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Report of the Two Day National Conference

On

NAAC Revised Accreditation Framework: Challenges and Opportunities with Special Reference to the North Eastern Region

23th – 24th August, 2018.

The Two Day National Conference on *NAAC Revised Accreditation Framework: Challenges and Opportunities with Special Reference to the North Eastern Region* held on 23th – 24th August, 2018 was organized by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Shillong College. The seminar was sponsored by Chief Minister's VAF Fund, RUSA, and ICSSR-NERC, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

The conference was inaugurated with a grand function on 23th August, 2017, graced by the Hon'ble Minister of Education Shri Lakmen Rymbui as the Chief Guest, Shri D.P Wahlang, Principal Secretary, Government of Meghalaya, as the Guest of Honor. Dr K.R Vishnu Mahesh, Assistant Director, NAAC, Bangalore delivered the key note address besides a host of other prominent dignitaries, invitees, experts, resource persons, delegates and participants from all over the State of Meghalaya.

The inaugural function commenced with the felicitation of the dignitaries by Dr K.D Ramsiej Principal Shillong College followed by the welcome address from the Vice Principal of the college, Dr Malay Dey. While warmly welcoming the gathering he dwelt on the dynamics of education and its challenges thereby necessitating the importance of organizing such programmes that will develop awareness and stimulate in-depth discussions on mechanisms for assessment and accreditation. Then he briefly highlighted on the experiences of the college in connection with the NAAC accreditation processes and stated that the college would continue to expand academic environment and infrastructure to meet the demands for achieving excellence in higher education.

Dr K. D. Ramsiej, Principal, Shillong College then presented a brief introduction about the journey since its humble inception in Jail Road Boy's High School, Shillong on 15th August, 1956. He

acknowledged the contributions of its founders and emphasized that the college would continue to strive for excellence and serve the society with a focus on the underprivileged.

Then he highlighted on the journey of the college focusing on its various development from the year 2011 onwards when he had taken over as the Head of the institution. From infrastructure development to digitalisation of the library, opening up of the language lab sponsored by RUSA the first ever of its kind in any of the colleges in Meghalaya, the women's' and boys hostel, building up the intellectual resource base by recruiting more teachers, encouraging research and publication, acquiring two new plots of land, opening of five new departments amongst others. He exhorted that year after year since 2011 every corner of the college has felt the winds of change, each student has benefitted from the change. The latest was the starting of the PG programme in English.

Further, the Principal deliberated on the achievements of the college which included the setting up of the Entrepreneurship Development Cell which started the UGC Sponsored Three Months Certificate Course in Entrepreneurship Development, introduction of Add on Courses such as Functional Hindi, Computer Short Term Course, Personality and Skills Enhancement and Entrepreneurship. A number of students have benefitted from these programmes especially from entrepreneurship and skills training; an initiative by the college which have enabled them to start their own ventures. The recent NAAC Peer Team has hailed it as one of the best innovative practices by the college. Bearing these achievements in mind the principal renewed his commitment to continue and take the college to greater heights.

This was followed by the keynote address presented by Dr K.R Vishnu Mahesh, Assistant Director NAAC, Bangalore. The resource person emphasized that assessment and accreditation is of utmost relevant in the present day context since the development of higher education is directly related to the economic growth of a country. Further, he highlighted that the country is undergoing immense expansion in the higher education sector with rapid growth of new institutions. However, in spite of this growth there are innumerable obstacles in the process to ensure quality, academic excellence and innovations in higher education. With special reference to the North Eastern Region, the speaker emphasized that the inherent difficulties lie in the problems of finance which then leads to inadequate infrastructure, resulting in poor quality standards. Consequently, this leads to outflow of local meritorious students to seek better education outside. To address this problem, the speaker suggested

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that institutions need to come under the purview of NAAC assessment and accreditation. He encouraged institutions to prepare mechanisms to meet the parameters as set by NAAC that would enable them to achieve quality and excellence in higher education.

After the key note presentation, the Guest of Honor, Shri D.P Wahlang, Principal Secretary, Department of Education address the august house. While congratulating the College for organising the programme he pointed out to the significance of the seminar in the context of the North Eastern Region and stressed that education is a powerful tool for Inclusive growth of the Region and the country. The speaker pointed out that the statistics in India revealed a huge number of children below the age of 18 years in schools which, however only a fraction manage to go for higher studies. This he attributed to the unmindful, obsolete courses which equip the youngsters only for lower clerical jobs, leading to depression and increased suicide rates. To overcome these issues an Education Policy for our state needs to be in place. A new curriculum with a more flexible framework, pragmatic teacher preparation and finally the importance of developing institutional leadership. He concluded by emphasizing that NAAC assessment and accreditation is imperative in availing financial assistance from funding agencies.

