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Quality and Quality Assurance Approaches in the Context of Teacher Education: Questions yet to be Answered

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ABSTRACT

Quality assurance with its multiplying manifestations around the world has become an integral part of education. The institutions of education, throughout the world, are continuously striving to achieve and/or improve quality. Quality of education itself stems from the quality of teacher education institutions and programs. There is dire need to ensure, improve and assure the quality of teacher education. But this phenomenon is not as simple as it sounds to be because for many teacher education institutions the problem of quality arises from the very beginning while determining the clear conceptual meaning of 'quality'. This paper examines different perceptions of quality, particularly as it applies to teacher education. Models of quality, in this context, are briefly reviewed and challenges of quality assurance for teacher education institutions in Pakistan are enumerated. The overall purpose is to deliberate upon the practices and the models of accreditation, so that improvement in the procedural implementation by National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) may be suggested. Major approaches to quality assurance are brought out. Systems and practices of accreditation and recognition and essential characteristics of each are highlighted. Some recent global initiatives and local experiences are discussed with the view to present a comprehensive picture of this vital phenomenon and its multiple dimensions.

KEYWORDS: Quality assurance, Accreditation, Teacher Education, Challenges

1. INTRODUCTION

Assuring quality is not a thing to do with a one-click; quality enhancement is a gradual and cyclic process. After the execution of the cycle, the worth may be judged as per standard specified and the new measures may be adopted to improve the overall performance of the program. But this may be the one aspect towards the quality assurance. There is a number of different concepts and procedures for the quality improvement and assurance of the programs and the institutions. These

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concepts, procedures, and practices are being explored towards the purpose of quality assurance mechanism for teacher education programs in Pakistan.

Broadly speaking two major mechanisms are common in almost all the definitions of the quality and quality assurance models being utilized across the globe namely: Internal mechanism and external mechanism for quality improvement. In the following lines, the different concepts of the quality and quality assurance in perspective of teacher education are presented with the purpose to develop the context for the readers.

CONCEPT OF QUALITY AND TEACHER EDUCATION

No institution providing teacher education today can dare to ignore quality concerns as for long time survival and competitiveness of the institutions; it has become inevitable for them to revitalize the quality of their services, redefine their policies and practices and to measure satisfaction level of their stakeholders. Though the quality was and will always be very important for teacher educators like all the other organizations but its significance in present era has become crystal clear as discussed by Vroeijenstijn (1995) cited in Newton (2007) 'The concept of quality is not new: it has always been part of the academic tradition. It is the outside world that now emphasizes the need for attention to quality. Kheradia (2011) support these views by elaborating that:

'The concept of "Quality" with a Big "Q" was an offshoot of the growing quality crisis of the 1980s when "quality" (with a small "q" that was solely restricted to manufacture goods) acquired a broader...meaning.' (p, 403)

The quality drive across the globe as at first put the institutions under pressure then gradually it is becoming the part of the academic process. Particularly the last two decades demonstrated increased demand for tertiary education, technological advancement, the emergence of the knowledge economy, and higher aspirations of stakeholders along with the competition at the national and international level, resulting in the transformation of teacher education institutions (Damme, 2001; Abukari and Corner, 2010).

Advancement in technology and competition across the globe demand increased focus towards the quality enhancement and quality assurance. Law (2010) argues that the

subject of Quality Assurance in higher education has attained a special focus throughout the world because of the increasing demands for this sector to meet the challenges of globalization and to respond to ever-changing aspirations and expectations of the communities regarding their development into new knowledge-based societies. In this regard, the quality of the teacher education programs may be the major indicator towards the ensuring the quality at learners level. The need for the quality assurance compels the educators to conceptualize the terms and then compare it with the existing practices, that may lead to the revitalizing the quality and the accreditation process and mechanisms used by the teacher education institutions.

Education services being intangible are not as easily measurable as it sounds to be an outcome of the education is in form of the transformation in knowledge, characteristics, skills, and behavior of the individuals (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, and Fitsilis, 2010, World Bank, 2003). Newton (2007) also cited McConville, (1999) and Green (1994) described quality as a philosophical concept and believed that no definition of the term quality exists; you only know it when you find it. Tam (2001) viewed quality as a multidimensional phenomenon having multiple meanings on the basis of how the phenomenon is perceived. So it is to note here that despite the growing concern and common commitment of teacher education institutions across the world to assure quality, quality as a concept is multi-faceted; contextual and value-laden and is, therefore still frequently misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented by many of the academics cited in Tsinidou et al, (2010) and Law (2010).

