Quality in Indian Management Institutions – Accreditation or Certification is Mandatory - Conceptual Paper

Prof. (Dr.) Koppula Rajanath

B.Tech (Hons.), M.Tech, MBA, PhD
ISO 900 Lead Assessor & Auditor
Member Advisory Committee, Ascent Consultants,
Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Abstract: Post economic reforms in India i.e. Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG), the entire Nation has been pushed to operate efficiently and effectively not only within the country but globally, which demands higher caliber managerial personnel, in terms of skill and knowledge to manage the ever changing and never ending competitive environment. These days the environment around any business organization is charged with Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity and unless management graduates delivered by the management institutions are competent enough to deal with such situation, these management institutions will lose their credibility in the market. To develop positive credibility and image, these management institutions need to be accredited or certified.

Accreditation or **Certification** in education is the process by which an external association or agency evaluates an educational institution or programme offered by the Institution and formally recognizes the Institution as having met and satisfied certain predetermined requirements and criteria or standards of educational quality. Apart from ensuring quality Accreditation or Certification will also enhance public **Confidence** or **Trust** about that educational institution.

It is in this context, the present study "**Quality in Indian Management Institutions – Accreditation or Certification is Mandatory - Conceptual Paper** " was taken up.

Keywords: Education, Management, Accreditation, Certification and Quality

1. Introduction:

In a competitive business environment, growth of any business organization would entirely depend on customer appreciation and loyalty it commands. Organizations are becoming increasingly conscious of the competitive potential of "**Quality**". The present day's competition focuses not only on price but quality too.

Only offering products and services of high quality on a durable basis can ensure competitive edge. Quality has become an issue because standards are contractually defined whereas previously they were vague and unmonitored [1]. In the present economic and political climate, even higher standards are demanded in the face of diminishing resources. "**Therefore, continuous enhancement of "Quality" on a sustainable basis has become essential for the prosperity of any business organization at present and in the future as well**".

Traditional thinking would state that quality is conformance to specifications.

Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so is quality in the mind of the customer. If the customer is not happy with the product, it is not of quality and therefore "Quality is a Measure of the Conformance of the Product to the Customer's Needs" [2].

Webster's Dictionary (1989) [3] defines quality as "A degree of Excellence or Superiority in Kind". The American Society for Quality Control (ASQC, 1987) specifies that quality is "the Totality of Features and Characteristics of a Product or Service that bear on its Ability to Satisfy Stated or Implied needs". Crosby (1979) stated that quality is "Conformance to Requirements". Juran (1993) suggested two simple definitions of quality: "Fitness for Use" and "Quality is Customer Satisfaction". In earlier days Quality was perceived as a Corrective measure. However, over a period of time, situation has changed and concept of Quality shifted from "Correct the Occurrence" to a state of "Prevent the Recurrence". This concept has been used as a powerful weapon by any organization to win over competitors and Management Institutions couldn't be an exception.

The environment around the world business has changed considerably in the recent past with the technology evolving at a very rapid pace leading to the fourth industrial revolution, which has created VUCA environment. VUCA [4] means: "Volatility", "Uncertainty", "Complexity" and "Ambiguity. VUCA describes the situation of unpredictable change that is now the norm in most of the industries in the world. Therefore, the future managers are required to be "Educated" and build up the "Skills" that are needed to manage such an environment. This becomes very important in the Indian context given the following two considerations such as (i) Growing MSME sector, which demand "Skilful" manpower to manage the scaled up operations, exploring

the financial resources and penetrate to new markets and (ii) <u>Demand for Entrepreneurship</u> to address The Start up India and Make in India programmes.

Management education in India has undergone considerable change over the years. The launch of the first two IIMs in Calcutta and Ahmadabad in 1961 and subsequently during the next two decades the growth was moderate. The beginning of economic reforms in the country during 90s, the thrust on management education increased with the result that several Institutions started offering two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM), in addition to Universities offering two year Masters in Business Administration (MBA) by establishing departments of management studies. From the beginning of 2000, there was a mushroom growth of Business Management Schools (BMS) and as on 2016 there are around 5,500 [5] which are recognized by the central or state governments. It is also a fact that there are a very large number of management institutions which are yet to be recognized by the government and most of these are privately managed. As per ASSOCHAM, barring a handful of top business schools like the government run IIMs and other few, most of the management Institutions in the country are producing sub-par graduates who are largely unemployable and the ASSOCHAM Education Committee (AEC) noted that only 7 per cent of the pass-outs are actually employable in India excepting graduates from IIMs. There are more seats than the takers in the management schools. In the last five years, the number of management school seats has tripled. In 2015-16, these schools offered a total of 5, 20, 000 seats in MBA courses, compared to 3, 60, 000 in 2011-12. Lack of quality control and infrastructure, low-paying jobs through campus placement and poor faculty are the major reasons for India's unfolding management school disaster. The need to update and re-train faculty in emerging global business perspectives is practically absent in many management institutions, often making the course content redundant. While on an average each student spent nearly Rs 3 to Rs 5 lakh on a two-year MBA programme, their current monthly salary is Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000. The faculty is also another problem as few people enter the teaching profession due to low salaries and the kind of respect they get from the society around them.

