CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 SUMMARY

Higher education is the fast growing service industry exposed to the 'liberalization, privatization and globalization' processes in the recent times. In order to attract students and to cater to their and needs aspirations higher education providers have been actively involved in the process of understanding students' expectations and their perceptions about quality in the system. They are expected to adopt techniques of measuring quality of the inputs and process of education just like any other business sector. Measuring quality of the services is, therefore, an important task to provide feedback on the dimensions of quality that needs to be taken care of, in the future.

There is enough justification for an increased assessment of the quality of the country's educational institutions. Traditionally, these institutions assumed that quality could be determined by their internal resources, viz., faculty with an impressive set of degrees and experience, availability of good number of books and journals in the library, an ultra-modern campus, and size of the endowment, etc., or by its definable and assessable outputs, viz., efficient use of resources, producing uniquely educated, highly satisfied and employable graduates. As students are direct receivers and participators in the higher education process, the available study activities would influence their perceptions and satisfactions to the educational quality. The major factors that influence students' perceptions to the quality of higher education are the teacher's quality and the quality of the student support system (including peers, family, institutional climate and the environment). It is also argued that the concept of quality management requires the organization should “take customer as the focus of attention”. Quality has certain expression and is related with
the evaluation of this expression. The quality of higher education, more precisely-its perception – is determined by various factors: "the changing perception of society to teaching and learning, the social expectations towards the graduate of higher education institution, balance between research and studies in the establishments of higher education activities and management of institution, structure and content of study programmes, implementation of the study process, teaching–learning environment and satisfying the needs of students".

Quality assurance, also termed as quality monitoring, has become the buzz word of colleges and universities now, as they are responsible to the society for the products, they produce i.e. the graduates. The concept of accountability emphasized as the university has the main responsibility to justify to society how the finances provided by government are used in the teaching–learning process of university students. The concept of consumerism has also emerged, whereby the students, taken as consumers of the service of education have the right to obtain the best of quality education that is possible'. The NAAC has identified following seven criteria to serve as the basis for its assessment procedures of quality excellence in higher educations institutions:


All these different criteria with a number of quantifiable indicators have been allotted differential weightages accredit an institution with appropriate grade point average. The need of quality assurance in higher education is on increase to cater to the ever increasing employment related demands of market, within the country and at international level. The issue of quality assurance – external and internal–has sought the attention of national level institutions such as UGC, NAAC, AICTE, NCTE etc. The criteria adopted by NAAC, since its
inception, has also undergone a sea change to incorporate the emerging realities and needs of market on the one hand and of students and community on the other hand. Hence the findings of the study, based on views and perception of students and teachers, will have immense use for (i) looking into the relevance of the parameters of quality in higher education; (ii) redefining of existing parameters; and (iii) evolving new parameters in the mechanism of quality assurance in higher education.

The perusal of review of related literature (Harvey, 1998; Stella, 2001; Anandakrishanan, 2004; Mehta, 2004; Kaur, 2006; Thorat, 2006; Altback, 2009; Singh, 2009; Tilak, 2010; Aggrawal, 2012; Dhawan, 2013) reveals that higher education system needs a change to be more oriented towards market needs in globalising economy, while maintaining a commitment to existing value pattern of a society and keeping a high level of quality maintenance. It is matter of concern that higher education institutions have restricted themselves to teaching and other two components – research and extension – have not been adequately taken care of to the desired level.

The rapid expansion of higher education to meet the need for mass higher education, without corresponding provision of infrastructural facilities and resources, has affected quality of the system in both developed arid developing countries, Evaluation procedures, being adopted by assessment and accreditation councils have no doubt helped to assess the level of excellence along with its maintenance in a particular system and provide a lead to move towards enhance quality in higher education which is a continuous process. In the light of these observations, it was thought worthwhile undertake the research problem entitled:

**Quality Assurance in Higher Education: An Evaluative Study**
Objectives:

1. To study performance of university system with special reference to Punjabi University on identified parameters of quality assurance in higher education.

2. To study views and perceptions of college and university teachers on their role performance in terms of identified parameters of:
   i) Teaching;
   ii) Research;
   iii) Extension.

3. To study views and perceptions of university students with regard to quality of higher education and its relevance in the era of globalization in terms of certain identified parameters of quality assurance in higher education.

Delimitations

The proposed study was confined to:

i) Only to three state universities of Punjab providing Post-graduate courses of the study.

ii) Mechanisms being evolved in quality assurance in terms of annual reports of university system.

iii) Views and perception of university teachers with regard to three major functions i.e. teaching, research and extension.

iv) Views and perceptions of university students with regard to quality and relevance of higher education in globalizing economic order.

