CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

1.01 Introduction

In the early Indian society, woman was represented as an embodiment of uncontrollable power. She was called ‘Sakthi’. Naturally, social and religious values were created and the need to keep her under control was justified. As a girl /adult, she is under the control of her father; as a wife her husband is her controller. As a mother, she is worshipped and she gains identity in the society only in this role. Thus, during the pre-Independent era woman’s position in Indian society was simply to help men. Women were totally marginalized and they remained invisible in all human activity. During the Indian struggle for independence, women were considered as helping hand to men. In the post-Independent era, the emergence of women as a potential force is accompanied by empowerment of women. Indian women realized that education is a source of power. As a result, higher enrolment of women is recorded in educational institutions in India.

1.02 Growth of Educational Institutions in India

The demand for higher education and the global demand for human resource in the employment market led to a phenomenal growth in the number of educational institutions. For instance, the number of Universities increased from around 20 to 350, the number of Colleges from 500 to 20,000 and the student enrolment from about 25 lakhs to 12 millions. In recent times, Indian Students have made remarkable contribution to Companies like Infosys, TCS, Wipro and HCL. These software giants have taken the Cities like Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad to a significant place in the world map. After software industries in the 90s, the millennium appears to be the
age of Biotechnology in India. This is currently regarded as having the largest reservoir of scientific and technical manpower in the world with an estimated stock in excess of 10 million people.

The opportunity available for human resource in the global market has motivated the students between the age group of 17 to 24 to pursue education. The percentage of increase in the enrolment of boys in educational institutions in 2006-07 was 6.01 when compared with 1990-91 enrolment. Whereas the percentage of increase in the enrolment of girls was recorded as 9.85 in 2006-07 (Geetha Rani, 2010). The growth rate in enrolment of girls in educational institutions could only be monitored by the governments but they could not start sufficient number of institutions due to financial constraints.

These details about the performance of Indian higher education appear to be phenomenal but at a very low cost for the students. India subsidizes higher education to a very great extent. Government institutions which have mostly led the growth in higher education subsidize up to statistics 90-95%. However, in addition to this, privatization of education has also greatly helped the growth of higher education in India. Looking back in retrospect, perhaps it is high time, that it could be realized that government can not subsidize higher education for ever. To achieve international quality and to compete in the world market, entry of private sector in to education is inevitable. In the years to come, the private sector will greatly add momentum to the growth in higher education as it is done at the school level. The government has started withdrawing subsidy to higher educational institution and increase internal revenue generation and be more competitive. Naturally, the private Engineering and Arts and Science Colleges have emerged.
1.03 The Role of Christian Missionaries in Education

The contribution of the Christian church in every country is a subject of great importance not only to the Christians of that country and their brethren in other lands but also to scholars of general history, for church history is a part of social and political history of the respective country. Their life of dedication, generosity, hard-work, Missionary zeal, foresight, concern for the downtrodden ever stand as paradigm to today’s education. The missionaries perceived that through education, the people could be enlightened and their standard of life could be improved. They focused mainly on rural poor, especially women. As the first step, many Schools and Colleges were started to provide quality education. Missionary organization such as XBHEI, All India Association for Christian Education (AIACHE), through systematic planning Co-ordinate the activities of the Christian educational institutions. The Government of India, after careful review of the functioning of the institution permitted the starting of more number of institutions. Further, the involvement of private agencies in the field of education was absolutely necessary to cater the educational needs of the people. Today, the church in India runs 2000 High & Higher Secondary Schools and 6000 Primary Schools in addition to the Arts & Science and Engineering Colleges.

1.04 The Contribution of the Franciscan Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary to Education

Founded in Pondicherry on October 16, 1844 by Rev Fr.Louis Savenian Dupuis, the congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was affiliated to the third order of St.Francis. The Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary is an outcome of the’ felt need’ of the Fathers of the Diocesan Synod of
Pondicherry, as a result of their concern for the education of Women. The Fathers of the Synod believed that the education of women would become instrumental in fostering true piety in families and generally in raising the quality of families. During the Diocesan Synod held at Pondicherry the President Msgr. Clement Bonnard, the Vicar Apostolic of Pondicherry, spoke emphatically about the necessity for the education of women. The Fathers proposed the idea that an Indian Sisters’ Congregation should be started and the sisters should be entrusted with the responsibility of teaching women, secular education together with religious and moral education. By the Grace of Lord, the congregation runs 162 educational institutions which include 45 primary schools, 18 middle schools, 58 high schools, 26 higher secondary schools, 3 special schools, 8 Arts & Science Colleges, 2 teacher training institutions, one B.Ed college, and one engineering college. Besides, the education ministry, the nuns manage health care, community development and faith propagation centers. Around 21,250 students complete their courses in these institutions and serve as useful human resource to the society. These students include women from weaker section of the society living in remote rural areas of India.

