

# Quality Assurance Ranking systems for Higher Education Institutes

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## Abstract

A perceived need for an international ranking of HEIs is required to understand the quality of higher education in that institute. The three longest established and most influential global rankings are those produced by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Times Higher Education (THE) and Shanghai Ranking. The ranking systems varied from country to country; programme to programme and few times also depends on faculty. In India mainly two ranking and or accreditation systems are considered i.e. NAAC and NIRF, however in few cases ranking is also given by some private organizations or individuals. In this paper information about these ranking system has been collected and a case study to understand the information about these ranking system has been reported.

**Keywords:** QS, Times Ranking, NAAC, HEI, NIRF

## I. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance is the responsibility of everyone in an educational institution, through the top management sets the policies and priorities. So, quality assurance should be a continuous process. However, accreditation as External Quality Monitoring can be found in all types of higher education systems. The need for quality assurance and accreditation has been established especially in the context of globalization and financial constraints impinging-on higher education. This unit provides an introduction to the twin and integrated issues of quality assurance and a accreditation in higher education. Each institution has its own internal procedures for assuring and enhancing quality of its provision, and for satisfying itself that appropriate standards are maintained. These are carried out through the various procedures designed at international level. Most institutions carry out both regular monitoring and periodic review of programmes. The three longest established and most influential global rankings are those produced by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Times Higher Education (THE) and Shanghai Ranking. The ranking systems varied from country to country; programme to programme and few times also depends on faculty. In India mainly two ranking and or accreditation systems are considered i.e. NAAC and NIRF, however in few cases ranking is also given by some private organizations or individuals (1-7). The prime objective of this paper is to identify few ranking systems of HEI throughout the world viz a viz understanding of these systems in Rajasthan state as a case study has also been reported.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### II.1 Types of Ranking systems

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a world-wide association which is active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education. The great majority of its members of it are quality assurance agencies that operate in many different ways, although the Network also welcomes (as associate members) other organizations that have an interest in Quality Assurance in HEI. INQAAHE offers members many services, including a Journal, a Bulletin, a Query service, a Good Practice database, funding for projects and funding for a Professional Qualification in QA. INQAAHE was established in 1991 with only 8 members. Today the total membership exceeds 300 members. Among more than 20 different global ranking systems, the longest standing and most influential are the ARWU (produced by the Shanghai Ranking Consultancy), Times Higher Education (THE), and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS). In India, the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) are to agencies that assesses and accredits higher education institutions in India. The former was established by MHRD in 2016 whereas later is an autonomous body funded by University Grants Commission of India headquartered in Bangalore. NAAC was set up in 1994.

### II.2 Case Study to understand the information about ranking system

In order to understand the ranking system of HEIs throughout the globe and to enhance the functioning of IQAC a survey was conducted at Government Dungar College, Bikaner. For this purpose a format was designed and given to 100 stakeholders out of which 95 has completed it satisfactorily and analysis was made on their replies. The questionnaire with the response has been represented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Questionnaire: Response to judge information about Ranking system**

S.N.	Question	Yes	No
1	Do you know about the ranking systems other NAAC in India?	15	80
2	How many ranking systems for HEI are popular worldwide, write names? (Yes for more than 2)	10	85
3	Do you know about QS Ranking?	4	91
4	Do you know about THE Ranking?	4	91
5	Had your institution applied for any other ranking than NAAC?	12	83
6	Is it the role of IQAC to provide information about ranking system to all stakeholders?	87	8

7	How many institutes are there in first 50 HEI of world ranking? (Yes for more than 1)	45	50
8	How many institutes are there in first 100 HEI of world ranking? (Yes for more than 1)	61	34
9	Is there any institute of Rajasthan in first 200 HEI of world ranking? (Yes for more than 1)	8	86
10	Is your institution scores a NIRF ranking?	55	40

### III. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

#### III.1 Case Study

The results of case study reported in Table 1 clearly indicates that there is an urgent need to spread the information regarding ranking system effective worldwide in order to explain and understand the quality assurance system as well as to enhance the quality in HEI. Top ranked institutions of 2018 are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Top QS ranked institutions of the world year 2018**

Name of Institute	Rank
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	1
Stanford University	2
Harvard University	3
California Institute of Technology	4
University of Cambridge	5
University of Oxford	6
University College London	7
Imperial College London	8
University of Chicago	9
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich	10