2. Study Objective:

In the context of the above the objective for the study is "**<u>Quality in Indian Management Institutions – Accreditation or Certification is Mandatory - Conceptual Paper</u>**" i.e. to develop the quality in management institutions in India, it would be imperative for each and every institute need to be either accredited or certified by appropriate agencies.

3. Methodology:

The study is non-empirical since the paper is conceptual in nature. The basic information has emerged from ideas, thoughts coupled with the literature review and published information, all of which were then converted in to the "**Entire Concept**". The entire concept is described as a **Model** comprising four components, viz; "**Environment**", "**Process**", "**Improvement**" and "**Outcome**". The methodology also involves understanding the **Teaching – Learning Process** under the following four steps: **1ˢᵗ step** involves the student's Attendance, Aptitude and Attitude, **2ⁿᵈ step** includes the back ground of the student, the infrastructural facilities available at the institution and the exposure levels of the student, **3ʳᵈ step** involves the Teacher's Competency, and **4ᵗʰ step** involves the Teacher's Skills, Aptitude and Attitude. From these four steps, the "**Knowledge**" and "**Skills**" acquired by a student is finally presented in the form of an empirical equation, involving all the factors of the above steps, which concludes that what everyone's belief during "**Teaching – Learning**" process, 100% knowledge transfer takes place is a "**Myth**".

4. Literature Review:

Dr. Debjani [6] states that the quality of the institute as a whole and the degrees imparted by it need to be regulated with certain common established and set standards so that it meets the expected need of its clients - students, parents, employer and society at large.

Any institution of higher education would aspire to stand out in the crowd and establish itself as distinguished in fulfilling the confidence of its stakeholders. The status and quality of an institute can be estimated from the accreditation status of the institute, university, and the program that it imparts.

"**Accreditation**" in higher education [7] is a collegial process based on self and peer assessment. Its purpose is the improvement of academic quality and public accountability. This continuing "<u>Quality</u>" control process occurs usually every five to ten years.

Accreditation is a term covering both the initial and ongoing approval of an institution offering as meeting the standards established by a nationally recognized accrediting association. Accrediting associations are voluntary membership organizations that undertake to monitor the "**Academic**" and "**Administrative**" quality of their members, which are either entire institutions or components.

AICTE stands [8] for All India Council for Technical Education and NBA stands for National Board of Accreditation. NBA was established by AICTE for periodic evaluations of technical institutions & programmes basis according to specified norms and standards as recommended by AICTE council. The simple and most important thing for a common student to know about AICTE is that it is the only organization that approves a college all over the nation. If a college is not approved by AICTE their degrees are not valid. AICTE recognition means before an educational institution start taking approval from state govt. and state university they should fulfill basic requirements for starting an educational institution. AICTE check those minimum conditions at the beginning and gives its approval. Once the institution gets the approval from AICTE they can associate themselves with the state university for start admitting students for engineering studies. As AICTE grown big in years, it became highly difficult to have a constant check on the quality of education in approved colleges and at the same time assessing the new applications for starting colleges. To deal with AICTE established an autonomous body known as NBA to have periodic evaluations of the Colleges & Courses according to specified norms and standards as recommended by AICTE. It has the full authority to recognize or derecognize institutions and programmes under them.

Similar is the case with NAAC. NAAC stands for National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous body, established under the aegis of UGC.

IAO [9], International Accreditation Organization, states that Educational "**Accreditation**" is a system which ensures that educational institutions provide an education that conforms to global standards, as well as other student-driven facilities that help students achieve their goals. Accreditation is also a guarantee that education providers continue to improve their teaching methods and academic standards, keeping in view the students' best interests. IAO grants accreditation to leading educational institutes based on the stringent evaluation criteria. IAO accreditation in India is assuming great importance and a few institutes have earned accreditation based on their high educational standards and other features. Still a very large number of management institutes in India are to be accredited.

