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ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ABSTRACT: *Organizational effectiveness is a concept of how effective an organization is in achieving the outcomes the organizations intends to produce. Every organization regardless of industry or country seeks to be more effective and achieve superior results. Academic organizations are not less different. The public at large has become more conscious of its institutions of higher education. And universities, as a part of its main objective, conduct several studies for the societal benefits. However, there are a very few studies conducted on these institutions themselves, even though a part of the national budget is set aside for the development of societal reforming organizations like schools and universities. In other words, though a widely used and researched area, there still exists a lack of clarity with regard to the general understanding of organizational effectiveness and this goes true for academic institutions as well. The system of education needs to conduct its own research into the identification of the variables and factors associated with effectiveness. However, the meaning of the effectiveness of an educational institution is defined as its successful operation in terms of awareness of the organizational missions by the administrator, faculty members, and the support staff. This paper attempts to understand the basis of attaining effectiveness in academic institutions and also attempts to reflect on the ways in which effectiveness can be enhanced. Finally, no single model accurately describes the conditions in an institution, instead multiple models provide a richer understanding of organizational outcomes.*

KEY WORDS: *Organizational effectiveness, academic organizations, organized anarchy, students, faculty members, administrators, and universities.*

INTRODUCTION

Organizations occupy a predominant place in the lives of modern men that study of their effectiveness has emerged as an important area of research in psychology. In spite of the marked importance of the subject, however, much controversy exists pertaining to the theory and researches of organizational effectiveness. The primary reason is the perplexing diversity of organizational forms in modern society (Ghorpade, 1971). Organizations differ in regard to their societal functions; they vary in terms of size, shape, and structure; and most certainly, they differ in relation to the institutional interrelationships and circumstances in which they operate.

Organizational effectiveness is a concept of how effective an organization is in achieving the outcomes the organizations intends to produce. Every organization regardless of industry or country seeks to be more effective and achieve superior results (Thompson,

1967). Academic organizations are not less different. The public at large has become more conscious of its institutions of higher education. State and localities are more demanding in terms of education and service, more critical of what they perceive institutions to be doing, and more vocal in expressing their criticism and desires. Public institutions like these always answerable to the general interest can no longer avoid defending what they do or do not. They are increasingly becoming answerable to numerous constituencies for the range of their services and the effectiveness of their performance.

The main mission of academic organizations includes teaching, research, academic services to the community, and fostering arts and culture. Other missions are human development and exploration of an improved quality of life leading to a better, more peaceful society through educational reform and sustainable development of local

communities. Education acts as an agent of social change and social development and social change takes place as a response to many types of changes in the social and non-social environment.

Education initiates social change by bringing about a change in outlook and attitude of man, which in turn brings about a change in the pattern of social relationships. Education also aims at imparting knowledge and enabling every individual to effectively participate in the activities of society and to make positive contribution to the progress of society. With education playing a major role, it is very important to see that such organizations function effectively while imparting quality education to the masses. But the question is how far academic institutions are concerned about increasing effectiveness? K.S. Cameron (1978) and Karagoz and Oz (2008) mentioned in their writings that various effectiveness approaches and models have been developed, but unfortunately little research has been done on organizational effectiveness in higher education context.

Universities as a part of its main objective conduct several studies for the societal benefits. However, there are a very few studies conducted on these institutions themselves, even though a part of the national budget is set aside for the development of societal reforming organizations like schools and universities. The meaning of the effectiveness of an educational institution is defined as its successful operation in terms of awareness of the organizational missions by the administrator, faculty members, and the support staff.

W. Zummata (2001), in a review of higher education, had noted that institutions were historically viewed as “*necessarily freewheeling and unconstrained*”. However, W. Zummata (2001) also observed that colleges and universities face unprecedented external demands and this shift in states expectations; and relations with colleges and universities is significant not only for academics own interests but for important societal values.

R. Howard Bowen (1977) observed that the production process in higher education is far more intricate and complicated than that in any industrial enterprise. Turning resources

into human values defies standardization. Students vary enormously in academic aptitude, interest, intellectual dispositions, social and cultural characteristics, educational and vocational objectives, and many others.

