



NAAC Assessment update

Gender Sensitive Quality Indicators & Disabled Friendly Environment at Education Campus

The NAAC has always believed in making quality a continuous process and the various initiatives of NAAC are aimed at sustenance of quality in accredited institutions. As a part of post accreditation initiatives, the NAAC is regularly reaching out the accredited higher education institutions with various innovations and healthy practices.

The NAAC has been promoting quality as a holistic and participatory process. The concerns towards various disadvantaged sections of the society including those of the differently-abled people get reflected in the assessment and accreditation process of NAAC. However, to give further impetus and focused attention towards these issues, the NAAC advocates that all accredited higher education institutions may follow the action plan for promoting participation of differently-abled persons in letter and spirit. This action plan based on the inputs received from UGC, NIEPA and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) primarily aims at making suitable interventions in the higher education sector, which may help differently-abled persons in getting equipped with knowledge and skills that may possibly improve their economic status and offer a meaningful life. Efforts to ensure a disabled friendly physical infrastructure as per the annexure A and prescribed reservations in admissions as well as in recruitment would go a long way in adding a different dimension to institutional quality.

Another area of national priority towards which NAAC would like to draw attention is addressing the

concerns of gender sensitivity in governance of HEIs. The NAAC has developed Gender sensitive Quality Indicators and expects that all HEIs may try to use these indicators not only for assessment purpose but also as an integral part of the overall functioning.

The NAAC, as desired by the MHRD has already initiated the process to integrate the above guidelines with self-study report formats. Since this process will take its own course, as an interim step, we have decided to request all assessors to take into consideration the compliance of these guidelines while arriving at the judgement on institutional quality during the process of Accreditation as well as Reaccreditation. Since we are sending these guidelines now, it may not be feasible to allot specific weightages, however, willingness and a phased plan by HEIs can be taken into consideration while conducting assessment visits.

We hope that you will welcome these steps by the NAAC and take the lead in early implementation of the same, during the assessment visit. We also look forward to your valued feedback on these initiatives.

This document along with copies of "Action Plan for Promoting Participation of Differently-Abled Persons in Higher Education" and "Gender Sensitive Quality Indicators" marks a beginning of new initiative of the NAAC-Assessment Update. This series is expected to keep our assessors informed about the latest trends in A&A as well as serve the purpose of orienting our experts to policy initiatives and priorities of NAAC.



Action Plan for Promoting Participation of Differently Abled Persons in Higher Education

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 provide that all Government Educational institutions and other educational institutions receiving aid from the Government shall not reserve less than three percent seats for persons with disabilities. The national center for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), a Non-Governmental Organization, has carried out a survey of the sample of universities, colleges and schools; to assess the status of mainstream education of students with disabilities therein. According to the NCPEDP, the enrolment of students with disabilities in 119 respondent Universities was found limited to only 1635 students, which constitutes about 0.1 percent of the total enrolment in those universities.

□ These findings have been largely confirmed by the UGC, which informs that with regard to the enrolment of students in the University system the enrolment of students with disabilities in the teaching Departments of the universities is only 2156 constituting 0.33 percent of the total enrolment in universities. The two findings clearly suggest that the current enrolment of students with disabilities is dismal, falling far short of the statutory requirement of 3 per cent.

3. In general, the participation rate of students in higher education in India is only about 8% of the target population in the relevant age group. (as compared to approximately 20% in the developing countries and 40% in the developed countries). However, the status of the enrolment of students with disabilities in Higher Education is much worse. Till recently, the UGC did not maintain any statistics in

respect of enrolment of students with different sets of abilities, in various Universities/ Colleges. It is in the process of doing so.

□ At the Elementary Education level, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) proved instrumental in ensuring a high level of enrolment up to 68% for children with different sets of abilities. Of the 15.93 lakhs students with disabilities in the elementary school-going age group as identified in 2004-05, 10.77 lakhs have been enrolled. Strengthening of these efforts is expected to increase the number of students with disabilities in the schooling system, which in turn would translate to higher participation of such students in colleges and universities.

□ The Central Government has been advising the State Governments and UTs with concern in the matter. UGC has also emphasized to the Universities about greater access for differently abled students in the higher education system and on the need for implementation of the schemes of the UGC in this regard with greater vigour.

□ In 1999-2000, UGC introduced two special schemes i.e. Teachers' Preparation in Special Education (TPSE) and Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (HEPSN) to prevent marginalization of the differently abled persons in the higher education system. These schemes have been designed with the objective to develop courses for special teachers/educators and counselors and also to provide facilities in various forms for the differently abled persons. The main objectives of the schemes are: (i) to start special education courses for teachers' preparation at B.Ed/M.Ed. level. (ii) to provide equal education opportunities and experience to

disabled persons in higher education. There will be an intake of a minimum of 20 and maximum 30 students.

