



STUDENT EVALUATION AND REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Dr. P. S. Aithal* & P. M. Suresh Kumar**

* Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, Pandeshwar,
Mangalore, Karnataka

** Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, Pandeshwar, Mangalore, Karnataka

Abstract:

Innovative evaluation process in higher education system is required to gauge the knowledge and skills acquired at various levels of the programmes. As part of imparting quality higher education for undergraduate and post graduate students, Srinivas Institute of Management Studies (SIMS) developed an education service model for integrated academic support. Backed by the presumption that evaluation is the essence of examination and examination is vital to assessment, the college has instituted a wide range of evaluation processes which runs parallel to curriculum delivery. In this paper, we have analysed the strategies followed by Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, which is affiliated to Mangalore University for ensuring transparency in evaluation and undertaking reforms to strengthen it. The paper discusses details on the major evaluation reforms of the university that the institution has adopted, and the reforms initiated by the institution on its own, details on some of the formative and summative evaluation approaches adopted to measure student achievement which have positively impacted the system, details on the significant improvements made in ensuring rigor and transparency in the internal assessment and weightages assigned, for the overall development of students. The graduate attributes specified by the college/affiliating university and the institutional effort to ensure the attainment of these by the students, and details of the mechanisms for redressal of grievances with reference to evaluation both at the college and University level are also analysed.

Index Terms: Student Evaluation in Higher Education Institution & Reforms in Higher Education

1. Introduction:

The issues related to assessment of teaching, learning and evaluative processes and reforms, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the system are of paramount importance for higher education institution. One of the purposes of evaluation is to provide development-inducing feedback. Further it should also help the teacher to plan appropriate activities for enhancing student performance. The qualitative dimension of evaluation is in its use for enhancing the competence of students. Innovative evaluation process is intended to gauge the knowledge and skills acquired at various levels of the programmes. In this paper, we have analysed the strategies followed by Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, which is affiliated to Mangalore University for ensuring transparency in evaluation and undertaking reforms to strengthen it. The paper discusses details on the major evaluation reforms of the university that the institution has adopted, and the reforms initiated by the institution on its own, details on some of the formative and summative evaluation approaches adopted to measure student achievement which have positively impacted the system, details on the significant improvements made in ensuring rigor and transparency in the internal assessment and weightages assigned, for the overall development of students. The graduate attributes specified by the college/affiliating university and the institutional effort to ensure the attainment of these by the students, and details of the mechanisms

for redressal of grievances with reference to evaluation both at the college and University level are also analysed.

Several studies on innovations and quality in higher education including Strategic Planning in Higher Education Institutions [3], Innovations and Best Practices can Transform Higher Education Institutions [4], quality in higher education [5-6], Internal Quality Assurance Cell and its Contribution [7], Enhancement of Graduate attributes in Higher Education Institutions through Stage Models [8], Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions [9], Effective Leadership and Governance [10], Strategy Development and Deployment in Higher Education Institutions [11], Faculty Empowerment Strategies in Higher Education Institutions [12], Unique & Successful Model in Integrated Development [13], Applying SWOC Analysis to an Institution of Higher Education [14], Techniques for Electric Energy Auditing in Education System [15], Societal Expectation And Institutional Accountability in Higher Education [16], Methods and Approaches for Employability Skill Generation in Higher Educational Institutions [17], Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions through Best Practices in Library [18], Analysis of Academic Administrative System Implemented in Higher educational institution [19], Learning through Team Centric Exercise & Key Point Pedagogy - An effective Learning Model for Slow Learners in Higher Education Training [20], Opportunities and Challenges for Private Universities [21], Innovations in Private Universities [22], Creating Innovators through setting up organizational Vision, Mission and Core Values : a Strategic Model in Higher Education [23], Comparative Study on MBA Programmes in Private & Public Universities [24], Impact of On-line Education on Higher Education System [25], Innovations in Higher Education - A new model implemented in MCA degree programme [26], Environmental Consciousness in Higher Educational Institutions [27], Analysis of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education [28], Innovations in Student Centric Learning – A Study of Top Business Schools [29], Innovations in Experimental Learning – A Study of World Top Business Schools [30], How to Increase Research Productivity in Higher Educational Institutions [31], Academic Support through Information System [32], and Quality Teaching and Learning as Practice Within Different Disciplinary Discourses [33], Innovative Education Model to realize Ideal Education System [34], ABCD analysis of Stage Model in Higher Education [35],) Analysis of NAAC Accreditation System using ABCD framework [36], Application of ABCD Analysis Framework on Private University System [37], The Study of New National Institutional Ranking System using ABCD Framework [38], Educational institutions quest for service quality: customers" perspective [39], Comparative study of quality practices in higher education institutions [40], Quality in higher education-a survey [41], Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education [42] are studied and published.