Many theorists consider organizational effectiveness, as if it is a goal to achieve, as though at some point of time, organizations will have a final set of characteristics or reach a level of productivity and effectiveness will be attained. This is just not the case in institutions of higher education and denies the temporal reality of developing organizations and also ignores the contribution of process to develop effectiveness. Organizational effectiveness here depends on the organizations ability to change, develop, and adapt over time (Ross & Goodfellow, 1980).

Most organizations are not completely free to set their own goals and are constrained by their environments to conform to the goals expected by external constituencies. Thus, in higher education, most universities tend/try to set goals quite similar to those of the most other prestigious universities (Cameron & Whetten eds., 1983); or seek to adopt practices of institutions deemed best within a particular institutional type. Occasionally, however, some institutions are able to identify themselves as unique and as deserving the public’s attention, even though they don’t conform to the traditional models of success.

There are also different levels within the college and university with large cultural variations existing within. Overall organizational effectiveness may be to some extent be a function of the degree to which the organization is able to accommodate and reconcile differences among multiple organizational cultures. In some institutions, however, it may not be possible to support simultaneously all of the cultural dimensions that underlie each branch or department.

Organizational effectiveness, thus, requires an understanding by leaders of the priorities of the institution, especially as the organization moves through different phases.

ORGANIZED ANARCHY

Though there are many approaches proposed for the valuation of effectiveness,

there is a group of organizations for which none of these approaches for evaluating effectiveness is appropriate. Schools, colleges, universities, large service organizations, and research and development organizations encompass this group of organizations together referred to as “organized anarchy”. The main peculiarity about this class of organization is that sub-units are largely autonomous and there are few common structures or linkages flowing throughout organized anarchies to bind the sub-units together.

Common linking factors, like purposes and goals and the formalized hierarchy of authority, are either not present or may be weak in organized anarchies. Goals of such organizations are complex, changing, and contradictory. Sub-units pursue goals that may be unrelated to the broader, more general organizational goals. Since the sub-units are not tightly connected, influences from external environment are partitioned among them. And also any disturbances from external forces seldom diffuses throughout the entire organization because of the autonomous nature of the sub-units.

Academic organizations are not completely free to set their own goals since most organizations are constrained by their environments to conform to the goals expected by external constituencies. Organizational theorists often adhere to the fact that effectiveness of organizations cannot be described in a straight forward manner. The interpretation of the concept is done on the basis of the organizational theory and the specific interests of the group posing the question of effectiveness (Cameron & Whetten eds., 1983; and Cameron & Whetten, 1985).

Therefore, different models have been used as background to understand organizational effectiveness. Under the goal model, an organization is effective if it accomplishes its goals over a long time. Effectiveness is measured by the degree to which the organizations attain identified output targets. In higher education, *benchmarking* (Alstete, 1995; and Barak & Kniker, 2002); *performance funding* (Banta, 1993); *institutional and professional expectations* (Betz, Cunliff &

Guinn, 2003); and many evaluation service instruments all embody the goal model of effectiveness.

Most researchers and practitioners suggest that the achievement of goals must be understood not in terms of some ideal for all organizations, but instead viewed realistically in terms of the constraints on goal achievement that may limit a particular organization (Cyert & March, 1963; and Steers, 1977). That is organizational effectiveness should be judged in terms of what the organizations members are expected to do, not in terms of unrealistic hope (Cameron, 1980).

As per the system model, organizations can be compared to biological systems which adapt to their environment. The main characteristic of this approach is that organizations are considered to interact openly with their surroundings and also they can themselves actively exert influence on the environment. Flexibility and adaptability are the two most important conditions for effectiveness i.e. for survival. Thus, organizational effectiveness may, then, be measured in terms of yearly intake which could be attributed to intensive canvassing or academic marketing. Canvassing activities mainly consists of displaying of acquired facilities or the presentation of data such as the previous years examination results.

A major characteristic of an anarchic organization is unclear technology. Educational institutions being operated at different levels, there does not exist a single methodology for functioning. The organization manages to survive and even produce and very often its own processes are not understood by its members. It operates on the basis of simple trial and error procedures, the residue of learning from the accidents of past experience and pragmatic inventions of necessity.

Fluid participation is another characteristic of an anarchic organization. There are different levels within the college and university with large cultural variations existing within. Some units may be characterized by elements of the collegial culture, while others emphasize market or adhocracy characteristics. The kind of culture existing in medical academic institutions is drastically different from that of a culture existing in an Arts and

Science college. Likewise so is the difference in culture in two different universities.