Operational Definition of Terms

i) Quality assurance in higher education connotes commitment on the part of higher education institutions-both colleges and universities-to ensure continuous improvement in physical and human resources in the educational system to strengthen teaching-learning process to enable the recipients to be skilled and productive members in market and good citizens in the society.

ii) Evaluation is the systematic investigation into the process of outcomes of the implementation of a particular educational program, also synonymous with "program evaluation": such investigations answer calls for accountability, assist in decision making, aid program development and planning, and serve research. 'Evaluative study' in the present study connotes compressive analysis and interpretation of progress (based on documentary evidence) in higher education institutions over the
previous 10 years of accreditation along with judgmental aspects of teachers and students on excellence/quality and relevance of higher education in socio-economic development of Indian society.

**Methodology**

Keeping in view the nature of the study, mixed methods of research were followed i.e. qualitative and quantitative. The study has been conducted in two phases:

**Phase I: Documentary Analysis and Tool Development**

I) Documentary analysis dealing with evaluation reports of NAAC was done with regard to assessment and accreditation of degree colleges and university system over the last 10 years. The strengths and weaknesses of the colleges and universities have been culled out from the reports and presented in the form of statements.

II) In order to study views and perceptions of college and university teachers and students followings tools were constructed and standardized.

- Interview schedule for college/university teachers to seek their views and perceptions with regard to different aspects of quality assurance i.e. curriculum; teaching-learning and evaluation; research, consultancy and extension; infrastructure and learning resources; Governance and Leadership and innovative practices.

- Questionnaire-cum-interview schedule for university students to seek their views and perceptions with regard to teaching learning process, facilities, research and extension activities.

**Phase II: Field Survey**

The field survey on teachers and students was conducted as stated below:

**Sample**

The college and university teachers and campus based post-graduate students of three state universities was the universe of present study. The sample for present study consisted of 175 college/university teachers and 500 university students.
**Tools**

Interview schedule for colleges/university teachers and Questionnaire-cum-interview schedule for university students were used for collection of primary data.

**Organisation and Treatment of Data**

Documentary analysis of NAAC reports of universities and colleges was made to cull out salient features reflecting on strengths and weaknesses of higher education institutions; Percentage analysis of teachers' and students' responses to identified quality issues and concerns – as per UGC norms and NAAC criteria – was made for interpretation of primary data.

**5.2 CONCLUSIONS**

The results of the study – as arrived at with the help of content analysis of documents and reports along with views and perceptions of teachers and students’ on quality concerns in higher education – led to certain conclusions as stated below.

**5.2.1 Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions**

The content analysis of NAAC reports of universities and colleges was done to find out the observations of review members. These were further classified into (i) strengths, (ii) weaknesses, (iii) opportunities, (iv) challenges and (v) recommendations for quality enhancement as reported hereunder.

**i) Strengths (University Campus)**

1. A wide range of programme options in varied disciplines including Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Basic Sciences, Professional Programmes (Engineering, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Management, Law and Education), among others; are in vogue. The promotion of academic studies and research on socio-economic development of Punjab along
with Punjabi language, literature, religion, culture and heritage are also on the agenda of higher education institutions.

2. Taking the higher education programmes to the doorsteps of the rural/backward regions through establishment of several neighbourhood and satellite campuses, and also efforts to provide professional education with subsidized fee structure for the benefit of the poorest in the rural area is another highlight.

3. Special efforts have been there towards resource mobilization through contributions from NRIs, alumni and others; sizeable revenue generation through self-financing professional programmes, and from correspondence courses.

4. Quite an enterprising managerial initiative in getting several structures/schemes sponsored and supported by UGC/Government/NGOs; some buildings/facilities have also come up thanks to magnificent contributions of donors.

5. Besides strong academic profile of a good number of Departments of Studies and Research (especially in Science faculties), a commendable and sustained record of accomplishments in sports.

ii) **Strengths (Affiliated Colleges)**

1. Good academic ambience and work culture existing among teaching faculty.

2. The performance of the students in the final examination and active participation in sports and extension activities.

3. Proactive management and good scope for further expansion of the infrastructure facilities.

4. Blending of modern and Traditional based teaching-learning method.

iii) **Weakness in University System**

1. A good number of faculty positions lying vacant; leaving some of the Departments under-staffed or managed by adhoc faculty. In this context, it is noted that some posts have been advertised recently.
2. Despite a large number of programmes being offered in multiple disciplines, there is little horizontal mobility for the students to choose across the disciplines. The curricular reform such as choice-based credit system is yet to be attempted.

3. While there are some pockets of individual excellence in research, the over-all strength in terms of research projects and quality publications in refereed/high-impact-factor journals deserve to be improved. Many of the publications happen to be the books published by the university Press and a good number of articles in house journals, particularly in humanities and social sciences.

4. A considerable amount of duplication/overlapping of activities by a number of differently christened departments/chairs on account of funding factors. Lack of co-ordination/interaction among the departments, with in a faculty or lack of any umbrella structure called school.