Quality in the context of education is taken as related to the aims, mission, and vision of the institutions and in this regard, the definition of quality in terms of fitness for purpose or effectiveness in institutional goal achievement is quoted. According to Green, (1994) cited in Odhiambo, (2011), 'A high quality institution is one that clearly states its mission (or purpose) and is efficient and effective in meeting the goals that it has set itself' (p,15). It indicates that quality is a matter related to the internal process of the institution, therefore it is perceived as something which can be and should be assured, managed and improved (Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010). Internal mechanism improvement should be based on the internal audit of the institution and the institution

may disintegrate it into program wise or the section wise. The standards aligned with the mission and the vision of the institution may help to set the stage for the quality derives.

Quality is a complex phenomenon having multiple dimensions, but assurance of the quality is a problem that may be dealt with implementing both internal and external mechanism. Here we had tried to explore the quality assurance and accreditation mechanism of teacher education in Pakistan. The purpose is to highlight the alignment of the international procedures with the procedure followed by the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) in Pakistan.

Many factors may be discussed to maintain the quality derives in teacher education program, According to Coates, (2005) Students require exact information about educational quality to be able to decide between different courses and institutions, Sufficient information is also needed by academics and institutional administrators to enable them to monitor and improve the practices and policies as well as the courses and programs and the acceptance of the graduates by the employers may be the major factors that institutions have to consider for the stimulation of its quality derive. Institutions want necessary information about their quality to benchmark and promote their performance. Along with these parties Governments and other national and international agencies call for the authentic and sufficient information for getting assistance in deciding about funding, accountability and policy formulation. Due to these and many other factors, 'quality assurance has become part of the fabric of many higher education systems' (p.25). Commission of the European Communities, (2009) pointed out that globalization, integration of economies and increased professional and academic mobility, necessitate the recognition of credentials across the countries. The "borderless" system of education has made quality assurance ever more important. Kettunen, (2008) argues that Quality Assurance (QA) refers to a holistic approach aiming to provide a philosophical and theoretical framework for the improvement of higher education institutions output. He quotes the definition of quality assurance proposed by Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, according to this definition term quality assurance encapsulates all the processes, procedures and systems employed by the institutions of higher education to safeguard and enhance the quality of its programs and activities

(Ambreen 2012).

Odhiambo, (2011) elaborated the concept of quality assurance in a comprehensive way as the systematic procedures intended to monitor and enhance quality. It provides the stakeholders with a guarantee that the programs, courses, and products in form of the graduates meet defined standards. He believes that quality assurance may be taken as an instrument for the continuous improvement of the system, installing accountability and allowing compatibility with other systems of higher education. Therefore, the quality assurance mechanism of the teacher education institution of Pakistan will be explored and specifically, the procedure and mechanism employed by the NACTE will be discussed in the light of indicators and the factors identified by the different researchers.

As we have seen that many of the researchers are of the view that quality is not a matter of fact it's rather a procedure to follow both as an internal mechanism and external mechanism. One can't deny the significance of any of the mechanism. Many models address the quality and quality assurance mechanisms we have tried to highlight few of them along with its utilization in the teacher education institutions of Pakistan.

QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACHES AND MODELS

Quality assurance drive is not new but recently the universities of Australia particularly made noteworthy improvement in developing better, more comprehensive and well-integrated models and approaches to quality assurance. In many cases, approaches to quality assurance that are off-the shelf approaches have proved to be effective and successful in different areas of institutions (for example using ISO 9000 standards for students' admission). However, recent developments have suggested that for the provision of better quality education programmes in colleges and universities, these approaches are not much suitable. Tailored, multi-faceted types of approaches that are designed to particularly address the issues of complex educational environments are obviously required. Despite these debates and developments, many teacher education institutions across the globe, still do not have specific but comprehensive; well-thought-out and systematic quality assurance programs, policies and mechanisms. Considering the importance of this issue Boyle and Bowden (1997) identified important features like

Vision, Primary purpose; Management and Leadership; Human Resources; Customer-focus; Evaluation; Continual quality improvement and Structures as well as policy and procedures (Boyle & Bowden,1997).