1.05 Origin and Development of Idhaya College of Arts and Science for Women at Pudupalayam

The congregation mainly focuses on the upliftment of women in rural areas. Education being an important instrument to enlighten and improve the status of women, many higher educational institutions was started in remote villages. One such village which has evaded government’s attention for the past 57 years of independence in Pudupalayam. Not even the wealthy private sector had attempted to start an Arts and Science College. In such a situation, Idhaya College of Arts and Science for Women was founded in the year 2004. It is a minority institution run by the sisters of Immaculate Heart of
Mary congregation, Pondicherry with the objective of uplifting the oppressed women.

This College is a long cherished dream of the Diocese of Vellore. When the proposal of starting a college in Pudupalayam was made by the Diocese of Vellore, the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (FIHM) accepted it gladly. The congregation has been working for the development of the womenfolk of this area, since then.

Most Rev. Bishop Dr. Malayappa Chinnappa, the Bishop of Vellore generously donated 70 acres of land which belong to the Diocese, for the development of marginalized women of this rural area. Fr. Pancras, the procurator of Vellore Diocese volunteered to make further arrangements for the construction of college building. With the beneficiary help of Fr. Joe Lourdu Samy, the college flourished.

Rev. Mother Regina Mary, the former Superior General and the first principal of Idhaya College, Pudupalayam is the real architect of this college building. By her unceasing efforts, the foundation stone was laid on 24th July, 2004 with 60 students. Now with 1225 students of the first, second and third year, the college is stepping into the ninth year (2012-2013).

1.06 Objectives of the College

The College strives to develop academic excellence, soft skills, overall personality, creative thinking, aptitude and character building based on spiritual and moral values. Besides, the institution attempts to fine-tune the skills of the students to use the human resource to improve the economic status. ‘Born to Win’ is the motto of the institution i.e. every human being is born in the world to win. The institution helps the students to be self-reliant and face the realities of life with courage. Precisely, the objective of the
institution is to provide quality education to the poorest of the poor women in this area.

1.07 Vision

The vision of the college is to produce intellectually enlightened, spiritually inspired, emotionally balanced and morally upright, socially committed young women who will be the agents of social transformation in the world.

1.08 Mission of the College is to:

- Impart education with the latest facility especially to the students of rural area.
- Develop the overall personality of the students
- Make them self-reliant.
- Provide them opportunities to develop their latent talents.
- Train them to develop leadership skills.

In order to convert the vision into action, the institution takes unceasing efforts to introduce new courses and equip the students to find suitable placement. The following courses are offered at present:

UG Courses:

- B.A. English Literature
- B.Com
- B.B.A
- B.C.A
- B.Sc. Computer Science
- B.Sc. Microbiology
- B.Sc. Physics
- B.Sc. Mathematics
PG Courses

- M.Com.
- M.A. English Literature

1.09 Student Enrolment and Faculty Position

The enrolment of students in various courses during 2007-08 was 229. The total number of students admitted every year has risen to 454. The students enrolment has almost doubled during 2012-13 which clearly indicate that the institution meets the expectation of the students and parents in and around the village in providing quality education. 50 faculty members are employed in this institution of which around 50% are M.Phil holders, 28% are B.Ed degree holders.

1.10 Research Topic

Though located in a remote village in Tamilnadu, Idhaya College of Arts & Science for Women, strive to provide quality education to the students. To achieve this objective, adequate infrastructure facilities such as buildings, labs, library, playground, vehicle, hostel and medical facilities are provided.