5. The functioning of student support-structures (placement cell, grievance redressal cell and others) and conditions of hostels, and of learning resources (particularly in access time, and opportunity and ambience) deserve to be improved to ensure better levels of student satisfaction of the campus.

iv) Weaknesses (Affiliated colleges)

1. Shortage of regular and qualified teaching faculty.
2. Lack of infrastructural facilities including laboratories.
3. Lack of new books and reference material in library.
4. Student participation in co-curricular and community related extension activities.
5. Alumni association non-existent.
6. Liaison with industry and community non-existent.
7. Research projects and research orientation among teaching faculty not satisfactory.
8. Use of ICT based aids in teaching learning not satisfactory.
9. Lack of funds for maintenance of existing facilities and creation of new facilities for teaching-learning.

10. IQAC not functional.

11. Lack of e-governance in administrative and library affairs.

v) Institutional Opportunities

1. Scope for developing some autonomous schools/centers of excellence taking some strong departments as nodal points (Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences).

2. A good opportunity for this multi-faculty University system offering a wide range of PG programmes on the campus, for giving adequate freedom/flexibility for the students in the choice of credit-based soft core courses across disciplines.

3. Scope for improving career-focus of the programmes by imparting soft-skills including communication skills and by offering skill-based add-on certificates/diplomas on a concurrent basis.

4. Opportunity for improving consultancy and extension services, for dissemination of research findings relevant for application, through better university-industry linkages, by creating a separate catalytic structure for the purpose.

5. Scope for improving the quality of the professional and other programmes: for instance, longer time-span of integrated courses beginnings with either +2 or even matriculation for entry into higher education institutions along with providing ample scope for enriching the curricula, more industry-oriented and with internship programmes.

vi) Institutional Challenge

1. Challenge of finding quality faculty/resources for expanding and sustaining the quality of programmes in the so many satellite/neighbourhood campuses.

2. Challenge of affiliation-related burdens and diversions generally associated with an affiliating university to cope with increasing number of degree colleges options for variety of PG Courses along with starting/running of post-graduation courses.
3. At the macro level, emerging challenge of several central/national universities which are likely to drain out good faculty and administrative resources from the general pool; posing a greater challenge of competition to the state universities.

vii) **Recommendations for Quality Enhancement**

1. Taking due advantage of the wide-ranging programme options available on the campus, a flexible choice-based credit system could be adopted for the advantage of the students and for better and cross-border utilization of the faculty/facilities.

2. A number of Departments/Chairs doing very similar/related programmes leading to inevitable overlapping/redundancies be avoided. Grouping and integrating these smaller sub-units into optimally sized schools comprising of a number of courses/departments may help better effective delivery of interdisciplinary programmes also. In contrast with the existing sub-optimal Departments, the proposed Schools would qualify for better funding support – under SAP/DSA of UGC and other national level bodies.

3. Autonomous Centers of Excellence (leading to National Facilities) be established on the strength of the research accomplishments of the fellow scientists in their fields of specialization. Autonomy may also be extended to other deserving departments in the campus and affiliated colleges providing graduate and post-graduate courses.

4. Campus infra-structure needs to be expanded/toned up. This includes faculty cubicles/separate rooms, more of hostels to ease out the current congestion in occupancy, making the entire campus with wi-fi facility, more and free internet facility in the library, e-teaching/learning gadgets to all the departments generator facility for all the vital segments such as library and others centers/labs.

5. Central instrumentation facility by pooling the costly/sophisticated equipments in different laboratories may be
explored to ensure effective utilization and maintenance for ever increasing number of scholars.

6. Career-focused short-term add-on diploma/certificates be offered on a concurrent basis in most of the departments for the purpose of enriching the skill-sets of students. Fees for such courses be cross-subsidized from the revenue generated from self-financing professional programmes.

7. A hassle-free structure/procedure be evolved to enable the principal investigators of the sponsored research projects execute their projects without wasting their time/energy on bureaucratic machinery.

8. Student evaluation of teachers be applicable to all the departments. Eventually, a ‘three hundred sixty degree’ comprehensive evaluation could be introduced to ensure an all-round sensitization and involvement of all stakeholders on quality parameters. IQAC be strengthened and made more functional as an effective pro-active body in quality enhancement.

9. Student support-structures and services be strengthened for better career guidance and placement, and grievance redressal. Training in soft skills including communication skill's and computer literacy/training for the students be provided at free/subsidized cost. Establishment of language labs and outsourcing of professional expertise may be explored.

10. E-governance in all branches of administration and networking with the affiliated colleges and all the Departments/satellite and neighborhood campuses, ensuring better transparency and dissemination of information could be pursued in a systematic manner.

11. Students be given more opportunities and guidance to participate in state and national level events including NSS, sports.

12. Alumni association has to be made more active and participative in institution development along with it.
13. Anti-ragging posters need to be displayed in visible places in the campus as well as hostels.

