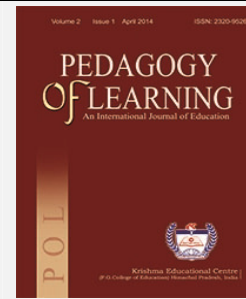


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Functioning of Internal Quality Assurance Cells in NAAC Accredited Colleges

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to explore the functioning status of Internal Quality Assurance Cells in NAAC accredited colleges of coastal Odisha. The investigator has adopted exploratory survey method. Dimension specific functions of IQACs have been identified on the basis of pilot study and a questionnaire has been developed to collect data from the members and co-ordinators of IQACs. Total 12 NAAC accredited colleges of coastal Odisha were included purposively in the sample unit, out of which 6 were rural and 6 were urban colleges. The sample respondents covered 60 members i.e. five from each sample institutions. The collected data were analysed by percentage analysis and chi-square test. Functioning of IQACs were categorised under five dimensions. The institutional location was found positively associated with regularity of functioning of IQACs in different components. IQACs of urban colleges were functioning more regular than the rural colleges

Keywords: Quality of higher education, IQAC, quality assurance

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of twenty first century witnessed the movements for quality assurance in higher education both at global and local levels. It is widely recognised that higher education promotes social and economic development by enhancing human and technical

capabilities of society. It is a fact that development of higher education and development of a country are closely related. Any country that is developed today in the world is mainly for its quality higher education. Higher education is the apex level of education, which produces knowledge leaders, technicians, teachers, professors, engineers, doctors, lawyers, scientists and other similar professionals to determine the progress of human society. Lack of quality higher education creates inverse situation in the society. Improvement in quality of higher education will enhance the level of human development and greater human development influence life expectancy and GDP per capita (Tilak, 1994). Quality assurance initiatives have greatly enhanced the quality consciousness among the higher education institutions (Gnanam, 2011). Higher education has been found to be significantly related to the human development index and greater for the disadvantaged groups (Joshi, 2006). Quality assurance in higher education has been one of the major challenges in the development agenda not only in India but also all over the world.

University Grants Commission was established in the year 1956 to maintain quality of higher education in our country. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) advocated for the establishment of an independent national accreditation body. As a result, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in the month of September 1994 with its headquarters at Bangalore. As per the guideline of NAAC every accredited institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC would become a part of the institution's system and work towards realisation of the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance. Efforts are being made on the part of NAAC accredited colleges to promote internal quality enhancement practices in respective institutions (Sahoo and Srivastva, 2015). The National Knowledge Commission report (2006) and the Yaspal Committee report (2009) on renovation and rejuvenation for structural reforms of higher education are of noteworthy to visualize the future expansion of higher education in India. A missile may blow up on its launching pad because of the incompetent designer or the mechanic who adjusted the last valve. The same is true of everything else in our society. We need excellent manpower, which is possible through quality higher education.

The 12th five year plan suggests a range of reforms to higher education to change the role of the Central Government from "command and control" to "steer and evaluate" giving more autonomy and accountability to the state and to the higher education institutions themselves with the goal of improving quality. In the context of Odisha immediate attention on the part of regional government is required not mere as the concurrent responsibility but as an unaltered major player of regulating and development of higher education institutions (Dansana, 2013).

So, according to demands and needs there has been substantial development in higher education in different regions of India. To respond to the present situation the State of Odisha has taken many initiatives in the recent times. It has well organized system of higher education supported by internal and external agencies. So, according to demands and needs there has been substantial development in higher education in different regions of India. To respond to the present situation of Odisha many initiatives has been taken in the recent times. It has well organized system of higher education supported by internal and external agencies. There are 520 UGC affiliated degree colleges in Odisha, out of which 472 colleges come

under section 2 (f) and 12 (B) of the UGC Act, 1956 and 48 colleges come under section 2 (f) only but are not included under section 12 (B) of the UGC Act, 1956, (UGC, 2018). Up to 27th November 2017 there were 14 university and 192 colleges in Odisha having valid NAAC accreditation status. (NAAC, 2017^{A and B}).

Internal Quality Assurance Cell is UGC sponsored scheme to be established in all its affiliated colleges with the financial support to plan, guide and monitor quality enhancement and assurance activities at institutional level. Some of the major functions expected from IQACs are

- Enhancement and implementation of quality benchmarks in various activities of the institutions.
- Documentation and dissemination of quality related activities.
- Organisation of seminars, workshop and promotion of quality circles.
- Monitoring quality activities of the institutions.
- Acting as a nodal agency of the institution for quality related activities.
- Preparing and uploading Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR).