2. Student Evaluation:

Multiple and concurrent evaluation is followed by the institute. This has been tacitly expressed through various information dissemination mechanisms like college calendar. A copy of the Calendar is given to all the students and faculty members at the beginning of the year. The examination co-ordinator is taking care of the Internal Tests and arranging logistics for the University examination. The institute uses the following mechanisms for continuous evaluation of the students:

Evaluation through Internal Tests: Internal assessment of the students is carried out as per the regulations and norms of the University. In consultation with the Principal, the co-ordinator will prepare the schedule of the internal assessment test for the academic year. The schedule contains the dates of the internal test, evaluation

process and also information to check malpractice. The schedule is circulated among the faculty members and the same is notified to the students on the notice board and the announcement is also made in the class rooms.

Evaluation through University Examination: The University examinations are conducted on as per the rules, regulations and guidelines issued by the affiliating University from time to time. The University communication is put up in the notice board for the students information. The students are given detailed information regarding the examination schedule, regulations and evaluation process in the orientation programme.

Evaluation Through Assignments: The faculty in-charge of each subject will work out and announce the topics for assignments to be written by the students along with deadlines for submissions at the end of each chapter. The quality of the assignments as well as the punctuality in submission of the assignment is the basis for assessment.

Evaluation through Attendance: Although, the University insists on 75% as the minimum cut-off level for the attendance to appear in the examinations, the college promotes maximum possible attendance through allotting internal marks as incentives.

Evaluation Through Class Room Discipline: In order to ensure discipline in the class, a competitive spirit is created among the students by way of recognizing a best outgoing student in each course. These prizes are awarded on the college day gathering.

Evaluation Through Participation in Co-Curricular Activities: The College encourages the participation of students in all co-curricular activities within the College and conducted by other Colleges.

Evaluation Through Subject Based Viva-Voce: In all courses in the College, viva-voce examination is mandatory. Certain amount of internal marks is set a part to be granted based on the performance in the viva-voce.

Evaluation Through Flair in Report Writing: In certain courses such as MSW, field work forms a major part of the curriculum, with huge quantum of marks set apart for it. The activities in the field are reported every week through field work reports to the concerned faculty supervisors. The quality of these reports decide a lot in the internal marks secured by each student.

Evaluation Through Effective Presentation: Seminar presentations are part of the curriculum in most of the courses. Students are advised on topics to prepare and present seminars in the open class, which is judged on merit to award marks for the presentation.

Evaluation Through Inter-Personal Relations and Good Habits: Every year the College identifies and recognizes the best out-going student in all courses through interpersonal relations and good habits. In other classes the class representatives and student representatives are chosen based on their interpersonal relations and good habits.

3. Reforms:

Details on the major evaluation reforms of the university that the institution has adopted and the reforms initiated by the institution on its own is as follows:

Reforms Initiated by the University:

- ✓ **Major revision of Syllabus:** The syllabus of all the courses are revised from time to time so as to keep it updated to the present relevance. This has been already implemented in all undergraduate and Post graduate programmes.
- ✓ **Increased Internal Assessment Weightage:** In line with modern thinking on education, thrust has been given to internal assessment by increasing the weightage of internal assessment marks.

- ✓ **Computerization of Examination Process:** The evaluation process of the University has been computerized and the marks cards are printed and hologram embossed to avoid tampering.
- ✓ **Bar Coding of Answer Scripts:** This enables to conceal the identity of the answer booklets for coding and decoding.
- ✓ **Early Announcement of Results:** With automation of examination and evaluation process, it has become possible to announce the results earlier than before. These improvements have enabled the University to announce the results in a few weeks compared to many months which used to take before.
- ✓ **Timely Conduct of Examination:** The University plans and declare the dates for conducting the examinations at the beginning of the academic year.
- ✓ **Opportunity for Revaluation/ Recounting:** The affiliating University has introduced a provision for Revaluation/ recounting of answer books subject to lodging an application with the required fee.
- ✓ **Credit Based System for Under Graduate Programme:** In the recent past, the University introduced credit based system in the examination evaluation to be in par with advanced global standards.
- ✓ **Credit Based System with Choice Based Paper for P.G. Programmes:** Last year, Mangalore University has introduced for the first time a choice based paper system, where students could choose any one subject from a list of papers offered in other disciplines.
- ✓ **Precaution Against Malpractice:** University sends instructions to the colleges to take actions to avoid malpractice in the exam.
- ✓ **Computerization of Admission Process:** The University has introduced online admission approval process to support the colleges to simplify the process.