In a net shell, most of the quality assurance models and approaches focus the same elements. Therefore these foci for quality assurance must be considered as priority agenda for teacher education institutions. But for the implementation of the model, one must consider the enabling conditions for the effective QA procedures. The conditions are frequently identified in the variety of literature related to QA as well as organizational developments.

1. A comprehensive quality assurance approach must be considered as imperative and vital element.
2. The leaders and top management should be highly committed to developing quality assurance policy, procedures and an organizational culture of quality.
3. Sufficient resources should be allocated and utilized for the procedures of quality assurance and QA should be taken as a fruitful investment, and not at some cost with little or no return.
4. Quality assurance should be considered as a superordinate target; quality assurance policy establishes different approaches leading towards actions and processes, not the reverse.
5. The major aim of quality assurance must be the organizations' prime purpose and focus should be on providing highest possible quality education programs (students' learning).
6. Quality assurance approaches must be considered as an inclusive and systemic procedure.
7. Quality assurance and planning should be considered as inter-connected, this means that planning should be considered as an essential and significant front-end component in the process of quality assurance at all levels.
8. Individuals need to be empowered through training and support to enable QA approaches to progress and goals to be achieved.
9. Quality assurance agencies at institutional level must employ knowledge of latest good practices in the field.
10. A key group of experts must be established to have a responsibility regarding quality assurance policy and practices. The leader of this group must have almost the same procedure and level of appointment as the leaders of other key groups in the organization.

In order to provide an enabling and conducive environment for the implementation of

the quality drive, there are some principles that may be followed.

General enabling conditions and foci as described above lead towards the number of key principles as a part of the model for EQA (Bowden & Boyle, 1995).

1. The major focus of the organizational quality policy should be on continuous quality improvement.
2. The continuous quality improvement relates to the quality of students' learning as well as the potential processes and elements affecting students' learning.
3. All the major components that affect the quality of students' learning are basically interrelated in a systematic and an integrated way to provide a comprehensive quality assurance framework.
4. An essential condition for quality assurance is an effective evaluation process to generate information and evidence for decisions and actions related to quality assurance and quality improvement.
5. The main job for quality assurance should lie with the group having responsibility for achieving specific quality-related goals: like the goal of providing highest possible quality educational programmes (Bowden & Boyle, 1995; Bowden, 1992).
6. Accountability is an essential consequence of quality assurance, but this should not be the primary focus of QA.

These principles and the enabling conditions discussed above lead to the primary focus of the paper that quality is affected by both internal and external factors; therefore there is a need to address this issues by adopting the procedures for both internal and external program practices and the components.

NACTE accreditation process focus on self-report and the visit of the external team, therefore there is need to analyze that to what extent these two mechanisms are meeting the goals specified. We have considered the following general methods for the quality assurance then will analyze its alignment with the NACTE procedure, with the purpose that whether the process followed by the NACTE is inconsistent with the global approaches to the quality drive for teacher education programs, and how the practice may be improved?

Generally, three major methods are applied to assure the quality of an Institution: that are accreditation, audit, and assessment. Some view assessment and audit of

evaluation and accreditation and evaluation differ in terms of their perspectives. Accreditation refers to the judgment regarding of an institution or program about its capability and status for meeting a threshold standard based on which it can qualify for certain status. Kis, (2005) cited Woodhouse, (1999) stated that to obtain accreditation has important implications for the institution itself (for example permission to operate); and/or for its students (for example eligibility for grants). Accreditation involves a comprehensive examination of the mission, procedures, resources, and programs of the institution.

While accreditation is in form of the binary judgment in terms of yes or no, assessment goes a set forward and provides graded judgments about the status of quality (Dill, 2000 cited in Kis, 2005). The result of an assessment is a quantitative evaluation, a grade in numeric, descriptive or literal form. Programme assessment is one of the most commonly used methods whereas institutional assessment is comparatively less widespread and 22% of the European agencies use it regularly (ENQA, 2003, cited in Kis, 2005). Whereas Audit is done to confirm the extent to which the institution achieves its own objectives whether explicit or implicit (Woodhouse, 1999, cited in Kis, 2005). There is a long procedure to do the audit of the institution but here we should remain focused on accreditation that also contains a bit of audit in it.