14. More efforts need to make provision for research publications by the teachers.

The NAAC observations reflecting on various facets of quality concerns in higher education institutions along with recommendations indicate certain key points:

1. By and large higher education institutions, both university system and colleges are serving the cause of education of people to a satisfactory level;

2. Teaching-learning process along with evaluation is a matter of concern and needs a fresh look;

3. Research programmes do not have a desired level of in-depth and contextuality which needs to be geared to national requirements in developmental process; and

4. Student support services for academic purposes (teaching-learning, library and other learning resources) along with stay-in arrangements need a more rigorous review and improvement.

5.2.2 Views and Perceptions of Teachers about Quality Assurance in Higher Education

On the basis of the views and perceptions of teachers, as described on various aspects of quality issues in higher education majority or large majority of teachers in higher education institutions have shown agreement/satisfaction with a large number of issues pertaining to identified quality parameters. However, two kinds of threats or ‘dissent opinion’ have also been identified: one dealing with certain contentious quality related issues showing bipolarity among teaching faculty; (division in agreement and disagreement); and second showing disagreement or dissatisfaction by majority of teachers on certain quality related issues. These have been listed as below:
i) **Issue of Bipolarity in Views and Perceptions**

The teachers have given divergent views on certain issues concerning quality in higher education as listed hereunder.

**Curricular Aspect**

1. Any revision/designing of syllabus is always a rigorous exercise taking substantial time and involving serious and intensive discussion among members of the Board of Studies.

**Teaching, Learning and Evaluation**

2. The modern teaching aids like LCD projector, OHP, CD-ROMs and computer systems in classroom instruction are contributing towards making teaching-learning process more effective.

3. The mechanism being adopted for monitoring academic progress of students by the university is quite appropriate and effective.

**Research, Consultancy and Extension**

4. Significant achievements have been made by the university faculty in terms of research awards, patents, research projects and publications of research papers and books.

5. The collaboration of university with industry and N.G.Os. would contribute in making research more meaningful for society.

6. The research and extension activities of the university have an orientation to ensure and promote social justice and empowerment of the disadvantaged sections of the society.

**Infrastructure and Learning Resources**

7. Adequate budget allocation is made by the university for the maintenance of buildings, furniture, equipments etc.

**Student Support and Progression**

8. The University has been successfully adopting some specific strategies to meet the specific needs of advanced learners as well as of slow learners.

**Governance and Leadership**

9. The teaching faculty is involved in decision-making regarding the functioning of the university.
10. The teaching faculty of the university has been successful in mobilising considerable financial resources by means of projects, collaborations and sponsorships.

Thus it may be stated that teaching faculty has difference in their views on ten important indicators across all the seven parameters (except innovative practices) – as identified by NAAC – being used for assessment – and accreditation of higher education institutions.

ii) Threats to Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Following are the issues concerning quality in higher education institutions on which majority of teachers have shown dissatisfaction.

Curricular Aspect
1. The present syllabi of different courses are not equipping students with sufficient knowledge and skills in accordance with the emerging demands of the employment market.

Research, Consultancy and Extension
2. The departments of the university have limited number of national and international collaborations in the field of research expertise, exchange and use of infrastructure and other facilities.
3. The university system is not making significant contribution to community development programmes through extension activities.

Infrastructure and Learning Resources
4. The university is not able to provide good hostel facility to the students.

Student Support and Progression
5. The placement record of the students passing-out from the university in recent years has not been very impressive.
6. The university system is unable to provide placement and counseling services to students in effective manner.
7. The university has not been able to put into place an effective students’ grievance redressal mechanism specially with regard
problem of girls, schedule caste students and students from other parts of the country and outside the country.

**Governance and Leadership**

8. The university system has not been successful to a considerable extent in effective quality control in the affiliated/degree colleges.

9. The fee being charged from the students constitutes only a small proportion of the total cost of education in the university system and it cannot be the reason for poor quality of services in the system.

**Innovative Practices**

10. The university system has not been able to evolve practices to involve its different stakeholders in planning, implementation and evaluation of the academic programmes rather their system is growing more and more in manner to socio-cultural economic aspects of human existence in the society.

These issues concerning quality inputs in higher education institutions – across six criteria of NAAC’s assessment and accreditation – call attention of educational authorities as majority or large majority of teachers have expressed dissatisfaction on these indicators.

In nut shell, the results are suggestive of three kinds of indications: (i) teaching faculty is responsive to a large number of measures taken by educational authorities regarding quality concerns in higher education; (ii) the divided opinion on certain contentious issues and disagreement on certain other issues on quality assurance. It shows concern of teaching faculty to take care of quality assurance in higher education: However non-responsiveness of good number faculty members on some of the issues across all the seven is a point of worry.

