

ISSN 2278-1811

Indexed in UGC –CARE List (Group-I)

ARTHSHAstra INDIAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS & RESEARCH

Volume: 13

ISSUE No: 4(03)
(QUARTERLY)

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024

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“AN INSIGHT INTO STAKEHOLDERS AND REGULATORS OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION”

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Abstract: One of the biggest obstacles to initiatives to increase quality in higher education is defining the consumer. Even while HEIs' most important and well-known clients are students, numerous other stakeholders serve as clients in several operational domains. This study discusses different stakeholders and accreditation bodies of management education. It also highlights the dilemma the institutions face for accreditation whether to go for NAAC or NBA? The current paper reflects the status of NBA accreditation in India and Maharashtra as well as Region Wise Accreditation Status (NAAC) in Maharashtra.

Keywords: HEI, Customers, Stakeholders, Management Education, NAAC, NBA.

Introduction:

It is critical for HEIs to look for what stakeholders consider to be the most significant measures of quality because their influence can improve or harm an institution's reputation and affect student enrollment. Students prefer good teaching and learning. Employers are more interested in graduates' research abilities as well as their involvement in society and industry. staff is knowledgeable about the accreditation process (Al-Amri et al., 2020). Deeper introspection and sincere communication with the key stakeholders are the only ways to find salvation. Fundamentally, the problem with our higher education system is a complete lack of communication and trust (Chaudhuri & Islamia, 2020). Different stakeholders have varied interests. Prior to establishing goals and strategies for each of these stakeholders, HEIs must first identify these stakeholders and their needs. The regulating body for the HEIs is All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Objectives:

1. To identify the stakeholders or customers of HEI.
2. To know the status on NBA Accreditation in India and Maharashtra.
3. To know Region Wise Accreditation Status (NAAC) in Maharashtra

Definition Difficulties: Who is the Customer of HEI?

Question often arises who is the customer of HEI? Can students be called as customers? Pereira and Da Silva (2003) stated that HEI customers can either be external (i.e., those who "receive the outputs of these systems") or internal (i.e., those who "work in these systems in the process"). Because of this, internal customers in the process of teaching-learning are different, where teacher is responsible for providing knowledge to the students; hence he/she is the primary customer in 'teaching process'. Students receive this knowledge and hence are the primary customers in 'learning process.'

Defining the customer of higher education is a major roadblock in quality improvement efforts. Though students are the most primary and prominent customers of HEIs, there are many other stakeholders who function as customers in different operational areas (Table- 1) (Quinn et al., 2009).

Sr. No.	Group	Customer Characteristics
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1	Students	Pay for a service, receive educational guidance (service), make use of office services, and buy ancillary services (hostel, canteen, etc.).
2	Staff/ Faculty Members	Control certain aspects of the design of goods and services while using some.
3	Academic Community	Benefit from the research done by faculty members.
4	Parents	Choose (or aid in choosing) a service provider, pay for the service, and serve as the main points of contact in various service interactions.
5	Employers	Purchase the finished product of the service process, occasionally offer financial support, and offer design guidance.
6	Accreditation Bodies	Control the design of the product or service.
7	State and Federal Governments	Provision of funds for University; Some control over product/service design
8	Others (Alumni/ Competitors/ Society etc.)	Ex-students who have received education; Institutions in same industry and beneficiaries of educational operations of an institution.

Along with the competing customers mentioned above, Quinn et.al (2009) stated that several areas of university operations cater to various customers. For instance, hostel facilities are primarily provided only to students. There is little to no interaction or interest from other stakeholders in this area of the university. There are certain internal and external customers for the administrative areas of the university. For instance, the university's office of sponsored research caters to research sponsors and governmental organizations as well as its own internal customers, including graduate students, teachers, and staff.

The primary beneficiaries of educational operations of an institution are certainly students; hence they should be treated as customers. They should be the focus of HEI to enhance the service quality of an institution (Yeo, 2008).

Various Stakeholders in Management Education

Depending on how narrowly or broadly we use the term, there are some slight differences in opinions regarding who should be regarded as "stakeholders" in higher education (Beerkens & Udam, 2017). As per traditional definition, a stakeholder is, "any group or person who has the potential to influence or who may be impacted by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Higher education being a public sector; thus, it is obviously distinct from businesses and other profit-making entities. The university serves as both a non-profit institution and a hub for human capital owners. The legitimacy of university existence is based on knowledge innovation of human capital. Colleges and universities themselves, however, are "the links between stakeholders" because they are non-profit institutions. Colleges and universities themselves, however, are "the links between stakeholders" because they are non-profit institutions. HEIs are stakeholder organizations even if the phrase "not for profit" implies that no one owns the organization's ownership, remaining claim, or control; only the legal person whose property right subject is "virtual" owns these things (Quinn et al., 2009). There are many stakeholders in higher education sector. Students have been viewed as important stakeholders or "key customers" in higher education (Abdullah, 2006). Further to this, Kara et al., 2016 states that students being primary customers, their perception on service quality has a major impact on continuous development of HEI (Mattah et al., 2018). Accreditation agencies are the most powerful stakeholder of HEIs (Dobija et al., 2019).