Biggs, (2002) cited in Raban, (2007) classifies the approaches of quality assurance of higher education into two major types namely retrospective approach and prospective approach. Retrospective quality assurance is more a managerial approach rather than an academic one. This approach takes accountability on high priority and the procedures used to assure quality are top-down and bureaucratic, set; communicated and implemented by top management. On the other hand, prospective quality assurance approach is equivalent to what an individual does as a reflective practitioner. It is mainly based on 'bottom-up' enhancement strategy, in which procedures to assure quality are initiated at the grass root level.

Another categorization of the approaches used for quality assurance in higher education is in terms of summative versus formative approach. Current formative approaches include: a) accreditation of excellence; b) minimum standard accreditation; c)

internal and external audits of quality assurance processes; d) supportive evaluation; e) a comparative evaluation of disciplines; f) benchmarking between institutions, and g) rankings. On the other hand summative approaches like accreditation are often tricky to apply as they use the criterion that is mostly proxies for quality, and as these approaches result in overall judgment, institutions and programs try to “put on their best face,” as a result weaknesses and deficiencies are concealed and plan to remove them are ignored (Worldbank, 2010).

Lim, (2009) argued that most of the higher education institutions adopt a certain approach to quality assurance named as the instrumental approach. According to this approach, quality is seen as fitness to purpose, provided that this purpose accords with those standards of accountability that are publically and legally accepted in that community, and the quality assurance system is considered effective if it enables the institution to achieve this purpose.

Though there exist some variations, the basic system of quality assurance under the instrumental approach entails the institution to set out its mission, design and implement strategies to achieve that mission, use performance indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) to determine the effectiveness of strategies and to implement corrective actions. Lim,(2009) believed that it is not easy to prove that this self-evaluating system will result in better quality, therefore he suggested three ways of assuring quality, the study was based on quality assurance system of the Vocational Training Council of Hong Kong, but Lim, (2009) stated that its findings would have relevance for other educational institutions. The first way of his suggested system is an a priori method. This refers to use data of quasi-quality measures taken by the institution in one document so that to enable different sections of the institution to see how their seemingly discrete activities are linked and how these contribute to quality efforts. But even a well-conducted a priori assessment is not sufficient and requires empirical support. The second method of the system is an assessment method aiming to combine a priori reasoning and empirical evidence, which is the stepwise backtracking method. The third method of the proposed approach is the external evaluation method, referring to use some independent quality assurance organization to evaluate quality assurance system of

the institution. This independent organization would be a part of national quality assurance framework.

If we keenly observe the procedure followed by the NACTE for the accreditation of teacher education programs it is aligned with the above-stated methods. At first, the NACTE has specified the standards for accreditation which are aligned with the National Professional Standards for Teachers. Then there is a self-evaluation mechanism that may be an alternative name of the internal audit. In the third phase, there are zero visits that help an organization to assess the quality and identify the baseline for the institution for a particular teacher education program.

External quality assurance approach was also proposed by Billing, (2004). He quoted a study conducted by Frazer, (1997) in 38 European countries. His study confirmed the range of the major purposes, external evaluation system serves with regard to quality assurance of higher education. These purposes ranging from accountability to improvement were primarily observed by Vroeijenstijn (1995) as cited in Billing, (2004). Billing, (2004) highlighted the major reasons to set up external evaluation system comprised the following key elements.

1. Assisting the institutions of higher education to make improvements.
2. Accountability to all stakeholders.
3. Changes in laws and regulations (for example increased autonomy of institutions of higher education)
4. Informing employers and clientele about standards
5. Assisting government and other agencies to make decisions regarding funding

MODELS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Ever increasing pressures on institutions of higher education resulted in the evolution of comprehensive approaches to quality assurance. More efforts in this regard are being made and are still required to propose the approaches based on the models that are flexible and comprehensive enough to be fitted to multifaceted dynamics and various cultures of these institutions. Models of quality assurance that are informed by major principles; values and vision of the institutions are required to recognize the key elements that shape quality in higher educational environments, and to conceive the integration of those as well as the ways of setting up new integrations. The major question is that

whether the approach and the procedure followed by NACTE is an inconsistency with the models and the approaches being followed by the institutions around the globe.