This was followed by the inaugural address delivered by the Chief Guest Shri Lakmen Rymbui, Hon'ble Minister of Education, Government of Meghalaya. The dignitary reflected on the pivotal role that educational institutions play towards grooming India into a super power. Highlighting the importance of the Seminar he reiterated that at present there is a need in preparing the road map in setting a new framework for assessment and accreditation which would bring a change in setting new trends for quality education. He noted that the technical sessions of the conference will equip participants from various institutions with the know-how to foresee and prepare for the new regulation to be implemented as per the guidelines of the Higher Education Council, with a thrust to improving higher education in the State and the North Eastern Region.

Then the vote of thanks was delivered by Dr (Mrs.) E.Kharkongor, Coordinator, IQAC. Finally, the programme concluded with the singing of the College Anthem by the students.

Technical Sessions: 24th and 25th August 2017

Altogether there were 5 Technical sessions arranged to provide a forum for all presentations. These are:

1. **Present Accreditation System in HEIs - Limitations and Need for Revised Framework**
2. **Global Scenario of Accreditation System in HEIs. :**
3. **Present Accreditation System and Revised Framework for Accreditation: A Comparative Study**
4. **Methodology/ Process of Accreditation in Different HEIs: Revised Accreditation**
5. **Framework in Higher Education - Challenges and Opportunities**

On Day I the 23th August, 2018 there were three technical sessions. The first technical session was on the sub-theme: **Present Accreditation System in HEIs - Limitations and Need for Revised Framework**. This session was chaired by Dr Utpal Sharma, Gauhati University and Dr K.R Vishnu Mahesh, Assistant Director NAAC, Bangalore was the resource person. The session started with a short documentary highlighting the genesis of NAAC, its mission and achievements. This was then followed by a presentation on NAAC Revised Assessment and Accreditation Framework: An Overview.

The resource person highlighted about the basic fundamentals on submission of Institutional Information for Quality Assessment (AQAR). He emphasized on the significant factors that strengthened the very core of HEIs and the role that these factors play in the process of Assessment of HEIs. The different aspects of various factors that HEI's have to focused on were clearly highlighted and these include Curricular Aspects, Teaching-learning and Evaluation, Research Innovation and Excellence, Infrastructure and Learning Resource, Students Support and Progression, Governance, Leadership and Management, Institutional Values and Best Practices

This was followed by second technical session on the theme Methodology/ Process of accreditation in different HEI's. Chaired by Dr K.R Vishnu Mahesh, Assistant Director NAAC, Bangalore the Resource Person of this session was Prof Jyoti Prakash Tamuli, IQAC Coordinator, Gauhati University. The resource person emphasized on the uniqueness and distinctiveness of HEI's in the state of Meghalaya and therefore the methodology that is applied in the approach towards attaining NAAC credit may vary. He further stressed that due attention should be given to the strength, weakness,

opportunities and challenges (SWOC) of the college in order to enhance performance. Data documentation of various activities of the college should be maintained in order to enable the IQAC to assess and plan accordingly on meeting quality parameters as laid down by NAAC.

Immediately, the third technical session started and Dr Utpal Sharma, Gauhati University was the resource person. This session focused on quantifying the parameters of assessment and accreditation as laid down by NAAC and encouraged the participants to strengthen networking and seek advice and assistance from experts while preparing for the NAAC process.

On Day 2, the 24th August, 2018, the first technical session started on the sub-theme: **Scenario of Assessment and Accreditation Process in HEIs in Meghalaya**. Chaired by Shri R. Mawroh, Principal Consultant, RUSA, Meghalaya, the resource person was Dr S.R Lyndem, Former Principal, UCC and Resource Consultant for RUSA. The Resource Person focussed on the significance of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and Higher Educational Institutions not only in the State but in the entire country. He noted that the parameters for Quality Assurance are intrinsically linked to policies, actions and procedures to ensure/guarantee that quality is being maintained and enhanced. The various parameters on achieving quality in higher education were discussed threadbare. The deliberations emphasized on five parameters of quality such as exceptional view of quality, quality as perfection, quality as fitness for purpose, quality as value for money and quality as transformation. Further the resource person noted that it is imperative to start a Quality Movement in the State and pointed out that Shillong College has laid the footprints and pioneered the movement for achieving Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Higher Education.

The last session of the day was on the Sub-Theme: **Revised Accreditation Framework in Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities with Special Reference to North Eastern Region**. The session was chaired by Dr M.N Bhattacharjee, Former IQAC Coordinator, Shillong College and the resource person was Prof N. Srivastav, Department of Economics and Former Director, IQAC, North Eastern Hills University, Shillong. The resource person highlighted on the various parameters for Quality Assurance in higher education keeping in mind the significance of quality as fitness for purpose, quality as value for money and quality as transformation for excellence.