As per Jon Murthy [10] the terms accreditation and certification are often used interchangeably and occasionally together. Despite the obvious confusion this can cause, the difference between the two distinct quality management processes are explained. "**Certification**" represents a written assurance by a third party of the conformity of a product, process or service to specified requirements. "**Accreditation**", on the other hand, is the formal recognition by an authoritative body of the competence to work to specified standards. All accreditation standards include the principles of "**Quality Management Systems (QMS)**", such as those found in the ISO 9001 QMS standard. It is the ability to demonstrate technical competence that puts accredited certification on a level above non-accredited certification.

As per Wikipedia [11] "**Certification**" is the formal attestation or confirmation of certain characteristics of an object, person, or organization. This confirmation is provided by some form of external review, education, assessment, or audit. Accreditation is a specific organization's process of certification. According to the U.S. National Council on Measurement in Education, a certification test is a credentialing test used to determine whether individuals are knowledgeable enough in a given occupational area to be labeled "competent to practice" in that area.

The ISO 8402-1986 standard defines quality [12] as: "**The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.**"

Quality, as per Prof. Sreedhara Bhat [13], stands for:
Q   **Quest** for
U   **Understanding** the Customer Needs by
A   **Actions** to achieve Customer's Satisfaction through
L   **Leadership** by
I   **Involving** all the concerned people and building
T   **Team Spirit** and developing
Y   **Yardsticks** for measurement of Progress.

As per Prof. Shetty, [14] in the article titled "Management Education in India: Trends, Relevance and Challenges ahead" concluded that in 21st century, India is emerging as an economic power. This will be mainly driven by industry and service sectors. With globalization, liberalization and privatization, the private corporate sector is going to be the major player in this regard. In order to enable the private sector to play such a dynamic role, a large pool of globally competitive professional managers would be required. The demand for managers is expected to continue in the upcoming years. "**The management institutions in India have formidable task to meet this growing demand**".

As per Dr. Marimuthu etal [15], in their article titled "Quality of Management Education in India and Reengineering Process from Traditional to Modern: An Overview" have stated that Education is the most dynamic science that should change with the passage of time. It is the main tool of human development which can be termed as key to growth and prosperity. Management education is all about managing the business of life and life of business and that's why the variables of management education keep on changing. The challenges of 21st century have necessitated the change in management education system in the country. The 21st century promises to herald a different environment for human development in all walks of life, including education. **It is going to be knowledge-driven century resulting a need of greater reform in all education sectors related activities like teaching, learning, evaluating, curriculum revision, administration processes etc.**

Mr. Arega Yirdaw [16] in his article titled "The role of governance in quality of education in private higher education institutions: Ethiopia as a case study" stated that the country is currently pursuing its education sector development program to create a knowledgeable, skilled, and employable workforce that can play a major role in the development of the country. The MoE has made clear in its position papers, regulations, and policies that "**quality education is paramount** "to the planned growth and expansion of the educational system in the country (FDRE, 2003).
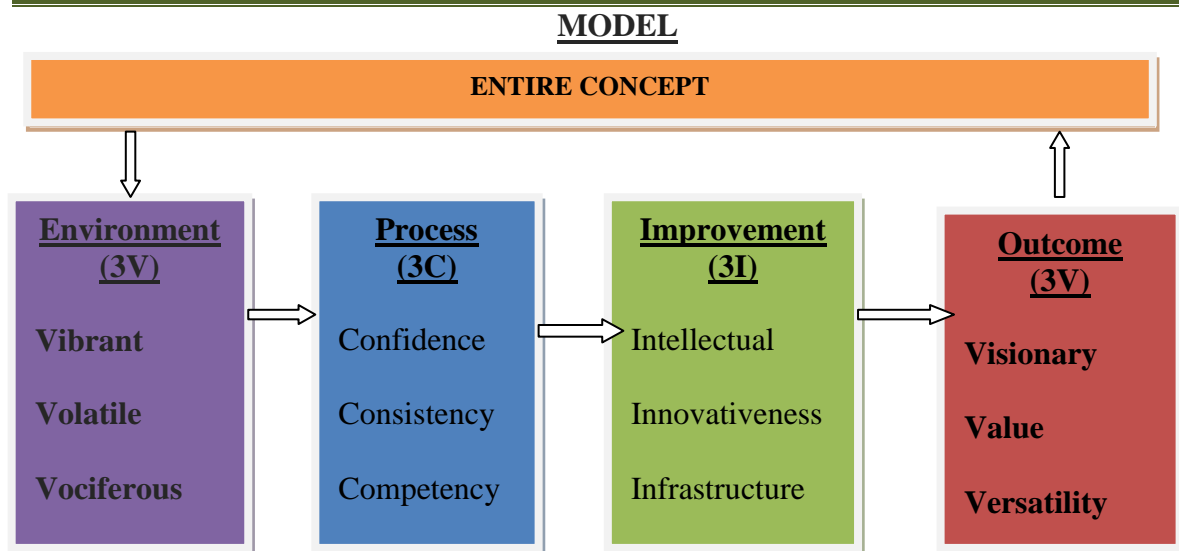
Ms. Gowri Menon [17] in her article titled " Maintaining quality of education in Management Institutes – Reforms required ", had stated that the 'quality' concept has grown to become an obsession in Japan and other Western countries, and India can't but join the race. **While improving quality of products/processes is ingrained in manufacturing industries, it is exciting to note that service rendering organizations are also becoming increasingly quality conscious and Education, as a service-rendering industry, demands quality maintenance and improvement.** In India, over the past decade, management education has been observing an upward trend which is indicated by the mushrooming of an alarmingly large number of Management Institutes and the moving in of an ocean of students seeking management degrees. It was also explained that "the quality of management education is largely dependent on the quality of its faculty, and the latter should be constantly enhanced by encouraging faculty to attend Faculty Development Programs and promoting Research Culture".