Institutional Reforms:

- ✓ **Reforms Introduced for Internal Assessment:** The total internal marks to be awarded to the students in any subject is a combination of specific allocations for performance in the internal written examinations conducted by the college, Assignments and presentations submitted/done before due dates and bonus marks for attendance.
- ✓ **Save a Year Program:** The College has introduced a best practice for those students short of attendance to make up their deficiency through attending extra hours of classes conducted exclusively for them subject to payment of extra hour charges. However this can avoid the students losing a semester without opportunity to write the University exams.
- ✓ **Model Preparatory Examination:** The College conducts model preparatory exams covering the entire syllabus towards the end of the each semester. This helps the students for their time management, enhancing preparedness and building confidence for the final exams.
- ✓ **Institutional effort to avoid Malpractice:** Strict invigilation is conducted in the examination hall throughout the duration of examination. Seating arrangement is decided in advance and printed registered numbers are pasted in each seat. The seats are spread out to avoid possibility of malpractice. Verbal instruction is given to all the students at the commencement of the examination about the consequences of malpractice. Staff on duty work in shift to ease the process of invigilation. Drinking water is provided to the students during the examination time. Students are instructed to keep all their personal belongings outside the hall. The surrounding areas of the examination hall is made noise free and made

no entry zone. Students are instructed not to write anything on question paper except their register number. The college also constitute Internal Squad other than the squad of the University to make surprise visits while examination in progress. The Chief Examiner can monitor the examination hall through fitted CCD and is continuously recorded for future review if needed.

- ✓ **Introduction of University Type Answer Booklets:** In order to familiarize the students with University model exam, the college has introduced the University type answer booklet. The format of the new booklet resembles the University booklet in the following ways: (1) Registered number is written instead of name of the candidate. (2) The Invigilator puts signature on the specified space in the answer booklet. (3) Provision is made for entry of marks by the valuing examiner according to the sequence of the questions in the question paper. (4) The valuing examiner has to put his name & signature in the appropriate place on the front page of the booklet. (5) Instructions to the candidate are printed. (6) Sufficient pages are provided in the answer booklet to avoid the danger of losing additional sheets attached along with the book.

3. Effective Implementation of the Evaluation Reforms:

The institution has effectively implemented the evaluation reforms of the university and initiated many reforms on its own.

- ✓ **Major Revision of Syllabus:** The College has implemented the revised syllabus by incorporating it in the Teaching Plan and the Study materials. New Text books have been purchased to enhance reference.
- ✓ **Increased Internal Assessment Weightage:** The increased weightage given for award of internal marks has been accommodated appropriately in the assessment system.
- ✓ **Computerization of Examination Process:** The College is furnishing all required information to the University to help computerization of the evaluation process.
- ✓ **Bar Coding of Answer Scripts:** The College ensures that the Invigilators paste the bar coded stickers appropriately in each answer booklet and packed.
- ✓ **Early Announcement of Results:** The College submits the internal marks and Practical/seminar/viva-voce marks well in time to the University and also spares the services of the valuers.
- ✓ **Timely Conduct of Examination:** The college announces and adheres strictly with the deadlines set by the University and the norms regarding eligibility. This helps in timely conduct of examinations.
- ✓ **Opportunity for Revaluation/ Recounting:** The college supports the students wishing revaluation or Re-totaling by providing them with the information and guidance. The outcome is also intimated to the corresponding students.
- ✓ **Credit Based System for Under Graduate Programme:** Information on Credit based system is disseminated to all the students through including it in the college calendar.
- ✓ **Credit Based System with Choice Based Paper for P.G. Programmes:** The college is attracting a lot of students from nearby colleges to take the Choice based paper which is offered in the college. Similarly our P.G. students are going to other colleges and university departments to attend such choice based subjects.