The teachers have suggested certain measures to be taken care of by higher education institutions to enhance quality of teaching-learning process as listed below:
1. The study habits of students pursuing higher education should be developed and use of library should be ensured for the same.
2. The evaluation of learning outcomes of students be a regular feature through which comprehensive and higher order thinking is promoted among the future generation of nation.
3. The institution–community networking with the help of community related activities such as awareness rallies, celebrations of important national days etc. should be enhanced.
4. The post-graduate and doctoral level research projects need to be planned and executed keeping in view priority areas as reflected in national planning and state’s concerns for socio-economic development. The M.Phil and Ph.D level research themes and training in methodology need to be more rigorous and students’ should be geared and made to deal with research process in a scientific, but humane approach.
5. The professional development of teaching faculty through seminars, conferences and workshops etc. should take care of socio-economic development of Indian society.

From the responses of teachers on structured questions and certain open-ended responses it may be summed up that teaching faculty, under survey, has shown a responsive and responsible outlook to quality concerns in higher education. Also it in evident that they have a zeal to contribute to quality enhancement measures is higher education.

5.2.3 Views and Perceptions of University Students

The analysis and interpretation of views and perception of students (the recipients) about certain quality relates issues in their education is indication of the fact:

1. The university students, by and large, are quite well aware of the issues in the quality of teaching-learning process and its evaluation.
2. However, there are a good number of university students' who have not responded (ranging from 1% to 45%), thereby meaning that it is a matter of worry that some students are totally unaware of the important facets of educational process.

The quality concerns – as being seen in market context (in the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization) – have not been well received. The social and cultural concerns in society (as a result of education) are not being catered to. The students were requested to express their views to certain issues in higher education, which may lead to quality assurance. On the basis of their responses following issues emerged:

1. Each faculty member should be provided with separate room where she/he prepares for class and interacts with students during consultancy hours. Each faculty member should also be provided with a computer in his room for browsing internet for academic matters, doing research and preparing teaching etc.

2. Infrastructural facilities in the university should not be limited only to classrooms, library and laboratories. Sufficient infrastructural facilities should be provided for sports, hobby clubs etc. University should organize events such as technology festival, sports competition and cultural festivals.

3. The academic structure should be flexible enough to meet the expectations of different types of students.

4. Feedback mechanism should include collecting feedback through questionnaire, personal interaction with students, and voluntary feedback from students.

5. Faculty members should engage the classes as per schedule with passion and commitment. They must exhibit themselves as role model in terms of punctuality, discipline and commitment. Both the teachers and the taught should enjoy the teaching-learning.

It may be concluded on the basis of responses of university students on teaching-learning process that they are keen to learn well and are sensitive to the academic environment. They are also aware to
shortcomings in the system and have shown are good level thinking and concern for improvement in academic and research culture in higher education institutions.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The three sets of results “(i) NAAC observations (from peer review reports); (ii) Teachers’ views and perceptions on quality assurance and (iii) Students views and perceptions on teaching-learning process in higher education and issues related with its quality” are given in the proceeding sections. These results are indicative of the fact that no doubt higher education institutions are playing a crucial role in national development, but still there are problems in quality of higher education, as system is expanding to cater to large mass of Indian youth. The expansion of higher education system with inclusiveness in participation on agenda in 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017), in continuity with themes of previous plans is a big challenge to quality assurance. To quote Ghuman (2013):

India’s higher education system is the third largest after China and US. India has around 34,000 institutions having about 220 lakh students. For making education a reliable engine of development, the quantitative expansion should be in tandem with quality.

The availability of requisite infrastructural facilities, library facilities, laboratory equipments forms the core of quality environment in any higher educational institution. But, lack of funds for maintenance of existing facilities and for the creation of new facilities in public universities and colleges is a generally reported scenario these days. In fact, inadequacy of public funds is a very serious problem that the higher education system in India suffers from. It is related to many issues including falling standards and quality; widening inequalities; the growth in private institutions- specifically profit-seeking ones; the introduction of self-financing courses, even in the best universities; and the increasing reliance on student fees and loans as well as other cost recovery measures (Tilak, 2013: 8). Besides, in order to deal with the
resource crunch the universities and other institutions are also relying on donations from NRIs, alumni etc. along with collaboration with industry. Therefore, maintenance of infrastructure and facilities of desirable quality by public higher educational institutions has become a daunting task in the face of dwindling public funding.

As far as the situation in private higher education institutions is concerned, Tilak has viewed it as a stylized fact that in many private education institutions in India the quality and standards of education are poor. In his view, the poor quality of education offered in the private institutions, a fact which is being widely noted, may be because of a lack of serious concern for providing quality education by the management of these institutions, as their motives revolve more around making quick money rather than in providing good quality education; and equally, if not more importantly because of the lack of any strong quality ensuring mechanisms instituted by the government and other higher education regulatory bodies (Tilak, 2011: 26). Thus, the market-oriented economic reforms being adopted by the Indian government since 1990s have resulted in posing serious challenges to education in general and to higher education in particular.