#### III.2 Quality assessment approaches

In general following approaches have been taken into account for quality assessment;

1. Self-evaluation/ Self-study: Real quality that is sustainable is one that is assessed by self. This is how we can know what our strengths and limitations are. The self-study report required for submission at the time of assessment for accreditation should be self-critical and reflective. Selfevaluation can be an indicator for continuous improvement and the first step for ensuring quality.
2. Best practices benchmarking: Benchmarking is a common topic in business, education and industry. It is defined as a continuous systematic process for evaluating the products, services and work process of organisation that are recognized as representing the best practices for the purpose of organizational improvements.
3. External quality monitoring: The process of external quality monitoring or assessment includes external stakeholders such as; employers, professional bodies and the general public about the legitimate quality of a higher education institution. For which a peer team is associated for external quality monitoring, which critically analyses the self-study report and the quality provisions based on established criteria.
4. Market driven approach: The issue of quality in education has become so important these days that rankings of educational institutions have become a huge business. However, most of these rankings depend on the 'voices of the alumni' and thus are perception based.

#### III.3 Quality assessment tools

Quality assessment is a conscious and planned process; therefore, some sorts of tools are required for it. However, the following eight tools are highly required for quality assessment.

1. Process flow chart: A flow chart is a symbolic/pictorial representation of the stages in a process. It records the series of activities and events in a process in such a way that communication becomes instant and clear. It is extremely used when a problem needs systematic approach.
2. Graphs: These are the tools to present information in a concise and graphical manner. There are different types of graphs that can be used to represent data for decision-making, like; histograms, pie charts, line graphs etc.
3. Pareto analysis: It is a tool used to prioritize problems for solutions. It says that 80% of problems stem from 20% of the causes. So, it is also called as 80-20 rule. Thus, by focusing 20% we can improve 80%.
4. Fish-bone diagram: It is also known as cause-and-effect diagram. It is a tool for analysis and open thinking in problem solving. In a diagrammatic representation, the effect is placed at the right end of a broad arrow. Major causes are recorded on either side of the effect line and minor causes as clusters.
5. Scatter diagram: This is a method to determine the relationship between the cause and effect in a pictorial manner. It shows pattern of association or otherwise of two variables/parameters.
6. Check sheets: These are often used as check lists or tally charts to ensure that some tasks in a process are done and measure how well they have been done. It ensures that everything is in order according to the design. So, some says that this is a quality control device by which we can weed out products that lack some checkpoints.
7. Control charts: Checklists are primarily used in statistical process control operations in manufacturing and product development to ensure that all the outputs are within an acceptable limit of variations.
8. Brainstorming: It is one of the most fundamental processes of generating ideas and solutions for problem solving. It involves participation of the stakeholders and thus teamwork is the hallmark of the process. This involves knowledgeable and experienced participants who share their ideas on a problem in a free-flowing manner without restrictions.

### III.4 Benefits of Accreditation and or Ranking

The following major benefits, are derived from the process of quality assessment and accreditation.

- Helps the institution to know its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities through an informed review.
- Helps in identifying internal areas of planning and resource allocation.
- Enhances collegiality on the campus.
- The outcome of the process provides the funding agencies with objective and systematic database for performance funding.
- Initiates institution into innovative and modern methods of pedagogy.
- Gives the institution a new sense of direction and identity.
- Provides the society with reliable information on the quality of education offered by the institution.

In view of these benefits, academics by and large concede that the pressures of mass higher education and financial constraints have changed the conditions of higher education sufficiently that formal externally validated methods of quality control must be a central component of higher education systems.

### IV CONCLUSIONS

Higher education in our country is at cross roads, at one end there is high demand for access to higher education, and on the other quality in higher education is questioned. In order to survive in this globalized competitive world, all higher education institutions should play special attention to quality in higher education. However, NAAC has taken a number of steps to promote the quality in higher education through self-assessment, peer review, best practice benchmarking, brainstorming etc. At the end, it can be critically examined that quality assurance in the academic system is utmost important. The lack of information and or knowledge regarding the world wide ranking system is another problem to enhance the quality education in different states including Rajasthan. A series of state level informative seminars, workshops and demonstrations are suggested to improve this situation.

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