Evidence also suggests that such a division of organizational culture within institutions of higher education commonly takes place – for example between administrative and faculty cultures, between student affairs and academic affairs cultures, and among the different cultures of the academic disciplines (Hellawell & Hancock, 2001). Within the department itself, the participants vary in the amount of time and effort they devote to different domains, involvement varies from one time to another. As a result, the boundaries of the organizations are uncertain and changing; the audience and decision makers from any particular kind of choice change capriciously.

Overall organizational effectiveness may be to some extent be a function of the degree to which the organization is able to accommodate and reconcile differences among multiple organizational cultures. In some institutions, however, it may not be possible to support simultaneously all of the cultural dimensions that underlie each of the effectiveness indicators (Connors, 1979).

In his own study of educational institutions, K.S. Cameron (1978) reflecting the interests of students, faculty, and administrators, drew on a variety of criteria like objective and subjective criteria or participant criteria and organizational criteria. He developed profiles of different educational institutions according to nine general criteria and found them to be diverse. One institution scored high on student academic and personal development, but quite low on student's career development. Similarly while one institution scored high on community involvement, the others scored relatively low. These variations show that even organizations in the same industry or service sector often follow somewhat different clients, approaches, products, and services. Thus, organizational effectiveness being a multidimensional construct requires an understanding by leaders of the priorities of the institution, especially as the organization moves through different phases (Cameron, 1978).

Very often because of the difficulty to evaluate the effectiveness of organizations with

anarchistic characteristics, researchers and people tend to rely on simple, uncomplicated, easily obtainable, and quantifiable indicators to justify their effectiveness. However, the best way to assess effectiveness is by asking knowledgeable administrators, faculty members and also students, the real receivers of education, to describe the various aspects of institutional performance.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS

Assessment of effectiveness in non-profit and service organizations is not an easy task. When asked a question which academic institution is more effective, institution A or institution B, often there is a struggle because the question can't be answered in a meaningful way, because of the lack of a systematic approach to measure institutional effectiveness. Judgments are regularly made, consciously or unconsciously by people who make choices and these choices are made on the basis of self interest, tradition or personal bias, because those making them do not have a clear idea of the pertinent criteria of effectiveness (Cameron, 1980). An institution is very often judged by the size, age, and beauty of the campus, the amount of its endowment, its faculty–student ration, and the number of professors who received doctorates from prestigious institutions.

Another approach for many years was to rely on a single overall assessment such as reputation ratings. Though very little sophistication was involved in such assessment techniques, this approach is still widely used to rate colleges and universities later on published in leading magazines. The criteria include faculty awards and honors, student's achievement after passing out, scores of students on national exams, and institutional resources. How true and valid are such ratings? Sadly the groups of institutions who do not full fill the above criteria are innumerable. Apart from a few institutions, like research institutions, most of them left without an accurate criterion to assess their effectiveness. The main question is what is the kind of analysis used in such an assessment and also from whose perspective or view point is such an assessment made? Since the real receivers

of education are students, they have the actual right to evaluate an institution and not the general public.

Not all organizations can be evaluated using the same criteria of effectiveness. Certain effectiveness criteria are more appropriate for some kinds of organizations than others. The criteria of effectiveness for different institutional types are not the same. Both internal and external evaluators of effectiveness in a college might apply quite different standards than would those in a research university. However, very often the different colleges and universities in spite of its wide differences in its characteristics, end up using the same criteria for evaluating effectiveness.

This conclusion raises the question of whether it is fair and reasonable to demand of colleges and universities that they perform effectively in same ways as organizations in the corporate sector. There are many problems in measuring and evaluating faculties of academic organizations effectiveness and efficiency, because variables are either not covered or may be too abstract, indicators not sufficient, the weight of indicators not suitable, criteria unclear, analysis not covered, casual factors not shown, and models not sufficient (Katz & Kahn, 1978; and Harrison, 1994).

Evaluation is so pervasive and important that the outcomes of such ubiquitous assessments have direct and serious consequences for organizations in terms of resource acquisition, legitimacy, and survival itself (Jobson & Schneck, 1982). If appropriate assessment criteria cannot be agreed upon, it would be manifestly impossible to agree completely on an evaluation of an organizations success or failure. Efforts become more meaningful if resource inputs, instructional and operational processes, and outcomes are assessed in an environment with a common understanding and shared purpose.