IQACs are functioning to attain excellence in NAAC accredited colleges in the state of Odisha. Especially it is significant to know how urban colleges have made special use of this scheme in comparison to rural colleges. This paper is based on research conducted in 12 NAAC accredited colleges in Coastal Odisha. Here an attempt has been made to present dimensions-specific quality improvement practices adopted by IQACs precisely and the functioning status of IQACs taking into consideration the nature of institutional location as an associated factor.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been conducted with the following objectives:

1. Identify dimension-specific quality improvement practices adopted by IQACs.
2. Explore the functioning status of IQACs taking into consideration the nature of institutional location as an associated factor.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The hypothesis of the study was stated as:

1. There is significant association between the functioning status of IQACs and the nature of institutional location.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

All NAAC accredited colleges of Odisha having IQACs were considered as the population of the study. Out of 12 NAAC accredited colleges of Coastal Odisha 6 urban and 6 rural colleges were included purposively in the sample of the study. The sample respondents covered 60 members i. e. five from each sample institution. A pilot study was conducted in two rural and two urban colleges to identify the areas where IQACs are functioning. On the basis of pilot study conducted a questionnaire was developed to study the functional status of IQACs. Data was collected from the sample institutions through

questionnaire. Collected data was analysed by percentage analysis and chi-square test of independence.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This part of the paper has two sections these are section 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' deals with dimensions-specific quality improvement practices adopted by IQACs and section 'B' deals with functioning status of IQACs.

A. Dimensions-specific Quality Improvement Practices adopted by IQACs

Empirical evidence on IQACs functioning on different elements of institutional practices was gathered through visits to different colleges and observation of various activities going on at institutional level. The pilot study of two urban and two rural colleges form the basis for matching different dimensions of quality enhancement interventions made under IQAC. The researcher categorised various activities of IQACs in the five dimensions viz, i) evolvment and adoption of quality parameters ii) curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research iii) feedback response from stakeholders iv) professional development of teachers and v) documentation and dissemination of quality related activities for quality enhancement and assurance at institutional level. Dimension-specific functioning of IQACs explored on the basis of pilot study have been presented below.

Evolvment and Adoption of Quality Parameters

Functions of IQAC related to evolvment and adoption of quality parameters cover several activities like revising curriculum in a relevant intervals, revising curriculum according to CBCS guidelines, making curriculum skill based, including continuous assessment practices in academic evaluation, making curriculum with provision of research components, taking feedback from stakeholders and making quality improvement a continuous process.

Curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research

Different activities are organised by IQACs to improve the quality of curriculum, teaching- learning process, evaluation and research. These activities cover wider base like curriculum transaction in the direction of students' centeredness, integrating technology in curriculum transaction process, making teaching learning interactive and participative, implementing continuous assessment practices in evaluation and conducting field study/action research at under graduate level etc.

Practices for feedback response from stakeholders

IQACs of higher education institutions adopted several practices for feedback response from stakeholders to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wide range of activities like collecting students feedback on teaching learning activities, encouraging peer assessment of teachers, preparing students feedback analysis report, organising PTA meetings and seeking their feedback, installing grievance redressal box at department level, arranging remedial coaching for slow learners and using stakeholders' feedback in quality improvement practices.

Professional development of teachers

IQACs of higher education institutions adopt several practices for professional development of teachers to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wider range of activities like opportunities for orientation and refresher course, encouraging publication of research work in journals, encouraging faculty members to undertake research projects, giving financial incentives for research publication in books and journals, encouraging participation and organisation of seminars and workshops, encouraging e-learning based continuous professional development of teachers.

Documentation and Dissemination of Quality related Activities

IQAC’s functions related to documentation and dissemination of quality related activities covers several activities like preparing and uploading Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) in institutional website, publishing quality related activities in a bulletin, documenting teachers’ achievement and preparation of self-appraisal report, publishing research journals and publishing magazines with creative articles of teachers and students.

B. Functioning Status of IQACs

Functioning status of IQACs in identified five dimensions of 6 urban and 6 rural colleges of Coastal Odisha are analysed and interpreted in the succeeding section.