The availability of requisite number of good teachers in higher educational institutions constitutes an important dimension of quality assurance. However, the higher education system in India now faces a very serious shortage of faculty, which is at least partially attributable to the policies of the last two decades, when downsizing of the public sector was the order of the day and faculty recruitment was banned for more than a decade. From institutions like the IITs, IIMs and central universities to undergraduate colleges, the whole system is severely short of qualified faculty. It is reported that 30 per cent to 50 per cent of the teaching positions in most institutions are vacant (Tilak, 2013: 7) Further, the establishment of central universities and private universities is also posing a challenge to the state universities to retain experienced faculty. Furthermore, the appointment of more and more teachers on ad-hoc or contractual basis in higher educational
institutions in the pretext of austerity also has serious quality implications.

Along with ensuring the availability of requisite number of teachers, the issue of teacher accountability has gained credence, especially with increasing influence of the market logic (education as a commodity/commercial service, consumer satisfaction etc.) and emulation of corporate model of management in education. Therefore, a number of mechanisms have been introduced in order to make teachers accountable such as promotion channel based on Annual Performance Indicators (API), student evaluation of teachers etc. Besides, different universities and institutions are also exploring some other mechanisms to keep a tab on teachers. Recently, in a panel discussion on “Higher Education in Punjab: Achievements and Challenges” held at Panjab University, Chandigarh, the vice chancellors of universities of this region have argued that teacher accountability is need of the hour and is also a major challenge before education system. One of the vice chancellors articulated that the teachers ‘should work for seven to eight hours a day than 14 hours a week’ and to ensure it, he advocated introduction of attendance system for teachers. However, the vice chancellor of the Central University of Punjab informed that they had already introduced a biometric attendance system for teachers. Therefore ‘teachers stay from 9 a.m to 5.30 p.m. to contribute maximum towards education. Moreover, there are no summer of winter breaks in Central University of Punjab’ (see Chandigarh Tribune, Oct. 27, 2013). Thus, in the name of teacher accountability, a rational is also being built for introducing discipline of a factory in higher educational institutions especially in universities, which generally stand for a public space where intelligentsia is engaged in the creation of ideas and values for a democratic society.

Research has been an important function of universities. Therefore, the quality of research work being done by the universities constitutes an important quality indicator. In the face of emergence of a global knowledge-based economy, good quality research leading to
generation of new ideas and innovations has become an important measure of competitiveness of a country at global level. In this regard, the National Knowledge Commission opined: “The ability to compete in the global market depends to a large extent on the capacity to generate new ideas though innovation in science and technology” (NKC, 2007). However, the perusal of NAAC reports highlights that there are only some pockets of individual or institutional excellence in research. Besides, internationally-acclaimed quality publications in refereed or high-impact-factor journals are also confined to some institutions or individuals. In the panel discussion on “Higher Education in Punjab: Achievements and Challenges” held at Panjab University, Chandigarh, the vice chancellors of universities of the region also commented upon the state of research in their respective university. They were of common view that though research has been a regular feature of the universities, but there has been a dire need to orient research to social needs and making it useful for society. Further, the quality of research work needs be improved so that it must be internationally acclaimed and should be reported in reputed national and international journals and other publications (see Chandigarh Tribune, Oct. 27, 2013).

It may also be mentioned that issues of quality as seen by objectively measured indicators to rank an institution at global level are under debate (Altbach, 2013). It is stated that ‘global university ordering is limited in what it measures. The exercise provides an incomplete perspective on higher education’. Hence the results of the present study are to be seen in the emerging views and perceptions of academic and research scholarship that looks into quantitative and qualitative concern of ever increasingly expanding educational system. The recent decision of U.G.C. to make accreditation compulsory for higher education institutions is also in the direction of qualitative improvement, both as viewed and perceived by teachers (providers) and students (receivers).

From these findings, it may be summarized that teaching faculty is appreciative of system of higher education with regard to quality
measures in higher education on a large number of issues. At the same time, the teaching community has expressed its opinions on a number of issues either in bipolarity or in terms of dissatisfaction which is indicative of the fact that teachers have a high concern over certain aspects to ensure quality assurance in higher education. These findings have an empirical support from some studies (Kaur, 2006; Singh, 2009; Singh; Khan, 2013), all conducted on educational system in Punjab in recent past. These researches have also been suggestive that teachers' and students' acceptability of quality assurance mechanism is a good sign for our system of education-geared to serve the large mass of youth (18-23 years) with a commitment to inclusiveness and excellence.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. A number of studies (ASER, PISA etc.) conducted by different organisations in recent past have highlighted that the quality of schooling in terms of desirable levels of learning among students has remained low despite the interventions by the programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (See Economic Survey 2012-13). In order to ensure the quality at higher education stage in terms of quality of clientele, there is a need to relook into the weaknesses of different initiatives at the school education level. Besides, the proposed Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), based on the proclaimed success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) should not remain an attempt merely to enhance enrolment at higher education level keeping in view the demands of the knowledge economy. Rather quality dimension must be given due significance in the implementation of this programme.