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVENESS

Many researchers have explored different indicators to measure effectiveness and most of them have same point of views. The effectiveness of an educational organization depends on many details such as the

administrator, teacher, students who are the permanent items of learning and teaching process. A premise of most organizational research is that effectiveness can be improved as more is learned about structures, processes, and contexts of organizations (Cameron, 1986).

D.L. Clark, L.S. Lotto and T.A. Astuto (1984) identified features of an effective academic institute as students' acquisition of important skills, students' success and development, learning targets, strong culture, and influential academic leadership. Similarly, W.K. Hoy and J. Ferguson (1985) mentioned that students' success, effective management of teachers, school's satisfaction, and the way in which academic leaders cope with environment are those dimensions that should be considered while measuring organizational effectiveness. Moreover, J.A. Gun and E.A. Holdaway (1986) have highlighted that the most important effectiveness indicator is teachers and students' satisfaction, then academic development, parents' satisfaction, grooming of students as a responsible citizens, employment of expert staff, and finally preparing students for moving in markets and getting good jobs, as building up their professional carriers.

One of the ways through which students can be transformed into active learners is through the development of better educational curricula and teaching methods which enables students and teachers to participate in new ways in the teaching-learning process. Learning in all subject areas involves inventing and constructing new ideas; and S. Zemelman, H. Daniels and A. Hyde (1993) suggest that if a constructivist approach is incorporated into the curriculum, where teachers create environments in which children can construct their own understandings, it will foster critical thinking and create active and motivated learners. This will act as an indicator to increase institutional effectiveness.

Staff training and development too have been identified to be crucial to an organization. Since effectiveness and success of an organization lies in the hands of people who form and work within the organization, training and development will enable them to

work towards taking the organizations to its expected destination. Training and re-training of all staff in form of workshops, conferences, and seminars should be vigorously pursued and made compulsory. Since teachers directly deal with students, training will enable them to brighten-up their ideas and know more about the recent development in their course area. A. Balci (2001) also emphasized that effectiveness should be measured in terms of student's development.

K.S. Cameron (1980) conducted effectiveness studies in institutions of higher education and identified nine distinctive areas that administrators believed were indicative of an effective institution of higher education after carefully selecting the criteria, constituencies, and institutions. These dimensions represented characteristics of organizations judged to be indicative of effectiveness from the point of view of internal major decision makers of the institution. The nine dimensions included: (1) student's educational satisfaction, (2) their academic, (3) personal development, (4) professional development, (5) faculty's job satisfaction, (6) professional development of teachers, (7) resource acquisition, (8) system clarity, and (9) organizational health. Later in his study, he elaborated that varying environmental conditions did have a strong impact on academic institutions (Cameron, 1986).

In India, one of the primary and most important evaluation service instruments used to assess colleges and universities is the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous body, established by the University Grants Commission in pursuance of the recommendations made by the National Policy of Education laying special emphasis on evaluating the quality of higher education in India. Based on different assessment, the institution is provided with grades of "A, B, and C". The different criteria of assessment of NAAC includes curricular activities; teaching and learning evaluation; student support and progression; infrastructure and learning resources; research, consultancy, and extension; and innovative practices.

Thus, based on the above assessment

criteria, the different indicators of effectiveness include student's development, effective management and leadership of academic organizations, faculty satisfaction, and quality of teaching, institutional culture, environmental impact, parental involvement, acquisition of resources, and their efficient usage. This gives us a clear idea why K.S. Cameron (1978) mentioned that organizational effectiveness being a multidimensional field, a single model cannot be used to measure all the underlying variables.

Often when evaluation service instruments such as NAAC, approaches an institution for assessment, the first requirement is to present the records and documentation of the various activities. However, many institutions fail to maintain the accurate records and details. Moreover for many institutions, the records maintained are just records without actual or detailed information maintained. There are even instances where records are kept just for the sake of documentation. Thus, a choice arises between objective data (company records) or subjective or perceptual data (interview/questionnaire responses) to assess effectiveness. But how far is using such information collected by the organization and stored as official document serving as appropriate indicators of effectiveness.