- ✓ **Precaution Against Malpractice:** The instructions sent by the University are read out in the classroom before each examination as well as exhibited outside the examination hall.
- ✓ **Computerization of Admission Process:** The College collects all relevant documents, convert them into soft copy and submits online for admission approval.

4. Effective Implementation of Institutional Reforms:

- ✓ **Reforms Introduced for Internal Assessment:** The total internal marks to be awarded to the students in any subject is a combination of specific allocations for performance in the internal written examinations conducted by the college, Assignments and presentations submitted/done before due dates and bonus marks for attendance. This is strictly followed in all courses.
- ✓ **Save a Year Program:** The College has introduced a best practice for those students short of attendance to make up their deficiency through extra hours of classes conducted exclusively for them subject to payment of extra hours charges. However this can avoid the students losing a year without opportunity to write the University exams. This has benefitted many needy students in the last few years.
- ✓ **Model Preparatory Examination:** The College conducts model preparatory exams covering the entire syllabus towards the end of the each semester. The dates for such examinations are scheduled well in advance to take place on time.
- ✓ **Institutional Effort to Avoid Malpractice:** The institution is effectively implementing all its mechanisms to avoid malpractice through continuous supervision.
- ✓ **Introduction of University Type Answer Booklets:** Sufficient number of answer booklets are printed and distributed.

4. Formative and Summative Evaluation Approaches Adopted:

Formative and summative evaluation approaches adopted to measure student achievement which have positively impacted the system are outlined below: The institution adopts both formative and summative methods of evaluation. Formative approach to evaluation includes measuring the student's achievement through presentations, project work, viva-voce, seminars, industry visits and field practicum. The evaluation through these approaches is reflected in the assessment made subsequently.

Presentation: Presentation helps to evaluate the students depth of understanding and ability to communicate.

Field Practicum: Field practicum serves to evaluate the student ability on application of Knowledge and skills into practice.

Project Work: It enables analytical and reasoning ability of the students and make them think big.

Viva-Voce: This helps to evaluate grasp of the fundamentals of the subject.

Seminar: Seminar enables to evaluate the student ability to comprehend a broad topic in a shorter form and to generate discussion.

Industry Visit: Industry visit helps to evaluate the power of observation and skills in report writing.

For summative approach three internal tests including one preparatory test are conducted and best two performances are considered for calculation of internal marks.

5. Improving Rigor and Transparency in Assessment:

Significant improvements made in ensuring rigor and transparency in the

internal assessment during the last four years and weightages assigned for the overall development of students: The College has developed objective criteria for calculating internal marks so as to ensure rigor and transparency.

Internal Test: Three internal tests including preparatory are conducted out of which marks secured in best two test are considered for internal marks.

Assignment and Presentation: Assignments / presentations/ projects / case studies are given to students to be completed on time and submitted to the faculty. The criteria for assessment are timely completion and the quality of the work.

Attendance: Although a minimum of 75% attendance is obligatory to become eligible to write the University examination, to encourage students, internal marks are offered on a proportionate basis to increase the attendance level.

Special Criteria: Keeping in view the peculiarity of different courses, internal marks are also awarded for field practicum, vivo-voce, and semester end projects.

Through the above criteria of attendance assessment the behavior aspects such as punctuality and regularity are ensured. Through written examination, the capacity for independent learning, memorization and comprehensive re-production are ensured. Through assignment and presentations the capacity of students in communication skills is assessed.

6. Conclusion:

The institute aspires to create leaders and decision makers for tomorrow. It aims at overall development of students and preparing the students for lifelong learning. It aims at the overall personality development of the student. The college intends to make the students employable and successful in career. The college aims at creating responsible citizens of the country with social sensitivity & gender neutrality. It also aims at developing younger generation upholding values & scientific temper. The college through the faculty members strives to ensure the attainment of these attributes. The entire activity of the college is framed around these attributes. The evaluation process is tuned to achieve these attributes in its students. A variety of innovations and improvements have been undertaken from time to time. The institution disseminates the evaluation processes to all its stakeholders to maintain transparency. It adheres to the academic calendar for conduct of examinations. Technology is effectively used in the examination management process. Reforms in the examination procedures and processes have positively impacted the examination management system.

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