The major objectives of Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (HEPSN) are:- (i) to create awareness among functionaries of Higher Education about Special Education Needs of Person with disabilities (ii) to equip the Institute/College with facilities to provide access to disabled persons. (iii) to assist disabled individuals to increase their sustainability in higher education. (iv) to explore possibilities for suitable placement for disabled graduates. (v) financial assistance to Teachers who are Visually Handicapped (Blind). Under the scheme, a grant of Rs. 6,000/-p.a. for visually handicapped (blind) permanent teachers is provided towards Reader Allowance, for purchase of Braille Books, recorded materials etc. During 2002-03, an amount of Rs 6.06 lakhs was paid to 101 visually handicapped teachers working-in various universities/colleges.

- ❑ UGC has issued directives to the Universities regarding full implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, in the universities and colleges with a view to ensure 3% reservation for persons with disabilities in admission to all the courses of study offered by universities and colleges and in jobs therein and also decided that barrier - free access for persons with disabilities in the universities, buildings, class rooms, laboratories and toilets etc. are to be ensured.
- ❑ Based on the inputs from UGC and NIEPA, an action plan of the National Sample Survey Report of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the Government of India, highlights that the Disabled Persons constitute about 1.8 per cent of the total population, of whom about 55% are illiterate and only about 9% have completed secondary and higher level of education. India, being a welfare state, is committed to providing positive externality to ensure a dignified and economically self-sustainable life to its citizens

with different sets of abilities. In this regard, suitable interventions in the higher education sector may help to equip them with knowledge and skills that may possibly improve their economic status and offer a meaningful life. Besides, it may also improve the economic productivity of the nation by skill upgradation of a significant section of the society that constitutes 1.8% of its total population.

- ❑ To achieve this objective, based on the inputs received from UGC, NIEPA and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) the following action plan is proposed:-

I. Measures for promoting greater participation of differently abled persons in higher education

Three per cent funds of the total allocation to UGC may be earmarked to spend on education of differently abled people.

To ensure that the Recruitment Rules are being followed by Universities and Colleges, which are funded under section 12(B) of UGC Act.

To establish special coaching centres for differently abled students in the universities/colleges.

Educational institutions may be asked to ensure a disabled friendly physical infrastructure as per annexure 'A' Existing infrastructure to be dealt with in a phased manner.

Deemed university status may be granted only on providing the necessary facilities for differently abled persons.

To redesign the curriculum of undergraduates, commensurate with the needs of differently abled persons.

A directive may be issued to the institutions that the reserved seats for disabled persons, if unfulfilled, may be advertised in the National dailies.

Building up a national database on differently abled higher education to ensure 3% seats are reserved for differently abled students in the university departments.

A directive may be issued to all universities/affiliated institutions to ensure that differently abled students are provided hostel accommodation on a priority basis.

All the universities/institutions and their affiliated colleges fit to receive grant from UGC may be directed to provide the information if their buildings have access to persons with disability. For all new buildings, the provision for the disabled should be made mandatory.

Delhi University has formulated a proposal on a Model Centre for Disability studies which is being examined by UGC. It is proposed that three more Central Universities may be identified to open such centres. UGC may be asked to finance these centers.

It is proposed that one of the Rajiv Gandhi Chairs may be set up for Disabled Management. This will evolve into a centre for studies and Research on inclusive practices that will give direction to future programmes and impact policy.

Every University should set up a 'Disability Unit' comprising of the following:-

- ❖ coordinator
- ❖ Placement Officer
- ❖ Student Volunteer

All the libraries to have Braille Books, talking books, reading machines, computers with speech software, sign languages interpreters, etc., in order to ensure access to information for the visually disabled students and the hearing disabled students.

II. Measures for improving awareness and sensitizing about the needs of differently abled persons

All B.Ed students may be asked to undergo training for teaching in any one of the stream of disability i.e. (i) Visual impairments (Blind and Low vision) (ii) Speech and hearing impairments and (iii) Locomotive disabilities They may be imparted training in the B.Ed/M.Ed. level course. In-service teachers may also be deputed to undergo a Refresher Course in any one of the above streams.

Special Education courses persently meant for disabled only may also be included in the existing text-books of the mainstream students/teachers to sensitize them to the needs of the disabled. The Consortium of Educational Communication, New Delhi (an inter-university Centre of UGC), may develop audio-video programmes in this field in consultation with resource persons drawn from specialized institutions.

These courses should be of inclusive nature and the chapters be included in the existing books for the mainstream student teachers.

A directive to all universities/affiliated institutions that all girls with disability be given priority over boys with disability.

NIEPA organizes orientation programmes in planning and management for Principals of the degree of the colleges. NIEPA can provide an effective platform on taking it as one of the components in orientation programme.

ENTRANCES EXITS

The main entrances and exits of any college /university must be clearly identifiable and easily accessible. They must be wide enough to accommodate wheelchair users. Steps and ramps must have hand railings of contrasting colours. The building should have automatic sliding doors. In multistory buildings, the entrance should permit access to a conveniently located elevator. Emergency exits should be easily identifiable and accessible.

PARKING

Parking for people with disabilities should be available near the building. It should be accessible to cross-disability groups equally. Accessible indoor parking spaces should be located close to the elevators and within 50 meters of the building entrance. The parking slots reserved for people with disabilities should be marked with the international symbol of accessibility. There should be procedures in place to make sure that non-disabled people do not use parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities. Drop off areas should be marked by a well-defined signage system and an accessible travel path from this area to the building should be available.