However, the researcher plans to assess the availability and accessibility of the facilities so as to evaluate the quality of education offered from the views of students, faculty and administrative staff hence the researcher framed the research topic thus:

**Availability, Accessibility and Assurance of Quality Education in Idhaya College for women.**
1.11 Definition of key Terms

1.11.1 Availability

Oxford Dictionary of English (2003) traces the origin of the word ‘Availability’ thus: The term ‘availability’ (n) is derived from the verb ‘avail’. Available (adj), ‘availability’ (n) are derived from the verb. The term originated during the Middle English period meaning ‘effectual’, ‘serviceable’ and ‘legally valid’. From the early nineteenth century, the word meant ‘at someone’s disposal’. ‘Readers’ Digest Word Power Dictionary (2001, rpt 2008) suggests that the word ‘avail’ is of Latin origin ‘valere’ meaning ‘be strong’, ‘Be of value’. The word ‘available’ (adj) means ‘able to be used or obtained’, ‘not otherwise occupied’. Mac Millan English Dictionary (2002) provides the meaning of the word ‘availability’ thus: ‘The state of being able to be obtained or used. To sum up, the word ‘availability’ means something/ somebody which/ who could be obtained or used. In the present study, the word ‘availability’ means the facilities/ manpower which could be obtained or used.

1.11.2 Accessibility

The word ‘access’ (n) is derived from the Latin word ‘accessus’ from ‘accedere’ meaning ‘come to’. In English ‘access’ (n) means the right or opportunity to use something or see someone (Readers Digest Word Power (rpt 2008). ‘Accessible’ mean ‘easy for anyone to obtain and use’. (Mac millan English Dictionary, 2002). The word is of Latin origin ‘accessibility’ from the verb ‘accedere’. From the Latin ‘access’ (meaning approached) the word accessible was derived. Accessible means ‘able to be easily obtained or used (of a person, especially one in a position of authority), friendly and easy to talk to, approachable’ (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2003). Precisely, the
researcher uses the term ‘accessibility’ to mean something which could be easily obtained and used; someone who is easily approachable.

1.11.3 Quality Assurance

The word ‘quality’ (n) is derived from the Latin word ‘qualitas’, from ‘qualis’ meaning ‘of what kind, of such a kind’. In English the word means ‘the degree of excellence of something as measured against other similar things,’ ‘general excellence’ (Readers Digest word power). ‘Quality Assurance’ means, the maintenance of a desired level of quality is a service or product, especially by means of attention to every stage of the process of delivery or production (Oxford Dictionary of English). The terms ‘quality Assurance’ means ‘the methods that a company uses to check that the standards of its services or goods is high enough’. (Mac Millan English Dictionary).

Dr. Sanjay Mishra, in his book Quality Assurance in Higher Education’, An Introduction, (Rev.edi.2007) says: ‘Quality’ is a much-debated term. To some it is like ‘beauty’ that lies in the eye of the beholder! Those who believe in this are ‘relativists’, whereas those who believe ‘quality’ can be specific attributes that can be identified, they are ‘objectivists’. The word quality comes from the Latin word ‘qualis’ meaning ‘what kind of’. With a variety of meanings and connotations, it has been referred to as a ‘slippery concept’.

The British standard Institution (BSI) defines quality as ‘the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs’ (BSI, 1991). Heli Mattisen and Birgit kuldvee explain the concept of quality thus: ‘Quality in the higher education context is a complex concept. It must be understood at the Global, state, international and individual Level….’ quality is the extent to which essential
characteristics complete the Requirements (ISO, 9000:2000). Quality is the
degree to which the institution is successful in achieving its objectives to the
satisfaction of itself, the students and society.

Ali R. Al-Hassnawi (2010), explains what quality means: quality is
still a concept that lacks a common definition applicable in all fields… As
far as higher education is concerned, quality relates to all aspects of the
international performance. Apart from the terminological complexities of
this issue, all those involved in higher education—whether students,
institutions, faculty staff, or other stakeholders—pay great attention to the
techniques, approaches or mechanism for assessing the various aspects of
their academic and institutional performance.

From the definitions given above, it could be inferred that quality
could be assessed using some key factors suggested by Indian and foreign
agencies. Hence the following dimensions which include the key factors
were identified.