5. Study Details:

The above literature review confirms the existence of competitive environment among management institutions. The competitive environment is described as "**Vibrant**", "**Volatile**" and "**Vociferous**". **Vibrant** means the market is full of players, free market forces play and therefore, the market is shaky or vibrating. **Volatile** denotes that the industry is not compromising with the current output of management institutions and slowly it is moving towards recruiting higher quality human resource assets. Further, the demands for integrated knowledge and skills is increasing with an emphasis on integrated learning approach involving inter disciplinary content. **Vociferous** signifies that students are increasingly empowered with regard to their needs due to the net worked economy/environment and they also have an access to the knowledge world over of what is happening in other institutions. This is further facilitated with the revolution in information technology and communications.

In such a "Vibrant", "Volatile" and "Vociferous", (3Vs), environment, education institutions can survive only when they build the "Confidence" in the students through "Consistency" in performance, and meeting the requirements of "Competency", (3Cs). In order to build these, the management institutions need to "Continually Improve" upon their competency of the intellectual capital through enhancing "Intellectual Property", "Infrastructure", and "Innovativeness" (3Is).The 3Is would finally lead to broadening "Vision", for enhancing "Value" and thereby develop in the Institution or the Management the very much needed "Versatility", (3Vs).

The "Entre Concept", "3V⟶ 3V", thus developed comprises four components, viz; 3Vs, 3Cs, 3Is, and 3Vs which are respectively addressed as "Environment"; "Process", "Improvement" and "Outcome". The "Entire Concept" is described in the "Model" given below:

MODEL

ENTIRE CONCEPT

Environment (3V) **Vibrant** **Volatile** **Vociferous**	**Process (3C)** Confidence Consistency Competency	**Improvement (3I)** Intellectual Innovativeness Infrastructure	**Outcome (3V)** **Visionary** **Value** **Versatility**

The understanding of the 3V → 3V concept will facilitate in drafting long-term strategies by management and thereby enhance the competitive capabilities of their institutions to excel in the ever-changing and never ending competitive environment. The major factors in this concept are "**Competency**" of the Institutional resources such as '**Infrastructure including Faculty**", "**Intellectual Property**" through augmented research by faculty to develop "**Innovativeness**" in programme content to deliver the very much desired "**Value**" and there by achieve the much demanded "**Versatility**" for any management institution.

Maslow [18] defined "**NEED**" as generic and needs in living beings are hierarchical pyramid of human needs stretching from basic physical needs at the bottom to spiritual or transcendental needs at the top.

The generic or "**Physiological Needs**" are Food, Clothing and Shelter. As per Maslow, once these physiological needs are satisfied, the need level climbs to "**Security Need**s", which when satisfied leads to "**Societal Needs**", which later climbs to "**Love and Esteem**" and finally to "**Self Actualization** ". Therefore, it concludes that once lower level of need is fulfilled the demand for higher level of need emerges.