Beck (1999) argues that theoretical models help to clarify the phenomenon as they provide a framework to visualize or conceptualize the phenomenon. It identifies the elements, the linkage that connects the elements and the principles that underlies the elements and their linkages. In other words, a theoretical model uses the known to parallel the unknowns that are necessary to be understood to comprehend the phenomenon. In this regard, a Model for Comprehensive Educational Quality Assurance (EQA) by Boyle and Bowden, (1994) distills some key ideas from the literature on quality assurance and the culture and practice in education to propose a model for educational quality assurance (EQA). The model, they believed is evolutionary, in the sense that (1) it is built on integrated ideas from practice, research and case evidence; (2) it amalgamates the key elements of educational environments which affect the climate, processes, and outcomes, but which are usually not directly linked to the strategies or systems of quality assurance; and (3) it has a persistent quality improvement in students' learning at its heart as its primary objective with accountability being an important consequence.

The proposed model is based upon major enabling conditions, fundamental principles and a set of interrelated key elements. The overall perspective assumes that all concerned groups in an institution must develop QA approaches best suited to achieve their objectives. EQA model is in overview form depicted the integration of principal elements including the followings:

Principal Output Elements:

- Quality enhancement (based on evidence) in student learning
- Evidence regarding accountability requirements, knowledge of quality.

Key Process Elements:

- Vision, objectives and strategic targets.
- Program quality assurance process and system.
- Faculty development program.
- Assessment of student learning
- Faculty evaluation system.

Key Support Platform:

- Support groups, policies, structures, and resources.

Viewing the integrated form of the elements of the model is crucial to comprehend the overall quality assurance system. This model is aligned with the NACTE standards as it addresses 'Assessment of students' learning,' and 'faculty development, form the vital outcome element that is 'Quality and CQI in student learning'. Whereas 'Faculty development' is taken as a critical determinant of 'Program QA', similarly 'Faculty evaluation' and 'Faculty development' need to be interlinked. Boyle and Bowden (1994) argued that both in design practice, these elements need to be interconnected. Which we can witness in the practice of NACTE as it suggests measures for the improvement of the quality rather than providing the final judgment. NACTE has also highlighted the importance of faculty development along with minimum criteria for the recruitment of the faculty. For example, activities for faculty development should be designed strategically to lead to program quality improvement and initiatives regarding program improvement need to ensure faculty development.

Student learning is the key focus of the model, whereas procedure for accreditation followed by the NACTE has also focused the classroom interaction and

formative assessment that lead towards the student learning enhancement.

Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, (2002) believed that internal dynamics led towards the loss credibility of first-generation models of quality assessment and assurance and external factors like internationalization made it realize the need to design a new generation of the systems of quality assurance. In a conceptual paper on, 'Systemic Adaptation to a Changing Environment: Towards a Next Generation of Quality Assurance Models, they schematized the quality assurance developments in the context of education by introducing a model called phase model of QA describing the effects of external and internal dynamics. They also analyzed that model from argumentative policy inquiry perspective.

A critical view of external and internal dynamics of the systems of quality assurance led to the introduction of a new analytical phase model of quality assurance in education systems. Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, (2002) argued that evaluation in institutions took place at different stages and results in learning of the actors involved in this process. All the actors including staff and leadership through participating in evaluation learn according to their roles. But learning, irrespective of its connotations being positive, is not a positive development every time. When the first round of evaluation is successful resulting in 'easy wins', a second similar round of evaluations would not add considerably in learning nor in quality improvement. So there is a need to design quality assurance systems in a way that they have an inbuilt facility for continuous learning and change. In other words, systems of quality assurance should have the ability to evolve and a delicate balance between accountability and improvement is maintained. Model for Systematic Adoption of Changing Environment is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Phases in quality assurance systems

1. Problems	2. Role of quality assurance	3. Information base	4. Nature of external review
Phase 1: Serious doubts about educational standards.	a) Identifying sub-standard educational programmes.	Descriptive reports. Performance indicators.	Summative; accreditation, checking standards. Report to state.
Phase 2: Doubts about the efficiency of the higher education system and/or institutions.	a) Public accountability. b) Creating quality awareness in institutions.	Descriptive/strategic reports ('self-selling') covering: a) performance, b) procedures.	Ranking of institutions. One report to state and institutions. Identifying good practices.
Phase 3: Doubt about innovation capacity and quality assurance capacity of institutions.	Stimulate self-regulation capacity of institutions. Public accountability.	Self-evaluation reports about: a) procedures, b) performance.	Audit report to: – the institution – the state
Phase 4: Need to stimulate sustainable quality culture in institutions.	Split between: – improvement based on self-regulation; – public accountability.	Split between: – self-evaluative reports about processes and strategies based on SWOT and benchmarking; – self-reporting about performance indicators.	Split between: – audit report to the institution; – verifying data to be incorporated in public databases.
New challenge: Decreasing transparency across higher education systems.	Market regulation, i.e., informing clients (students, employers).	Performance indicators about 'products' (knowledge and skills of graduates).	Publication of comparative performance indicators. Standardised testing of graduates?