Outcomes and Suggestions:

The technical sessions of the Two Day National Seminar which was attended by participants from rural and urban colleges of the state of Meghalaya were lively and thought provoking. They were followed by active discussions and deliberations which brought out significant outcomes and suggestions on the procedures and mechanism for NAAC Assessment and Accreditation.

A brief summary of the suggestions are as follows:

1. NAAC is the pivot to bring about Quality Management and control in all Higher Educational Institutions in the country.
2. In the Revised Accreditation Process 70 per cent is focussed on online evaluation and 30 per cent will be based on the Peer Team Visit.
3. Institutions should focus on the seven criteria for assessment which are at the core of every institutions for achieving quality and excellence. These are curricular aspect, teaching, learning and evaluation, research, innovation and excellence, infrastructure and learning resources, students support and progression, governance, leadership and management and institutional value and best practices.
4. The need to focus on Self Study Report and to create a reliable, up to date student data based.
5. Detailed discussion on the methodology of assessment have shown the significance of collection of data, documentation, importance of ICT, besides team building and undertaking SWOC analysis, planning, setting short term as well as long term targets amongst others.
6. Colleges have to focus on resource mobilisation, sensitizing stakeholders, team building, leadership in Governance, develop networking, existence of co-operation and co-ordination among stakeholders, to seek advice and suggestions from experts and others.
7. The vital roles that skill education would play in the higher educational scenario and institutions have to take up this challenge.
8. Government policies on HEIs would prove to be very vital for achieving Quality Education.
9. There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach form primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.

10. Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top international institutes and also generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centres of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.
11. There is a need to focus on the graduate students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subjects for gainful employment.
12. The need for a multidisciplinary approach in higher education so that students knowledge may not be restricted only up to his own subjects.
13. Introduction of job oriented courses, establishing high tech libraries, promotion of research, publications, innovations and technological development.

Valedictory Function: 24th August 2018:

The Two Day National Conference on *NAAC Revised Accreditation Framework: Challenges and Opportunities with Special Reference to the North Eastern Region* concluded with a valedictory function, on the 24th August 2018.

The valedictory function which was attended by 120 participants from within and outside the State was graced by Prof S. K. Srivastava, Vice Chancellor, North Eastern Hill University as the Chief Guest besides other prominent dignitaries, invitees, experts, resource persons and a host of others besides faculties and students from the college.

The function commenced with the felicitation of the dignitaries by Dr K.D Ramsiej, Principal, Shillong College. Then, the welcome address was delivered by Shri K.D Roy, Vice Principal, Professional Courses. While warmly welcoming the gathering he highlighted on the strategic importance of the theme of the seminar with reference to the North Eastern States and the role that NAAC play for achieving academic excellence. The Report of the Technical Sessions of the Two Day National Conference was then presented by Dr (Mrs.) E. Kharkongor, Co-Ordinator, IQAC, Shillong College. The Report clearly highlighted on the salient features of the entire proceedings discussed and deliberated during the different technical sessions. She informed the House that the outcomes of the deliberations and suggestions thereof would be submitted for policy decision.

This was followed by the Participants Remarks which were presented by Dr J. Marak, from UCC, College Umiam, Meghalaya, and Dr Hussian, from Barpeta, Assam. The participants while congratulating the college for organising the seminar on relevant issues express their gratitude and thankfulness for the excellent hospitality that had been shown towards them. They also expressed their satisfaction for all the arrangements made for the different technical sessions which had allowed them ample scope for discussions and deliberations. Further they pointed out that such programmes are the need of the hour for sharing ideas and information that would contribute to the dynamics of education in the State.

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Dr K. D. Ramsiej, Principal, Shillong College delivered the Chairpersons' Remark. While acknowledging the Chief Guest, Prof Srivastava, Vice Chancellor, North Eastern Hill University, for his support in the endeavours of the college he reiterated that, as the college boldly steps into the new decade, its primary goal remains the same, to impart quality education and mould the students into responsible future citizens of this great country. Further, in his remark he appealed to all representatives of different colleges and University to go for assessment and accreditation and stressed on collective efforts of all so as to transform and change the education scenario, thereby meeting new challenges.

This was followed by the valedictory address by the Chief Guest, Prof Srivastava, Vice Chancellor, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. In his address the Chief Guest congratulated Shillong College in all its endeavours to provide quality education and salutes everyone who has contributed in the process. He emphasised on the crucial roles of the teacher and student to ensure academic excellence and quality in higher education. He also called upon colleges to register for NIRF ranking and concluded by quoting "Lets us be ambassadors for quality in Higher Education" so as to promote education and arrive at a comprehensive plan that would lead to inclusive growth of the State, the region and the entire country.

Then the vote of thanks was delivered by Dr S. Sarma, Convener and finally, the programme concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.


22/10/18
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