Various Regulators of Management Education

There are two zenith regulators established by the government in India to guarantee the quality of management education. These are University Grants Commission (UGC) & All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The functioning of these regulatory bodies differs from each other. The UGC in real sense deals with traditional education and the AICTE deals with technical education. The UGC recognizes universities and fall under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. AICTE is the statutory body and a national-level committee for technical education which provides alliance to technical programmes like B.Tech, MCA, MBA, M.Tech, etc. UGC gives approval for courses like B.Com. BA, B.Sc, etc. The B-Schools are subject to AICTE regulations regarding governance, responsibility, transparency in admissions and programme administration, infrastructure, students-to-faculty ratio, curriculum, library, laboratories, grant-in-aid for organizing seminars, conferences, faculty development programmes, establishment of entrepreneurship development cells, institute-industry interface cells, etc. Even though standards lay down by the AICTE are not difficult to comply with, but many of the management institutions do not follow it (Rao, 2014).

Various Accreditation Bodies of Management Education

There are various accreditation bodies that conduct an external quality assurance to assess and accredit the country's higher education institutions' and/or programmes' quality.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

The UGC established NAAC in 1994 with its Head Quarter in Bengaluru. Though National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 advocated quality assurance mechanism, only in 1994 was NAAC finally able to come into being. Seven criteria for assessment procedures have been established by NAAC: Curricular aspects, Teaching-learning and evaluation, Research, Consultancy and extension, Infrastructure and learning resources, Student support and progression, Governance and leadership and Innovative practices.

National Board of Accreditation (NBA)

In India, NBA under the aegis of AICTE undertakes quality assurance. NBA was established by the AICTE in 1994 to keep track of technical education quality issues. This was done with a view to provide recommendations regarding issues of quality assurance and quality management in technical education in India as well as to establish guidelines, norms, and standards for the accreditation of technical education programmes and institutions. NBA was established as an independent body on January 7, 2010, with a goal of ensuring the quality and applicability of education, particularly of programmes in professional and technical disciplines. Only programmes in engineering, computer applications, pharmacy, management, hotel management, and catering technology are accredited by NBA. The institutions receive the accreditation for three to five academic years. On June 13, 2014, the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) received permanent signatory status under the Washington Accord. According to the terms of the Washington Accord, only programmes that are delivered by educational institutions that have been approved by the NBA as Tier I Institutions are eligible for recognition by other signatories. The two fundamental goals listed below are accomplished through accreditation:

- i. Support and recommendations for technical institutions to maintain and improve the quality of their services.
- ii. Assurance of quality to diverse stakeholders, including students.

While NAAC accredits regular colleges and universities, NBA accredits technical programmes like management and engineering programmes. MBA programme comes under the purview of AICTE.

Dilemma on NBA or NAAC for MBA

A general scenario in India was that the post graduate management institutions were in dilemma whether to go for NBA or NAAC. This was because the UGC and AICTE stated in the gazettes 2013 and 2014 respectively that NAAC and NBA accreditation is compulsory for universities, autonomous institutions, and affiliated colleges. According to AICTE, by 2022 affiliated colleges

must have NBA of their programmes to be eligible for annual e-approvals, which would make them "unrecognized" (Sharma, 2019).

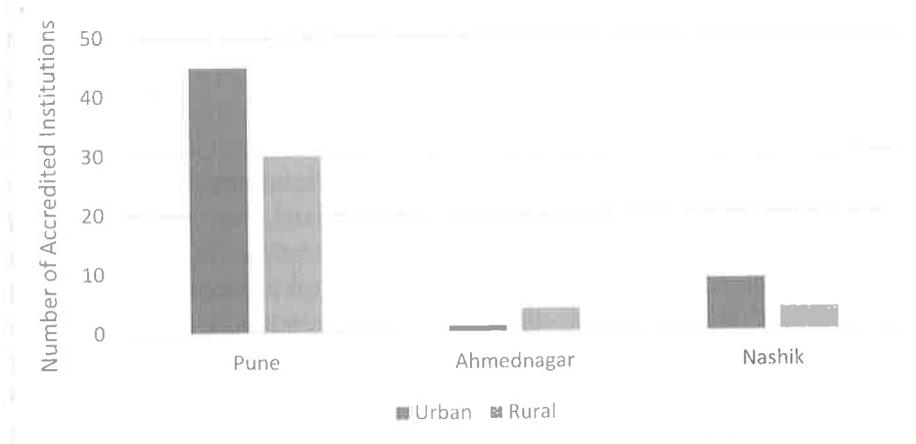
Status on NBA Accreditation in India and Maharashtra

As per the data published on the website of NBA, in India there are altogether only 70 institutions including universities and affiliated colleges offering post graduate management programmes that are accredited by NBA. In Maharashtra, out of these 70, only 12 institutions including universities and affiliated colleges are NBA accredited.

Region Wise Accreditation Status (NAAC) in Maharashtra

If we talk about NAAC accreditations in Maharashtra particularly Pune district as shown below in Graph- 6, many post graduate management institutions affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) got NAAC accredited. The number of the post graduate management institutions in urban and rural area of Pune district was found to be 45 and 30 respectively. Thus, making the number of total accreditations in Pune district to 75 out of 96 which is the total number of post graduate management institutions affiliated to SPPU in Pune district (i.e., 78% accredited). The number of NAAC non- accredited post graduate management institutions affiliated to SPPU in Pune district was 21. In Nagar (5) and Nashik districts (13), out of 32 institutions, only 18 (Rural area- 8 and Urban area- 10) are accredited (56%).

Graph-6 Region Wise Accreditation Status (NAAC) in Maharashtra



(Source- DTE Website- Pune, Ahmednagar & Nashik Region)

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