constituent Colleges) is revised on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.

At present IQAC is mandatory for every Higher Education Institution (HEI) after the first cycle of assessment and accreditation as set by the NAAC and UGC. It is a fact that without NAAC assessment and accreditation no HEI is funded by the Government of India. HEIs are being funded by the Rashtriya Uchchhatar Shiksha Abhiyaan (RUSA) of the Government on the basis of the NAAC accreditation.

The role of the IQAC Coordinator is crucial in ensuring effective functioning of all the members of the IQAC and the IQAC as a whole. The members of the Body function directly under the leadership of the

Coordinator. The Coordinator may be a senior and highly experienced competent person with visions and should be well acquainted with quality aspects of a HEI. She or he may be a full time functionary or a senior academician/administrator who is entrusted with additional responsibility as the IQAC coordinator<sup>2</sup>.

The role of the IQAC coordinator has been increasing day by day. It has become more technical at this age of digital revolution. In higher education the importance of ICT has increased tremendously. So the IQAC coordinator must be well versed in ICT and techno savvy. A man of personality with good interpersonal skill should be selected for the post of IQAC coordinator.

Nowadays seniority should not be a matter of great concern in educational institution as far as the selection of an IQAC coordinator is concerned. A teacher who has a knack for ICT and committed to his duty should be selected for this job. But it is suggested that a senior teacher should be appointed as the coordinator or director of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell. It is fact that a senior teacher without proper knowledge of ICT cannot cope up with the work of the IQAC Coordinator for submitting the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR), the Institutional Information for Quality Assessment (IIQA) and Self Study Report (SSR), and many more works associated with the office of IQAC.

Compulsory orientation programmes should be provided to an IQAC Coordinator off and on. Without frequent orientation it is very difficult to be acquainted with the pros and cons of the works of the coordinator. Dimensions of activities of HEI are expanding exponentially nowadays. So a coordinator has to adapt himself or herself to the new development in the field of education and pedagogy.

The New Education Policy 2020 (NEP2020) is introduced in the country. Choice Based Credit System in undergraduate Courses is also introduced in all universities and affiliated colleges of the country. For the sake of proper implementation of the NEP2020 the activities in all Higher Educational Institutions are increasing and going to be increased many folds shortly. In view of this the job of the IQAC Coordinator has become more challenging. So it is a right time to redefine the role of the IQAC coordinator as envisaged by the NAAC earlier.

The role of an IQAC Coordinator is now crucial as NEP2020 is introduced in our country. In almost all universities Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is also introduced. A coordinator must have adequate knowledge on NEP 2020 and CBCS. An IQAC coordinator should have a proper vision without which he or she cannot make suitable planning. He or she cannot suggest the principal or college authority as far as maintenance of quality in HEI is concerned.

A proper remuneration should also be provided to the IQAC Coordinator apart from the regular salary. The job of the IQAC Coordinator is becoming tougher and tougher day by day. He is not only responsible for submission of Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) every year and preparation of Self Study Report (SSR), but also he has to enhance and maintain quality in all aspects of an educational institution. The Government should also provide financial assistance regularly to every HEI for qualitative work on the basis of the performance of the IQAC.

Here I would like to propose one reformation regarding appointment of the IQAC Coordinator. There should be an examination system in online mode for selection of an IQAC coordinator and that may be conducted by the NAAC. So far this system is not prevalent. But this system may be introduced for selection of a better IQAC Coordinator. Grade sheet or pass certificate should also be given to passed out teachers. These certificates should be counted or given due weightage in PBAS for CAS promotion of the teachers.

The job of IQAC coordinator should be lucrative for provoking intelligent minds or best of the minds of an educational institution. The IQAC should be made a Statutory Body with the approval of the Education Department of the State Government. At the present circumstances because of lack of this approval instructions and orders issued by the office of the IQAC are most of the time are ignored by the institutional staff members. Same instructions and orders are to be given repeatedly by the office for submission of departmental and other documents so that AQAR can be prepared and submitted timely<sup>3</sup>.

But at present teachers are scarcely interested in the job of an IQAC coordinator as they consider the job burdensome. What is the reason behind this? Teachers are not ready to face the challenges posed by the job of the IQAC Coordinator. He has to remain constant vigilant to all aspects of a Higher Educational Institution for maintenance of quality in an HEI. All round development of an HEI owe to a successful coordinator.

Another reformation may be introduced in case of appointment of the IQAC Coordinator. Appointment with govt sanction is to be made through the Department of Higher Education of the State Government for a fixed term of three or five years for the best interest of the institution. He or she should be appointed as a full time functionary as the dimensions and volume of work proliferated in every HEI as envisaged by the NAAC. At present an IQAC coordinator is appointed by the Principal in case of a College which may be approved by the Governing Body of the College. That appointment is revocable by the very person who is appointed as the coordinator at his own whim. In case of a college most of the time the job of the IQAC coordinator is vested by the Principal on a person who is thought to be fit for the job. That is why as the coordinator is not accountable to anybody for his duty he can shirk his duty rested on his shoulder whenever he or she wants. In case of colleges the job of a coordinator is always considered as burdensome. So nobody aspires to accept the appointment in the

job of Coordinator though the job is considered prestigious in all academic circles. The head of the institution or the Principal is always indeterminate whom to select as the IQAC coordinator, who will serve the institution better as the coordinator.

A well coordination between the IQAC Coordinator and Principal or the authority of a College is sine qua non. The relation between the Principal and IQAC Coordinator can make or mar institutional growth. A very good symbiotic relation between the IQAC Coordinator and other members of the College staff also matters in all matters of the College. It may be hoped that new guidelines will be introduced by the NAAC regarding selection and appointment of the IQAC Coordinator.

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