The significant lesson from this concept is that needs are ever dynamic and changing, and needs keep climbing from one level to another i.e. "**Needs Know No Boundaries**". In the context of "**Education**", the need in the student, the customer of any educational institution, is "**Knowledge**". Knowledge is gathered to enhance "**Value addition** to the existing knowledge and thereby **Skills** and **Personality Development**". Knowledge is endless, particularly in the context of the expanded acrimony "**Education**" as given below:

E	**Excellent**
D	**Dwelling in the**
U	**Universe through**
C	**Continual improvement** in
A	**Actions for**
T	**Transcending the**
I	**Inherent**
O	**Opportunities in the**
N	**Nature to inherit them**

As "Need Knows No Boundaries", similarly, *"**Knowledge Knows No Boundaries***". Knowledge continues to expand so long Nature exists. The Nature is never understood in its entirety, because of VUCA, as explained earlier. Human being has been continuously exploring and unfolding the hidden opportunities of the Nature for the benefits of the Society at large.

The central focus of "Education" is *"Continual Improvement"* in actions for transcending the hidden opportunities of the nature and there by achieve higher levels of "Knowledge" on a continual basis through "Teaching – learning Process".

The "Teaching – learning Process" comprises of 3 "A's. The 3 "As" stand for:

1st A is **Acquiring Knowledge**: The knowledge stored in the mind of the student of a particular subject.

2nd A is **Assimilation of the acquired knowledge**: Integrating the knowledge acquired from each subject and arriving at sum total knowledge of all the subjects.

3rd A is **Application of Knowledge**: It is the synergy that evolves from the assimilated knowledge from all the subjects in a particular year or of a particular degree. Higher the synergy higher would be the competitive edge in the student. The sum total of Acquiring, Assimilation and Application is the knowledge acquired or the "**Value Addition**" in the student. Higher the value addition, higher would be the **Competitive Strength** of the student.

Considering the basics such as **Attitude** and **Aptitude** of the student, the student's interests and the peer group, comprehension capacity, the student acquires knowledge and skills less than what has been taught. This means the knowledge (K) acquired by a student in a given course or subject is proportional to the product of the "**Attendance Performance**" of that particular student and the student's attitude and aptitude levels.

$$K \propto \text{attendance} * \text{aptitude} * \text{attitude} \qquad ……… (1)$$

Further, considering the student's background, such as medium of instruction during earlier education, classroom facilities/resources, and the environment, we may further discount the knowledge acquired by the student. Therefore, the knowledge acquired by the student will be proportional to the product of the "**Student's background**", "**Infrastructure**" and "**Level of Exposure to the outside World**".

$$K \propto \text{background} * \text{infrastructure/resources} * \text{exposure level of the student} --- (2)$$

We may further discount the knowledge and skills acquired by the student, considering the extent of "**Faculty' Competence**" level. If the faculty doesn't undergo any continuous learning and development, the faculty competence levels will be proportional to the knowledge that the faculty has acquired during their study in a college. The competence level of the faculty will have bearing on the knowledge delivered to the students. If the faculty undergoes further development and acquires new knowledge and skills continuously, the knowledge delivery process would be positively impacted. However, considering this factor i.e., faculty competence level whether high or low, the knowledge acquired by the student in the given subject is proportional to the level of faculty competency.

$$K \propto \text{faculty competency (for the given course)} …………… (3)$$

Considering "**Skills**" of communication of the faculty, "**Aptitude**" and "**Attitude**" of the faculty, particularly younger faculty (sometimes the younger faculty take up teaching assignment as a stop gap arrangement), the knowledge and skills acquired by the student may be further discounted.

$$K \propto \text{Skills} * \text{aptitude} * \text{attitude (of the faculty)} …………… (4)$$

On consolidating all the above inferences, the **Knowledge (K)** acquired by the student in a given course/subject with student **Attendance Performance as (A)**, **Aptitude level as (Apt)**, **Attitude** measured as **(Att)**, with **Background (B)** and **Exposure level of (E)** and under the guidance of faculty whose **Competence & Skill level is (Fcs)** and with **Attitude (Fat)** and **Aptitude (Fap)** with the help of institutional "**Infrastructure" (I)** facilities i.e., library, laboratory etc, is given b:

Knowledge and Skills acquired (K) $\propto$ **A*App*Att*B*E*Fc*Fat*Fap*I**

OR

Knowledge and Skills Acquired (K) = M (A*App*Att*B*E*Fc*Fat*Fap*I)

where 'M' is the aggregate or percentage of marks obtained by the student in that course/subject.

