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# Role of Internal Quality Assurance Cell in Colleges and Universities

MR Kurup\*

*'There are those who look at things the way they are and ask why...  
We dream of things which never were and ask why not?'*

—Robert F. Kennedy

India is the third largest higher education system in the world, but is nowhere when it comes to quality and relevance. Majority of institutions in the affiliating sector are below par. With the establishment of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) during mid-1990s, strengths and weaknesses are being identified through a formal process of assessment and accreditation. The NAAC Vision is to make 'Quality the defining elements of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives'

The government and university being common to all affiliating institutions; we find at least a small fraction of institutions stand out and excel. Some of the top accredited institutions have been conferred with the status of College with Potential for Excellence and Centre of Excellence. It shows very clearly that quality is determined by internal factors.

Keeping this in view, NAAC has recommended setting up of a formal mechanism of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) at University and College levels. A State Level Quality Assurance Cell too has been recommended in every state. IQAC is conceived as a driving force, the Think Tank, to build and ensure a decentralized and participative quality intervention at the institutional level. It is meant for planning, guiding and monitoring Quality Assurance, Sustaining and Enhancement activities in an institution. The Goals, according to NAAC, are to develop a quality system for conscious, consistent and catalytic programmed action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the Institution; and to promote measures for institutional functioning towards quality enhancement through internalization of quality culture and institutionalization of best practices.

## **IQAC: The Think Tank**

'Think tank' is an empowered group of individuals that sets attainable institutional Vision/Mission and plan, organize and execute the policy in to practice to achieve desired goals. IQAC is conceived as the catalyst of institution building with a Motto 'Reaching the unreached with a missionary zeal within stipulated time'.

## **Three Approaches: Static, Normative and Dynamic**

IQAC may follow a three dimensional approach to build, sustain and enhance quality. They may be termed as static, normative and dynamic.

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