CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
## CHAPTER – V
### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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5.01. INTRODUCTION

As the time changes in the light of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, the Higher Education Institutions need to continuously update, advance themselves with the requirement of stakeholders. To mitigate the challenges posed, it is an imperative need on the part of Higher Education Institutions to raise their level of standard to greater level so as to groom our product with requisite skills and capacity at global market. The quality standard of Higher Education Institutions are determined with the help of an assessment, which is the application of all set of standards towards realization of its objectives. During the process of assessment, institutions are encouraged to examine their functioning, evaluate themselves and promote accountability in Higher Education. Assessment has an added role to facilitate enhancement of quality in teaching and research and also stimulate the academic environment for the attainment of an institutional academic environment for the attainment of the institutional objectives.

Introduction of quality assessment and accreditation system into Higher Education in almost all countries are determined in view of rapid expansion of Educational Institution, Private participation, Higher education reforms, Efficient and Competitive mechanism and the need to increase accountability.

Many external assessment agencies with different assessment criteria and indicators are practicing across the world on assessment and accreditation of Higher Education Institutions. In India, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been established to ensure and enhance the quality of Indian Higher Education. In their thirteen years of service, NAAC has earned a lot of goodwill and
appreciation from the academic community. In spite of number of credentials laid on their process, certain concerns enforced a need for incessant effort on the part of NAAC to strengthen and fine-tune its processes and scoring procedures.

In view of overcoming the hindrances posed on grading level of an institution and to design simple and quantifiable criteria of quality assessment, concerned effort are imposed on the part of academic community to fine tune the assessment indicators suitable to the present Higher Education scenario ensuring more objectivity in scoring on assessment.

5.02. INFERENCES ON REVIEW OF STUDIES

The investigator reviewed the related literature to gain an overall idea on the proposed area of research. The studies conducted so far in the specified area of quality assessment and accreditation of Higher Education Institutions were collected and analyzed. The culmination of review studies are classified under four broad categories:

i) Studies on Quality Assessment
ii) Studies on Quality Assessment of Higher Education
iii) Studies on Quality Accreditation in Higher Education
iv) Studies on Revisiting the Quality Assessment

Besides, a few of the quality models practiced at present at National and International level on the assessment and accreditation of quality of Higher Education were also reviewed to gain better comprehension about the assessment indicators of quality in education. Their educational implications of these studies were also analyzed for identifying and fine-tuning the indicators to conceptualize New Assessment Model for the assessment of Higher Education Institutions.
5.03. RESEARCH DESIGN

As the present study is intended to develop an empirical model with fine tuned indicators for taking assessment of Higher Education Institutions and to ensure its reliability and validity by application of assessment instruments with State affiliating Arts and Science universities in Tamilnadu, survey method was employed for the collection of relevant data.

5.03.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The latest developments in the field of business, communication and technology demand a thorough, in-depth knowledge in the subjects concerned. Hence quality education is the basis for achieving the above target. Naturally, responsibility of providing quality education lies with Higher Education Institutions. Assessment in educational institutions is mainly concerned with ensuring quality assurance in curriculum, teaching, research and overall contribution by the institution through its introspection and performance analysis. An assessment of the infrastructure facilities by an external agency is the proof that the institution could offer quality education.

Besides this assessment, educational institutions volunteer to go for accreditation of their programmes or Institution. In general, accreditation process has to facilitate the institutions to show their accountability to stakeholders, demonstrate effectiveness and to justify their existence. This process would also help and guide the institution and increase the stakeholders’ participation in managing the Higher Education Institutions. The assessment and accreditation of an institution or programme has dual purposes, namely, quality assessment as well as quality improvement and
should take into account the input, process and outcome. Though the quality of education is assessed by various National agencies in India, the parameters of quality are so subjective that they are not dependable. The following weaknesses are also observed in this assessment process:

- Institutions are sensitive to grade awarded by the external agency
- Inter team variation in awarding grade
- Mismatch between the Peer team report and grade
- Effective presentation and professional management masks their weakness
- There is more chances for subjectivity in assessment rather objective

It is inferred from the problems highlighted above, there arises confusion on the meeting of the existing benchmarks and measurement criteria and the scoring pattern followed at present by various external agencies. These are some of the moot issues that crave for further research in this field.

In the process of evading the grievances on scoring pattern and fine-tuning the assessment indicators, the researcher intends to identify some of the relevant criterion, key aspects and operational indicators providing no room for subjectivity on assessing their results. With the revisit on identified key aspects and indicators, a new assessment model would be evolved to assess the institutions and grade their status more objectively.