In academic organizations, the product is invisible unlike other organizations. Usually, a layman's criteria of an institution's effectiveness are often the number of students passing out with flying colors. But the question is exams scientific in assessing effectiveness? Does getting high marks indicate extremely great performance of the student and inurn the organization? The overall development of an individual is complete when a combination of knowledge, skill, and attitude is merged. Such a combination can be developed not only through academics, but also through an involvement and active participation in other social and cultural activities. But often that part of educational institutions is not given as much importance as it requires. But for that aspect to be recognized, we still have to go a long way.

A decade back, educational institutions were considered to be noble institution, where the students are polished into fine, educated

individuals ready to face the world, useful for the society and mankind. Unfortunately, a latest trend that is arising is the emergence of the privatization into the academic sector making it more business oriented. The impact of privatization is only making education into a commodity which can be attained and provided through money and not a service. Recently, there had been reports of a large number students failing to pass their graduation exams and this is all, because the colleges had been providing admitting those students with money and not on the basis of merit or capability. Though it is not directly applicable to all private organizations, it's a dangerous tendency that is leaning towards a business strategy. Institutions are becoming more concerned with getting back the invested money.

Thus, the quality of education in institutions with a money making attitude are often not up to the standard; thus, affecting the students and also in turn affecting the effectiveness. How can one call such an organization, an effective one, when the final product itself is defective? Salaries in India are growing at a very fast pace, primarily because there isn't a sufficient pool of manpower. Even though many have university degrees, the quality of education in most of the institutions are often not up to the mark. M.M. Sullivan and P.C. Wilds (2001) suggests that the primary measure of effectiveness is the cause and effect relationship between the institution and student learning outcomes.

However, most colleges have no experience or models on how to develop and sustain a comprehensive effort for assessing student learning outcomes at the institutional level. This is where the government has to take an action and stop educational institutions from deviating from its mission. Steps have to be taken to devise ways to upgrade the educational system across the country, with the government directly setting up central universities in various states. But, then, how is organizational effectiveness related to education? The government taking charge of education also should mean providing a major fund for its upliftment of various colleges without any need or help from private

organizations.

"Upliftment" means not only increasing the number of courses, but also, like NAAC has suggested, improving the quality of teaching, implementation of a new curricula, creating a culture with a flavor of its own, developing parks for relaxing and refreshing the students minds, and efficient leadership role taken up to guide the teachers and the students. All these factors summed up will influence the overall development of the student in turn increasing the effectiveness of the institutions. Thus, effectiveness is not just bound to the efficient functioning activities of the organization alone, but also extends into the achievements of the students. Therefore, achieving effectiveness of educational institutions is indeed a very complex task.

Just like the problem of privatization faced by educational institutions, another problem faced is the deep rooted influence of politics in all the sections of the institution. There's always a fight over, which party, or which community is going to gain power. And every time a particular party or community comes in power, they make changes in the administration and also enforces upon the employees new rules and regulations. This change causes the employees to face role confusion to a certain level and on the way effectiveness loses its track. Employees have explained how they've lost their voice in expressing their queries which was not the case about 2 decades back, where the working condition was employee oriented and working in an educational institution was considered as more of a service. Thus, the impact of academic leadership on motivation of faculty members and their impact on organizational effectiveness are undoubtedly vast and deep (Anum Siddique *et al.*, 2011).

All educational organizations have a particular structure/style in its function. It's not zig zag, but rather there exists coordination among the members in each department for its effective functioning and also someone to guide them through their goal oriented activities. In an organizational set up, one can call them leaders, administrators, managers; and how they influence their employees to work is leadership. Leader must have the

ability to influence others and to direct their efforts to achieve success. Leadership styles may vary from organization to organization and even within the organization. With academic environment facing many challenges these days, the leaders need to motivate, inspire, direct, and lead the faculty members towards achievement of shared objective.

Agility too has a major role in educational institutions. The best performing organizations in the current fast paced environments move quickly to identify opportunities. Promoting agility in institutions means concentrating on creating an openness to change and assuring swift execution of strategy and breaking away the barriers that impede the flow of work, people, resources, and ideas. With the increasing globalization and connectivity, it is important that educational institutions keep up with the changing world and create more opportunities and options for the students to grow and prosper.