• Curricular Aspects
• Teaching learning and Evaluation
• Research, Consultancy & Extension
• Infrastructure & Learning Resources
• Student Support & Progression
• Governance and Leadership
• Innovative Practices

Assessment of quality is very helpful to the stakeholders to choose the
institution for higher learning. The management could adopt suitable
methods/plan the activities to focus on the weakness and strengthen the
teaching-learning process; infrastructure facilities and extend the services
depending on the stakeholders’ demands / expectations. As there is
competition among various colleges, quality education decides the survival of the institutions. Hence adequate focus should be given to quality assurance in educational institution. Quality in education is relatively a new and recent concept. Quality in business and service could be immediately assessed while quality in education could be felt only in the long run. At the same time, it is very essential to take steps to maintain quality in education because quality in education decides the future of the countries. Hence the factors which are to be focused to provide and maintain quality in education were analyzed. A systematic effort has been taken by all the countries. A team of experts, educationalists, and educational planners, after careful consideration arrived at different dimensions of quality and fixed quantitative methods to assess the quality of education. In India, NAAC, UGC, NBA and the funding agencies have contributed significantly for the improvement of quality in education.

1.12 Quality Movement by NAAC

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in formed by Government of India to accreditation the universities and colleges in India. NAAC has designed quality assessment pattern of higher education in India. The council’s main objectives are i) to grade the institutions and their programmes ii) Stimulate academic environment iii) Promote changes, innovations and reforms. Further the council suggested important factors to the institutions for self assessment and evaluation, NAAC suggested two step process with effect from April, 1, 2007. In the first step IEQA (Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment) was decided and secondly the assessment and accreditations of the institution was undertaken. NAAC has prescribed seven criteria for quality assessment and accreditation. These are: Curricular aspects, Teaching learning and Evaluation, Research
consultancy and Extension, Infrastructure and Learning resources, Organization and management and students support services.

1.13 Role of UGC in Quality Assurance

UGC (University Grants Commission) has recognized the reports of NAAC as a valid and reliable report for quality assessment and maintenance. Hitherto, UGC’s role was mainly to give financial assistance to the needy institutions. But after the formation of NAAC, UGC has rationalized the grant of financial assistance. The UGC has already taken a decision to use the assessment outcome for funding decisions for certain grants without affecting the basic funding to the institutions. The outcome of assessment has been used for other decision making as well. Some major research funding agencies also look for the accreditation status of an institution even if the project proposal from the individuals groups is found acceptable. Thus, the universities and institutions are motivated to improve the quality of higher education in India.

1.14 Role of National Board of Accreditation (NBA)

The National board of Accreditation was constituted by All India Council for Technical Education as the autonomous body, to periodically conduct evaluation of technical institutions or programmes on the basis of guidelines/norms and standards specified by it and to make recommendations to AICTE regarding recognition or de-recognition of the institutions or programmes.

Based on the performance of the technical universities/ institutions the board decides i) whether to give Yes/No for accreditation. If the NBA says ‘No’ it implies that the institutions has not conformed to the minimum requirements. ii) Accreditation for three years and iii) Accreditation for five years. Thus when accreditation is given for specific periods, the universities/
institutions are motivated to improve the resources and focus constantly on the areas which ensure quality.

1.15 Role of Funding Agencies

The report and assessment of NAAC and NBA followed by the majority of the universities / institutions by UGC (University Grants Commission) and AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) have made the institutions focus on quality of education. In addition, the assessment of quality by NAAC and NBA serve as the basis for financial assistance. The following are some of funding agencies in India:

- University Grants Commission(UGC)
- Department of Science and Technology(DST)
- Defence Research and Development Organization(DRDO)
- Department of Sports and Youth Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi.

These agencies grant not only funds for creating infrastructure facilities, lab facilities, computer facilities etc. But also encourage research and development. Minor and major projects are financed by these agencies in different areas such as science, technology, sports etc. Government of India collects 2% of the total tax paid towards educational cess and the amount collected has facilitated the funding agencies to grant financial assistance liberally to all the deserving institutions/scholars. By getting grants, the institutions have developed facilities and improved research. The scholars have also pursued research in different areas. Thus the funding agencies play a major role in providing quality education in India.
1.16 Research Plan

Having selected the research topic, the researcher plans to give a brief introduction in Chapter I. Introduction includes growth of educational institutions in India. Role of Christian missionaries in education, contribution of Franciscan sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation to education, establishment of the college, objectives of the college, choice of research topic, definition of key terms and role of funding agencies. Chapter II presents a review of related studies. Chapter III explains the research methodology which includes the dimensions of quality assurance, preparation of the tool, validation of the tool and the administration. Chapter IV deals with data analysis and findings. Chapter V presents the conclusion which includes consolidated findings followed by recommendations and suggestions for further research. The researcher, with the above framework in mind, proceeds to present a review of related studies in the following chapter.