With this background, the title of research study is formulated thus: “QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS – AN EMPIRICAL MODEL”.
5.03.2. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

In this study, Higher Education Institutions refer to the Arts and Science affiliating Universities, those that have been accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) within last five years.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Quality Assessment is an evaluation of overall performance of an institution using operational indicators to assess the occurrences of events, availability and utility of physical as well as human resources within specified period of time (usually immediate past three years from the date of assessment).

ACCREDITATION

In this research study, accreditation refers the process of assessing and enhancing academic and educational quality through voluntary peer review. Quality Assessment and Accreditation are functioning in tandem. So, the accreditation is an in-built mechanism of assessment.

EMPIRICAL MODEL

Empirical model refers to a model developed and incorporating all the dimensions of quality. The model includes occurrence of events, availability and utility of human and physical resources. This newly framed model is validated and confirmed to be a reliable tool for assessment of higher education institutions.
OCCURRENCES OF EVENTS

In this research study occurrence of events means the responses received in the form of ‘YES’ or ‘NO’ against the operational indicators representing the total number of programmes, Meetings, Availability of infrastructure facilities, Faculty improvement, Students Service Activities, Co-curricular, Extra curricular activities, Participation in National and International conferences, Seminars, Workshops happened within the specified period (one / three years as prescribed by NAAC).

DIMENSION

It refers to different elements in the Quality Assessment pattern used in Higher Education Institutions.

KEY ASPECTS

It refers to sub element in each dimension, which is helpful to group the relevant operational indicators.

OPERATIONAL INDICATORS

It refers to the basic assessment unit.

5.03.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In India, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been assigned to undertake assessment of Higher education institutions. During the past ten years, NAAC has given accreditation to 3492 colleges and 148 universities. Further, it is exposed from the experiences of NAAC in their ten years services on assessment and accreditation process that quality gap is noted in the approaches to curriculum development, teaching learning, Research and consultancy, Infrastructure and Learning resources, Students Support Services and Organization and Development.
In spite of the insufficiencies and rectifications suggested during the NAAC's assessment, it is reported by the NAAC that the insights and experiences gained through the exercise has been very rewarding for them to trigger quality initiatives in the assessing institutions and to strengthen their own evaluative process. Similarly the reported impact on institutions has been largely positive. However, one issue that has remained in the arena of debate all through is the 'grade' given to the institutions. The institutions which have undergone the assessment process expressed their displeasure over the grading for two reasons, viz. the text of the Peer Team report is highly positive vis a vis the scoring and the comparison of facilities, faculties, infrastructure with other colleges which is rated higher.

To overcome the concerns and comments, academicians emphasize the significance of unambiguous assessment parameters for objective assessment. Hence the researcher ventured a study in this direction.

5.03.4. OBJECTIVES

The review of literature throws light on the need for making an empirical research on quality assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions. The present study attempts to identify imperative tools on assessment of higher education institutions. Against this background, the following specific objectives have been developed for the present study:

- To identify and study the assessment criteria and scoring guidelines followed by various National and International Quality Assessment Agencies / council on Higher Education.

- To revisit the assessment criteria and scoring pattern practiced on assessment by Accrediting agencies in India.
• To conceptualize and develop a comprehensive model of assessment and accreditation of Higher Education Institution.
• To implement the comprehensive model with already accredited higher education institutions in Tamilnadu.
• To examine the convergence and divergence of assessment indicators with existing assessment instrument.
• To find out the suitability of the proposed assessment model in the process of quality assessment and accreditation of Higher Education Institutions.

5.03.5. ASSUMPTIONS

• In the process of assessing performance of Higher Education Institutions, assessment indicators play a pivotal role.
• Operational Indicators evolved under different dimensions should be suitable for assessment in the present Higher Education scenario.
• Different assessment indicators under various dimensions are being practiced by National and International assessment agencies.
• Assessment criteria and scoring pattern followed by NAAC demand fine tuning of its indicators and objective scoring pattern.
• Assessment indicators evolved under New Assessment Model has many convergence and some divergence with the NAAC's model.
• Dimension wise scoring under New Assessment Model are almost similar (or) there is negligible difference when compared with NAAC model.
• There will be an agreement in overall scoring under New Assessment Model under different weightages.
5.03.6. HYPOTHESES

- There are variations in the assessment criteria and scoring pattern prescribed by the existing National and International External assessment agencies of Higher Education Institutions.
- There are variations in the assessment criteria formulated in NAAC's model and New Assessment Model.
- There is variation between NAAC's pattern of scoring and New Assessment Model's pattern of scoring.
- The objectivity in dimension-wise scoring pattern of New Assessment Model is ensured either by following in its own scoring weightage or NAAC's weightage distribution or by both score distribution.
- The objectivity in overall scoring pattern of New Assessment Model is ensured either by following in its own scoring weightage or NAAC's weightage distribution or by both score distribution.