CONCLUSION

In this age of increased accountability in higher education, far more attention is being paid to evaluation at all levels of colleges and universities. Trustees and presidents find themselves having to answer more completely and quickly to state agencies, accreditation associations, students, parents, and the local community. Each of these stakeholders may have a somewhat different view about what constitutes an effective college or university. So, also do the organizational members themselves have divergent perspectives on organizational performance. Further, complicating the assessment of effectiveness is the issue of the time frame for drawing conclusions about how well a college or university is doing. Choices driven by short term forces may induce the adoption of policies and practices that in the long run may work to the detriment of the institutions.

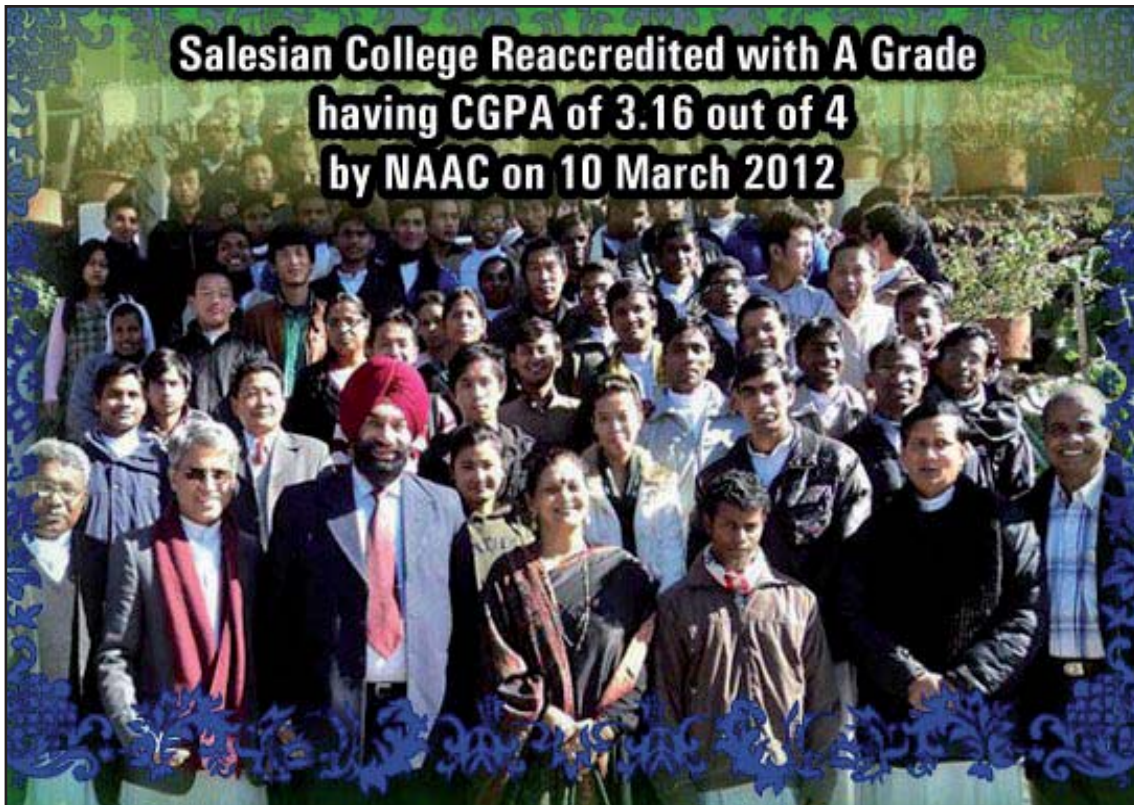
Thus, the conceptualization and measurement of effectiveness and efficiency constitute significant challenges for organizational leaders. It is important to understand how different criteria are being utilized in evaluating effectiveness and efficiency in higher education. However,

no single model accurately describes the conditions in an institution, instead multiple models provide a richer understanding of organizational outcomes.

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NAAC and Assessment of the Higher Education Institution in India
(Source: www.google.com, 12/12/2012)

In India, one of the primary and most important evaluation service instruments used to assess colleges and universities is the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous body, established by the University Grants Commission in pursuance of the recommendations made by the National Policy of Education laying special emphasis on evaluating the quality of higher education in India.