6. Conclusion:

The above empirical formula though hypothetical one should understand the theme. It is that everyone believes that during "**Teaching – Learning**" of an "**Education**" process, 100% "**Knowledge**" transfer takes place, which is a "**Myth**". In reality, it is far below than what is expected. Host of other factors, such as **Attendance**, **Process of Examinations**, **Analysis of Examination Results**, **Placement Activities** etc in addition to the factors described above, need to be addressed by educational institutions and thereby take adequate measures to build up their capacity and translate them from a state of "**Correct the Occurrence**" to "**Prevent the Recurrence**". The transformation is possible only when the faculty and management realize and understand that "**Continual Improvement**" is the only way left for them to sustain and grow in a competitive environment. The techniques or strategies to arrive at such a state are either by "**Accreditation by National Board of Accreditation (NBA)**" or "**National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**" or "**Certification by ISO 9000 Standards**"

In the process of **Accreditation**, either by NBA or NAAC several parameters such as the faculty strength, cadres, qualification and level of competence and performance, commitment, attitudes and communication skills of the faculty are considered under the criterion "**Faculty and Human Resource**" and the academic calendar, number of instructional days, contact hours per week, delivery of syllabus, student evaluation and feedback etc. are considered under the criterion "**Teaching- Learning Process**". Further in

accreditation, the focus is on "**Research and Development and Interactive Effort**" and is given the maximum weightage, which indicates extensive research inputs is the order resulting in "**Continual Improvement**".

      Certification of management institutions is done by ISO 9000 Standards. Many may not be aware as to what ISO 9000 Standard is and the key benefits that accrue due to the certification of the institution. ISO stands for International Organization for Standardization, with head quarters in Geneva. The **Quality Management Systems (QMS)** of ISO 9000 Standards is applicable, in addition to manufacturing enterprises to service organizations including educational institutions. A well documented QMS as per certain laid down procedures of the standard, implemented and maintained. Periodic "**Surveillance Audit**" is conducted to ensure the QMS is adhered to. The ISO 9000 Standards also emphasizes on "**Continual Improvement**" apart from being "**Customer Centric**" with a focus on "**Prevent the Recurrence**". The broad benefits due to this Certification are:

- Performance advantages through improved organizational capabilities,
- Alignment of improvement activities at all levels to an organization's strategic intent, and
- Flexibility to react quickly to opportunities".

References

[1]. Chapter 1 Introduction, 14.139.13.47 › jspui › bitstream
[2]. K. Sreedhara Bhat, "Total Quality Management – Text and cases", Himalaya Publishing House, pp.1
[3]. Relationship of the HACCP system to Total Quality Management, link.springer.com
[4]. whatis.techtarget.com › definition › VUCA-volatility-unce
Blow to B schools: 93% of management graduates ... – First post www.firstpost.com › Business News
[6]. Dr (Prof) Debjani Banerjee **Significance of Accreditation of Management Institutions,** www.shiksha.com › mba › articles › significance-of-acc...Feb 5, 2019
[7]. Definitions and Purposes of Accreditation www.ada.org › coda › definiti...
[8]. What is the difference between AICTE approval and NBA discuss education. in ›   what-is-t
[9]. **Accreditation in India – IAO** www.iao.org › accreditation-in-india
[10]. Jon Murthy, **What is the difference between accreditation and certification?** www.pbctoday.co.uk › planning-construction-news
[11]. Wikipedia- What is Quality
[12]. What is quality? Definition and examples - Market Business, *marketbusinessnews.com* › financial-glossary › quality
[13]. Prof. K.Sreedhara Bhat, Total Quality Management, Text & Cases, Himalaya Publishing house,, First Edition, August 2002, Pp.6,
[14]. Prof. Shetty Trends, Relevance and Challenges Ahead i-Scholar, www.i-scholar.in › NITTEMR › article › view, Vol 8, No 2 (2014), Pp: 139-148, Published: 2014-12-18,
[15]. Dr. Marimuthu KN and B. Chandrasekar "Quality of Management Education in India and Reengineering Process from Traditional to Modern: An Overview" 2018 IJCRT | Volume 6, Issue 2 April 2018.
[16]. Arega Yirdaw, The role of governance in quality of education in private higher education institutions: Ethiopia as a case study, www.amazon.com › Governance-Quality-Education-Pri...
[17]. Gowri Menon "Maintaining quality of education in Management Institutes – Reforms required,* Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 133 (2014) 122 – 129, ICTMS-2013,
[18]. Abraham H.Maslow - Motivation and Personality –