The proposed phase model, based on two principles of internal and external dynamics, has embedded idea that different types of problems in systems of higher education are best addressed by different types of quality assurance systems. Table 01 presentation of the model exhibits that occurring problems in the teacher education system are in a hierarchy which goes parallel to the concept evolution for quality assurance models of higher education. Viewed from another angle; external and internal dynamics act together to affect the development of quality assurance systems (Ambreen 2012).

The table depicts that the role of the external quality assurance is determined by defining problems. There is a possibility for the institutions to refrain from being really evaluative and they prepare so-called self-evaluative reports to obtain maximum assessment outcomes. Being acquainted with 'language of evaluation' and with the group, dynamics is an essential pre-requisite for genuine self-evaluation. External reviews also vary in different phases starting with summative reviews in Phase 1 like accreditation of

programs, to the ranking of institutions and audit reports.

This model is being followed by the NACTE by focusing the self-assessment and zero visits as pre-requisite for initiating the formal accreditation process. Quality improvement is not a matter of fact rather it's a procedure that is cyclic as indicated in the model. The NACTE procedure starting from the Zero visit continues to the formal visit of the NACTE team, where the purpose is to collect the evidence for the practices being followed. In next phase, these are quantified to serve dual purpose one to assign a rating and second the more important is to suggest measures for the improvement, whereas the next phase of the accreditation will be carried out on the basis of these suggestions. So we are in a position to say that NACTE truly follows the philosophy that improving quality is a continuous and cyclic process. The next model also focuses on the continuous improvement rather than judging the worth.

Quality assurance with a focus on measurement, regulatory control, and external accountability, leads towards the identification of quality issues in teacher education institutions but cannot guarantee improvements neither does necessarily create an attitude in personnel of the teacher education, which is focused on quality enhancement. Gosling & D'Andrea (2001) argued that by using student evaluation, peer review of teaching, curriculum development and assessment of learning support quality improvements can be achieved.

Inherited to this idea Gosling & D'Andrea (2001) proposed an integrated model of educational development is a model that integrates the improvement of teaching and learning with the processes of quality monitoring. The model is based upon the notion that educational development encompasses development in three areas, learning development, academic development and quality development. Gosling & D'Andrea (2001) while describing the model, state that the range of activities performed by educational development office would create a 'quality loop'.

As a current common practice, responsibilities regarding curriculum development, supporting students' learning, and quality assurance, are separated consequently allowing little linkage between the offices concerning these key areas (Harvey, 1998 cited in Gosling & D'Andrea, 2001). The proposed educational

development model would create the links between the process of curriculum development & implementation and system of quality assurance by creating a mutually respectful environment. In such an environment it would be possible to design a curriculum that offers guidance and advice regarding assurance of quality of the developed curriculum. For this purpose, a professional approach can be adopted at the time of official approval.

Gosling & D'Andrea, (2001) believed that this integrated model has numerous benefits for the institution, faculty members, and personnel and most importantly for the students. It would create the opportunity for discussion between quality assurance office and educational developers. Consequently, there would be less duplication of efforts and a holistic understanding regarding the relationship between quality assurances and learning enhancement. In addition to this, it provides students with the opportunities to learn in a supportive learning community. They view that though to extend recording practice is desirable, but the major emphasis of the model is on practice rather than documentation. This model does not impose a methodology or a strategy rather allows the practitioners to decide the appropriate procedures to achieve their goals.

Fig. 2 Holistic Educational Development (Source Gosling and D'Andrea, 2001)

This model focuses on the cyclic process of quality assurance, which is aligned with the NACTE practices, but there is a need to develop the comprehensive procedures

for the implementation of the cycles within the three areas as identified in the model.