5.03.7. SAMPLE

- Location: The affiliating State Universities of Tamilnadu forms the Sample of the study.
- Selection of Sample: Out of Fourteen affiliating State Universities in Tamilnadu, the Universities, which were accredited, by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore, during the last Five years period (2002 – 2007) were selected for this study.

5.03.8. RESEARCH TOOLS

The Assessment Tool consisting of Nine Dimensions of Criteria and 41 Key Aspects with 314 Operational Indicators are designed for getting
specific quantitative information about the Institution relating to its performance requirements. There are 140 statements which were expected to elicit 'YES' or 'NO' type of responses ensuring the occurrence of events and 150 statements expected to elicit 'Numerical value' type of responses ensuring the Availability of resources and number of occurrences and 14 statements were expected to get responses in Percentage to ensure the extent of availability or utility of resources available in respective Institution.

The total score arrived in each Key aspects would be calculated for arriving value for each Key aspects. Summated value of Key aspects in each dimension would be averaged to arrive the total score for determining overall rating with the supportive documentary sources of availability and utility from the responses on respective indicators concerned.

This quantitative responses from the institutions would remove or minimize the extreme bias and also reduce inter peer team variations. Further there will be less scope for adjustment at any stage and therefore judgment of the Peer Team would be more accurate.

5.03.9. DATA COLLECTION

For the purpose of collection of data, all the six state affiliating universities, which got accreditation by NAAC within last five years, were contacted. In spite of personal contact and repeated remainders, the researcher could be able to obtain duly filled in questionnaire from only four universities out of six.
In view of getting internal consistency on the data furnished, at least three questionnaire have been given to the administrators as well as academic staff members, who were involved themselves in their Assessment process, in each university. Data were requested from all the accredited institutions, but only 67% of universities have responded.

5.03.10. SCHEME OF DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used the following statistical treatment for the main study:

i) Descriptive Analysis (Arithmetic Mean and Percentage)

ii) Relational Analysis (chi – square test)

iii) Associational Analysis (co-efficient of concordance ‘w’)

5.04. OVERALL FINDINGS

The research study has revealed the following findings:

i) A New Assessment Model is framed to provide objectivity in assessment by fine-tuning the existing indicators and introducing some new key aspects and indicators as envisaged in the study of Pillai K.N.M. Srinivas (2006), Gnanam A. and Antony Stella (2006), Madukar B.S. Latha Pillai (2005), Srinivas G (2006) and Sharma S.I. (2006).

ii) The descriptive analysis made on the responses of the occurrence of events in all universities revealed the strength and shortcomings of each university under every dimension on the application of this model. The greater mean score and higher percentage on key aspects under the dimension ‘Vision and Mission’ and ‘Teaching and Learning’ in respect of the University ‘C’ revealed their dominant position in
these dimension. This finding is in accordance with the
findings of Evan G.R.(2000), Stanley elizebeth, C.Patrick,
Williams J (1997), Bastick, tony (1999), Gupta S.K. (1990),
Poliakoff, Anne, rogers, Ed (2002), Maheswari L.K. Motild

iii) The findings further reflected the greater mean score and
percentage earned by the University 'B' in respect of
'Curricular Aspects', 'Research and Consultancy',
'Utilization of Infrastructure Facilities'. The relevance of
programmes, revision of syllabus, availability and utility of
infrastructure availabilities are confirmed with the findings of
Calder (1999), Prasad V.S. (2005), Hauderick (1992), Kurup

iv) In the dimension of 'Students Support Services' the
University 'A' has obtained greater mean score and
percentage by its services to students. It confirmed to some
extent the studies of Cope and Hawrah (1978), Julian, Frank

v) The result of dimension-wise chi-square analysis revealed that
the obtained value in each dimension is less than the
theoretical value. It is observed from the results that there is
no significant difference on the occurrence of events among
the universities using the indicators in all dimensions.
Homogeneity in responses prevailed on each dimension
exhibited that the constructed tool able to yield the results
objectively even though there is negligible variances prevailed
in responses.
vi) In order to confirm the suitability of the New Assessment Model, a comparative study has been undertaken with the scores earned on NAAC’s assessment ratings. In this analysis, the overall grade points earned by four universities as well as dimension-wise points are administered for comparison with NAAC’s scoring. And also with the scores obtained on frequencies collected under New Assessment Model with NAAC’s weightage. Degrees of agreement among these three scales of rankings are determined by using the Kendall co-efficient of concordance ‘w’, which helps to ensure inter-test reliability.