2. In a democratic society, education at all levels must be inclusive, to take care of students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Such inclusiveness should constitute an important parameter of quality in such a society, as talented people from
diverse socially disadvantaged groups would be available for their contribution to equitable development of the society. In this regard, the government has to ensure equitable higher education participation of students from different socio-economic backgrounds by checking gross commercialisation of higher education on the one hand and by effectively implementing the programmes of affirmative action. Besides, the government must establish universities and colleges in public sector, especially in educationally backward areas with quality infrastructure, faculty and other facilities for improving accessibility to quality higher education.

3. A number of recent studies on employability of educated youth have pointed out that though some of the graduates are of a high caliber, but many do not have the requisite skills needed by the employment sector. According to the recent National Employability Report, 47% graduates not employable in any sector of the knowledge economy because of lack of requisite skills (Aspiring Minds, 2013). In the face of such a situation, concerted efforts are required to improve the quality of teaching-learning process at higher education level so that skills which are required by different professions could be developed. Besides, those higher education institutions which are merely churning out untrained professionals with degrees should be regulated, both in terms of services being provided to the students of weaker sections at affordable fee and quality in teaching-learning inputs.

4. Quality of teachers working in higher education institutions is one of the most important dimension of the quality parameters of higher education. The financial crunch being faced by most of the public universities and colleges has resulted either in the large number of vacant posts of teachers in these institutions or recruitment of teachers on contractual or ad-hoc basis. Besides,
the introduction of market mechanism in educational institutions, both public and private institutions, has resulted in tenure-based recruitment of teachers as a cost-cutting exercise. Such approaches have serious implications for quality of teaching and research as well as for the overall academic environment of higher educational institutions. Therefore, the vacant posts of teachers in universities and colleges should be filled on regular basis. Further, for the professional development of the teachers, they should be encouraged to participate in refresher courses, workshops, seminars, conferences etc. In this regard, the Academic Staff Colleges need to play a more meaningful and significant role in professional development of teachers.

5. The proliferation of private higher educational institutions has been a significant phenomenon in the recent past. Most of these institutions are interested only in making quick money and are thus resulting in commercialisation of education. This privatisation of higher education has been more or less unregulated. The quality standards are not being maintained in most of the recently established private institutions as for enhancing their profit margins they compromise the quality parameters. In order to maintain quality standards in higher education institutions effective regulatory mechanism should be evolved. The government, statutory bodies and universities should play a pro-active role in this direction.

6. As per the Times Higher Education Rankings 2012-13, no Indian university or institution has found a place among the top 200 institutions. The top ranked Indian institutions according to this ranking have been IIT Kharagpur (234), IIT Bombay (258) and IIT Roorkee (267). Interestingly Panjab University Chandigarh has become first Indian University to be in the 226-250 group in the latest Times Higher Education (THE). Top 400 University rankings, surpassing all 15 IITs on the basis of research impact and international outlook. This ranking is done on 13 indicators
classified into 5 categories i.e. teaching, research, citation impact, international outlook and industry income. This is because of 'teaching reputation, staff–student ratio, doctoral degrees, research income and scholarly publications, citation impact and collaboration with international institutions for student exchange, teaching and research sharings and above all resource generation, through universities-industry collaboration'. Apart from the fact that these rankings are limited in their scope and quality of any institution can be better gauged in its regional or national context, still in this era of globalisation and in the aftermath of GATS, such rankings matter. Only the Indian institutions maintaining high quality standards can sustain in the competition being posed by foreign institutions. Therefore, in order to facilitate competitiveness of Indian institutions, massive investment and stringent quality control are required in higher education sector. A strong national system of education, based on the national goals and ideals of social justice and equality, is a must to remain competitive and participate successfully in the emerging global world order.

7. Judging higher education institutions on the basis of inputs such as infrastructure, facilities, teaching faculty, job placements, research outputs, revenue generations etc. However, output indicators especially with regard to 'returns to nation and society' are not adequately taken into account. Social mission i.e. addressing to unreached and marginalized sections and to evolve enlightened, humane and egalitarian society with adherence to constitutional values should be an equally important aspect of accreditation process. Hence in this market economy era, there is urgent need to address to societal concern as well.