Another model for the quality assurance is 5Qs model, Zineldin, Akdag and Vasicheva (2011) examined the major factors that affect students' satisfaction level regarding quality of the higher education institution they, in this regard presented a new quality assurance model (5Qs) based on functional, technical, infrastructure, atmosphere and interaction of educational institutions. Zineldin et al (2011) cited Gronroos, 2000 who stated that service quality is usually attributed to two dimensions: functional quality and technical quality. Though functional and technical qualities are important, they mainly indicate the concerns of managers. The interaction between the service provider and the receiver is vital to determine customers' satisfaction and is highly influenced by the atmosphere. Quality in higher education not only depends upon the quality of academic staff but also includes the infrastructure, the administrative staff and the atmosphere of the academia. No empirical support is there regarding the role of atmosphere, infrastructure and interaction in student perception of quality and satisfaction. Zineldin et al (2011) expanded the conventional technical–functional quality models into a new framework of five quality dimensions in the context of higher education. Their 5Qs (Quality of the object, Quality of the processes, Quality of infrastructure, Quality of interaction and Quality of atmosphere) are being considered in the standards of NACTE which are given in the later section of this paper.

Zineldin et al (2011) provided a theoretical and conceptual base to understand the complex and multidimensional nature of the quality of teacher education and provided an evidence-based framework to help institutions of teacher education to redesign and re-engineer their policies and procedures of quality assurance. This leads towards the re-engineering and reconsidering the procedures being followed. The major concern is how data and the observation collected through the visits of the NACTE team may be utilized for the improvement in the light of 5Qs. As a final word, Kheradia (2011) highlighted that the credit regarding the evolution of quality concepts is due to the twentieth century whereas the twenty-first century calls for developing and maintaining the systems of quality assurance across the sector with revolutionary zeal. Another model TALEVAS has the potential to address many issues of quality assurance. This model may also be

adopted or adapted in the milieu of teacher education to come up with working vision and effective processes regarding quality assurance.

It has been explored that whichever approach or model is considered it is aligned with the NACTE standards, the following table highlight the alignment of the models with the NACTE standards and sub standards.

NACTE Standard	Comprehensive Educational Quality Assurance Model	Model for Systematic Adoption of Changing Environment	Integrated Model of Educational Development
Conceptual Framework	Mission and Vision	Mission statement	
Curriculum and Instruction	Key Process Elements	Internal Dynamics	Learning Development
Assessment and Evaluation System	Principal Output Elements	Both Internal and External Dynamics	Quality Development
Physical Infrastructure, Academic Facilities, and Learning Support	Key Support Platform	Internal Dynamics	Academic Development
Finance and Management	Key Support Platform	Both Internal and External Dynamics	Quality Development
Research and Scholarship	Key Support Platform	Both Internal and External Dynamics	Quality Development
Community Links and outreach			

Table 2: Alignment of Standards with Models of Quality Assurance

The table 2 indicates that NACTE standards are more comprehensive than any of the single model; NACTE has given weight-age to the research and scholarship as well as community Link and outreach, which are not addressed by these models explicitly. We might disagree with the context in which these models are developed but the common concern is a quality improvement, none of these claim that these are the fix feature for the model implementation, mean there is a room for improvement in each of the model. This can only be explored after the utilization of the model. Its effectiveness may vary from situation to situation. After analyzing these models there is need to go through the NACTE procedure and highlight the areas where there is room for the improvement.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The major purpose of the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education in Pakistan is to accredit the teacher education programs either in the processor being

launched by the degree awarding institutions or universities or by the affiliated institutions. The council is evaluating the programs as per standards and indicators identified. The procedure for the accreditation of the program is quite comprehensive and comprised three major phase's namely self assessment, zero visits, and the NACTE team visit.

There is a number of the tool being utilized by the NACTE team to collect both qualitative and quantitative evidence from the stakeholders. Although the procedure is well established and it produces the number and rank of the institutional teacher education program, but still there are some questions to be addressed. The first question of worth considering is that how the qualitative and quantitative evidence collected through different tools are being merged and what are the other feasible ways to do it? Secondly, the weight-age given to each standard for the establishment of the scores is appropriate and balanced. At third stage to what extent the rubric for the scoring of the indicators is appropriate and feasible. Whether the scores have enough range so that help to discriminate among the quality of the programs being offered by the institutions?

There is no simple answer to these questions, only the persons involved in the process are better able to address these questions, therefore it is recommended that there is a need to conduct an assessment of the Accreditation process study. We also recommend that the scores for each standard may be separated and cyclic evaluation of each standard may be performed after a reasonable interval of time as the quality assurance is a cyclic process.

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