vii) The average percentage comparison of scores earned on each dimension exhibited a very close agreement prevailing between the scores earned in New Assessment Model of this study with its own weightage and NAAC’s weightage. The close association continues to remain in all six dimensions except in ‘Research and Consultancy’ whereas the wide divergence between NAAC’s gradation percentage remain constant in all dimensions. However the overall gradation in all the four universities revealed the different trend of agreement between the two modes. The relational analysis revealed the fact that the scores earned on its own weightage under New Assessment Model has more conformity with its scores earned under NAAC’s weightage on every dimension. This homogeneity in grading of scores ensured its objectivity on assessing the Higher Education Institutions.
5.05. LIMITATIONS
The major limitations of the present study are as follows:

- The study has been conducted with smaller sample, as it is very difficult to obtain huge data from the respondents.
- The data collected are mainly furnished by the subjects.
- No separate process is suggested for accreditation of institution assuming that assessment and accreditation are goes in tandem.
- No grading system is suggested in this research study with the presumption of having two status viz. 'Accredited' and 'Not accredited'.

5.06. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS
The number of concerns and comments raised against the gradation of assessment agencies in India and appeals made against their gradation demand going for conceptualizing a New Assessment Model.

- The criteria / dimensions to be framed must reflect the basic, essential and practically possible areas to keep pace with the present educational scenario.
- The assessment indicators grouped into key aspects need to be fine-tuned and they must be precise and concise in getting responses.
- The responses to be received should always be accompanied by facts and figures leaving no scope for assumption or window dressing.
- The assessment instruments are to be tested on its independent status as well as fitness on application with all responses.
• The scores earned on new assessment should also be compared with earlier assessment with other model so as to confirm its degree of agreement and its reliability.

5.07. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research study on the following may be preferred:

• Application of New Assessment Model in the context of Affiliated and Autonomous colleges.
• Relational effect among the dimensions of the New Assessment Model.
• Identification of still more dimension of assessment in terms of cliental approach
• Application of new assessment model with different graded universities.
• Application of New Assessment Model in the Professional and Education colleges.

5.08. CONCLUSION

Assessment in higher education is mainly to ensure quality assurance in curriculum, teaching, research and overall contribution to the institution through introspection and performance analysis. In this research study, the researcher made an attempt to evolve an empirical model on assessment befitting the present higher education scenario. For the purpose of conceptualizing the New Assessment Model, the researcher acquired an in-depth perception through review of literature and studies on quality frameworks and its application and implication on higher education. The review studies have thrown more in-sights on assessment criteria, key aspects and scoring pattern practiced presently by some of the
National and International quality assessment agencies. With specific reference to the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the study ascertained certain assessment indicators which are susceptible to subjective assessment and some concerns and comments exposed on award of grading, Inter peer-team variation in awarding the grade and mismatch between the Peer team report and the grade awarded. The culmination of research review facilitated the researcher to gain better comprehension about the assessment parameters and scoring pattern.

After careful screening and pruning, the New Assessment Model has been developed with nine dimensions, forty-one key aspects and appropriate operational indicators. To experience the strength of New assessment tool, the tool has been adopted on few of the already accredited (by NAAC) Universities in Tamilnadu. The responses received from the respective institutions were subjected to statistical analysis. The results of analysis revealed the dimension-wise strength and shortcomings of each university under the New Assessment Model and also the fitness of the assessment tools on measuring standards have also been ensured. Besides, an attempt is made to have a comparison of scores assigned by the New Assessment model and the scores earned under NAAC assessment. It is observed from the study that there is an agreement of ranking in all dimensions indicating the performance of all universities. Similarly, the close agreement and correlation in overall scores of all Universities under the New assessment method by its own weightage and NAAC’s weightage are also found in existence, which ensures the credibility and strength of the assessment tools and its objectivity.

The strength of the New Assessment tool developed in this study is assessed on the ground that most relevant and fine-tuned operational indicators are identified by having prudent selection from the National and
International assessment agencies practiced presently. And also there is an in-built provision for innovative practices under each dimension clubbed with the scaffolding facility making suitable to the learning environment and thereby ensuring the strength of the new assessment tool. Moreover, as a measure to overcome the concerns on NAAC’s assessment, the scoring on each dimension is determined against the clear numerical responses on its occurrence of events and its availability and utility. Hence, the scope for subjectivity in assessment is restricted to a greater extent and the inter peer-team variation on grading is also eliminated considerably. The researcher firmly believes that it is not a panacea, but it is an honest attempt on the wide research area in the field of higher education. As the researcher has done this research work with selected sample under various constraints, detailed further probe may be elicited on pruning the assessment indicators and scoring pattern before generalizing this assessment tool.

Moreover, as the quality is an elusive term, it may not be static. As such, any model empirically validated to assess quality is also subjected to change, alteration and modification from time to time and place to place. Hence, further detailed study with a different scope and dimensions could be envisaged to ensure the Higher Education Institutions provide quality education to the people so as to groom their knowledge-resources for the betterment of our country.