When accreditation of higher educations institutions (HIEs) is going to be mandatory in near future, a more comprehensive and
effective accreditation mechanism should be put in place. The emphasis has been self-explanatory in 12th five year plan (2012-2017):

Accreditation will play a central role in the regulatory arrangements for higher education under the Twelfth Plan. Accreditation will be mandatory with clear incentives and consequences. In order to handle large-volume accreditation, multiple accreditation bodies (in addition to NAAC for institutional accreditation and NBA for programme accreditation) would be established. In order to facilitate student mobility and academic articulation, it is important to develop easily comparable, comprehensible and consistent qualifications throughout the system. A new accreditation law that provides for accreditation by independent non-profit agencies registered with a national accreditation authority is currently under consideration. While, the proper institutional structure would only emerge once the new law is enacted, capacities of existing agencies, NAAC and NBA should be enhanced in the interim. Indian institutions would also be encouraged to obtain programmatic accreditation from a select group of credible international accrediting bodies.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the light of the findings of the present study along with its delimitations, certain suggestions are being made for future researchers to focus on issues of ‘quality concerns’ and the principle of ‘expansion equity and excellence’ in higher education:

1. The focus of some researches should be on expansion of higher education institutions in the state of Punjab and country as well vis-à-vis socio-demographic and economic profile of the students having access to higher education – both academic and professional.

2. The researches should be undertaken to study socio-economic and psycho-cultural reasons for non-participation of large sections of society – mainly ruralities women, scheduled castes/scheduled tribes, other economically weaker sections, minority groups etc.

3. There is a need to study the participatory rates vis-à-vis type of higher education of different sections of society at state level and across states to identify the vulnerable groups of young adults in the light of principles of equity.
4. The initiatives for promoting the cause of universal participation in higher education, the data base regarding institutional facilities and courses available in higher education, both general and professional, is being made available by All India Survey on Higher Education since 2009-10. The Rashtrya Uchchtar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is meant for the equitable educational opportunities for all (principle of inclusiveness). Hence it would be desirable to undertake researches on utilization of educational facilities by the socio-economically weaker sections of young population (18-23 years), popularly known as ‘demographic dividend’ of India.

5. The inclusion of wider section of students with diverse background calls the researchers to look into students’ learning process and the psychological principles underlying learning and motivation in different socio-cultural contexts.

6. It is a well known fact that learning outcomes of school pass-outs entering higher education are not very satisfactory. In order to optimally enhance learning performance of students in higher education, there is need to study the role and effectiveness of metacognitive and resource management strategies in higher order learning among students, pursuing graduate and post graduate courses of the study.

7. The student activism and leadership among college and university going students along with their pro-social role in socio-economic development of India need to be focus of future researches.

8. The issues concerning student unrest, student’s socio-psychological problems and student welfare activities in higher education institutions should be focus of future researches in order to enhance quality in educational inputs.

9. The role of university teachers and of the affiliated colleges need to be researched by evaluative studies on three basic parameters – i) teaching-learning process ii) research guidance and project work; and iii) extension services. As teacher training has been given topmost priority in twelfth five year plan (2012-
2017), both at secondary and higher education stages it needs continuous evaluation – content-wise and methodology – wise to enable teachers to deal more effectively with the needs of expanding education opportunities.

10. In the era of ‘liberalization, privatization and globalization’ the issues related with functions of higher education are under transition and hence researches need to be undertaken to look into role of universities in socio-economic development of nation in the light of constitutional values.

11. The role of private sector vis-à-vis government sector in higher education need to be evaluated on the basis of constitutional values vis-à-vis corporate social responsibility (CSR).

12. The question of excellence in higher education needs to be explained in socio-cultural context of different and diversified Indian society and theorized in qualitative terms as well.

13. The role of university teachers, in particular and university system, in general needs critical study through empirical data based surveys in terms of extension services including adult and continuing education for evolving learning and egalitarian society.

14. The government programmes both in development and welfare sectors such as Mid-Day meal scheme (MDMS) in elementary education and Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Scheme. Post-matric scholarship schemes, education for sustainable development (ESD), millennium development goals (MDGs) and so on need to be continuously evaluated by researchers.

15. The national level agencies such as UGC, AICTE, NCTE along with NAAC etc. dealing with accreditation and quality assurance provide new and improvised guidelines. These, too, need evaluation by researchers to cope with quantitative and qualitative aspects of evaluation process dealing with role of higher education in development – social, economic and cultural.

The on-going educational programmes at school and higher education stages call for a comprehensive and conjoint effort of
researchers’ community to focus on national development and human development. Hence it is need of the hour to focus on all those issues, existing and emerging, that deal with human life. Education is man-making process and let researches be prioritized to focus on ‘humanistic’ aspect of education. It is worth mentioning that 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) document has aptly given emphasis on research endeavours in the following words:

Research and innovation are now vital function of higher education worldwide. The value of interdisciplinary research is recognised globally, as innovation is now happening at the intersections of disciplines. Collaboration is now central to innovation. Entrepreneurship that leverages innovation is also increasingly integral part of higher education systems. While all HEIs cannot be expected to become research-based institutions, it is vital that the country promote a research culture across all institutions while ensuring special support for those able to engage in state-of-the-art research.