RAMPS

Complementary ramps should be available next to the stairs. The gradient of ramps should allow easy use by wheelchair users. Appropriate landings should be available and the ramp should be wide enough for use by wheelchair users. Ramp surfaces should be slip-resistant and clear of obstacles. They should be protected on both sides. Ramps are to be marked with the international symbol of accessibility.

ELEVATORS

Elevators should be easily accessible and identifiable. The doors should be wide enough to accommodate wheelchair users and the space inside should be sufficient for them. Elevators should have handrails of contrasting colours on three sides and be at appropriate heights. Control panels should be at appropriate heights and the buttons should be large and embossed. Visual and audible signals indicating the arrival at different floors should be available. Emergency intercoms should be usable without voice communication in emergencies. Tactile/Braille instruction should be provided for the communication systems.

STAIRS

Stairs should be easily accessible and identifiable. The minimum width of the stairs should be wide enough and the landings have enough space at the top and bottom. The stair surfaces and nosing should be slip resistant. Handrails should be provided for staircases.

WASHROOMS, TOILETS AND BATHROOMS

Separate toilets should be available for people with disabilities. They should be clearly identifiable and accessible. The doors should be wide enough and should be lockable from inside and releasable from outside. There should be enough maneuvering space inside. All floor surfaces should be slip resistant. Mirrors, flushing arrangements, dispensers and toilet paper should be mounted at appropriate heights. They should be equipped with alarm systems for emergencies.

PUBLIC TELEPHONES

There should be at least one telephone accessible to wheelchair users and should be equipped with learning aids. The numbers should be embossed to allow easy identification. The coin slots should be at appropriate heights.

DRINKING WATER FACILITIES

They should be easily accessible and the fountainhead accessible to wheelchair users. The area around the fountain should be dry to prevent falls. Glasses should be provided at drinking water facilities. The taps should be easily maneuverable.

EXAMINATIONS ROOMS

Examination rooms should be easily identifiable and accessible. The examination tables should be of the right size and height.

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Gender Sensitive Quality Indicators

INTRODUCTION

Gender auditing is a process of assessing policies, practices and procedures in an organization that specially addresses the issues related to women. It aims to identify developmental dimensions of providing opportunities for women in the organization for their growth and also aspects hindering women's advancements in the organization.

PURPOSE

Educational institutions are being accredited by the NAAC to assure quality of education and thus establish credibility. Several criteria and indicators have been developed to provide a base for assessment and accreditation. Most of these indicators reflect academic, administrative, infrastructural, financial and human resources. However, it is noted that gender related dimensions are not captured in the assessment process. To make sure that the resources from women are utilized effectively, it is important to include gender components or get sex disaggregated data for assessing the gender balance and make appropriate interventions by the institutions. A list of gender sensitive quality indicators is given below for NAAC's consideration and action.

GENDER SENSITIVE INDICATORS

All educational institutions must take certain initiatives for achieving the objectives of the overall development of the students. In the specific case of women and as envisaged in the National Policy of Education (1986), education is viewed as a tool of social change for correcting the accumulated distortions of the past. To bring about this change, certain specific initiatives that would facilitate women students' development and empowerment are required. Such initiatives may be termed as Gender Positive Initiatives.

In this context, an audit of the outcome of the specific initiatives for the promotion of women's development, not only for the students, but also for the faculty, is necessary to establish equality of opportunity and gender justice, ultimately resulting in the optimum utilization of women's resources.

FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER SENSITIVE INDICATORS

NAAC has identified seven major areas for the assessment of institutions. Some examples of gender sensitive indicators have been delineated here for further elaboration and refinement.

Curricular Aspects

What are the women-related courses/topics introduced in the curriculum in the various subjects taught?

Teaching, Learning and Evaluation

- a. Gender segregated data on students and faculty in various departments at UG/PG level.
- b. Participation of women faculty in seminars/ conferences/ workshops/ faculty development programmes/ receiving awards/representation in various committees.

Research, Consultancy and Extension

- a. Percentage of women faculty actively involved in research/ guiding research students/ operating projects/ publishing and extension activities.
- b. What are the specific research topics and extension activities related to women?

Infrastructure and Learning Resource

- a. Availability of hostel/common room/ toilet/ sports facilities for women.
- b. Books and journals on women in the library.

❑ **Student Support and Progression**

- a. Sex disaggregated data on number of women students getting scholarships/ financial support and the students getting placement.
- b. Availability of women counselors, sexual harassment cell, lady doctor.

❑ **Organization and Management**

- a. Number of women in all selection /promotion committees/ academic/ administrative bodies of the institution.
- b. Details on maternity leave, crèche for children.

❑ **Healthy Practices**

- a. Number of gender sensitization programmes conducted.

- b. Number of women-related themes and topics taken up for discussion and debates.
- c. Number of leadership camps organized for the personality development of women students.

This is a brief outline of some of the gender sensitive indicators, which could be used effectively to assess the overall quality of an institution encompassing the gender components. NAAC's initiative to include gender sensitive quality indicators in the assessment process is a very progressive measure that should go a long way in bringing greater gender justice in the higher education system.

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