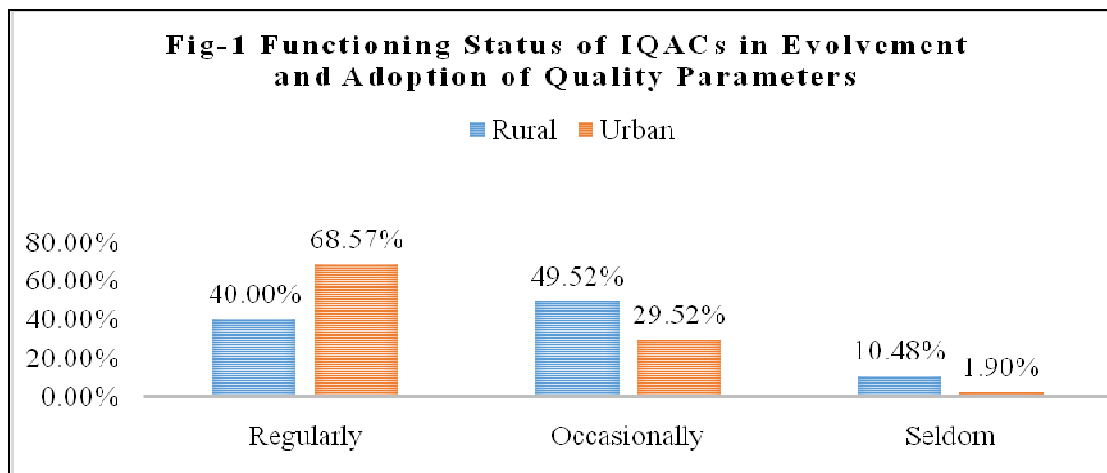
Evolution and Adoption of Quality Parameters

Functioning of IQACs related to evolution and adoption of quality parameters covers several activities like revising curriculum in a relevant intervals, revising curriculum according to CBCS guidelines, making curriculum skill based, including continuous assessment practices in academic evaluation, making curriculum with provision of research components, taking feedback from stakeholders and making quality improvement a continuous process. On these aspects of evolution and adoption of quality parameters, It is evident from Table-1 and related figure that IQACs of different colleges were found more regular (54.29%).

Table-1: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of Evolution and Adoption of Quality Parameters and Nature of Institutional Location

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Rural	84(40.00)	104(49.52)	22(10.48)	210(100)	38.86**
Urban	144(68.57)	62(29.52)	4(1.90)	210(100)	
Total	228(54.29)	166(39.52)	26(6.19)	420(100)	

Note: ** significant at 0.01 level , Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage



Going by the nature of institutional location it is evident that majority of respondents from urban colleges (68.57%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in evolvement and adoption of quality parameters than that of rural colleges (40.00%). From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in evolvement and adoption of quality parameters was significantly associated with nature of institutional location at 0.01 level of significance. However, within the significant association from the frequencies of responses it was found that the association of urban colleges and evolvement and adoption of quality parameters in terms of revising curriculum is more regular than the rural colleges.

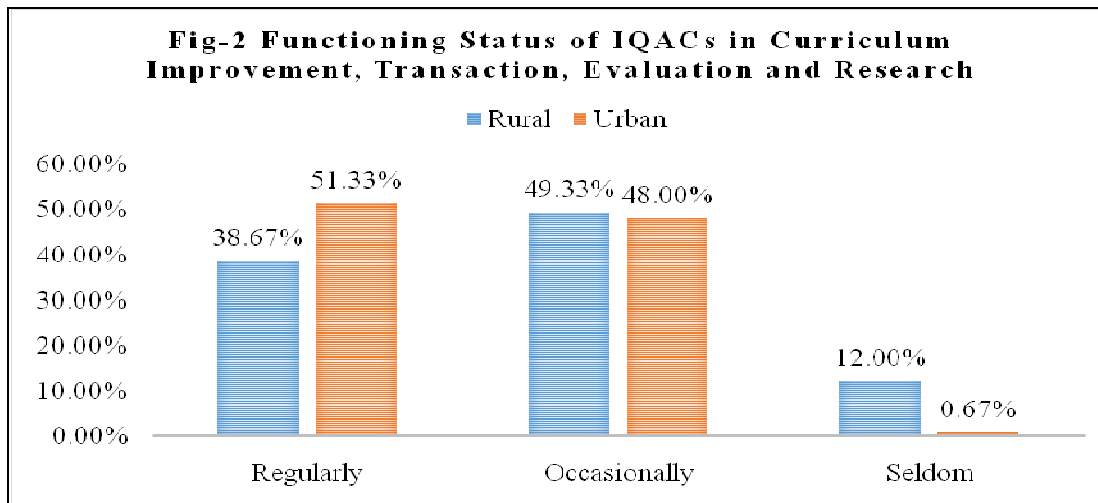
Curriculum Improvement, Transaction, Evaluation and Research

Different activities are organised by IQACs to improve the quality of curriculum, teaching- learning process, evaluation and research. These activities cover wider base like curriculum transaction in the direction of students’ centeredness, integrating technology in curriculum transaction process, making teaching learning interactive and participative, implementing continuous assessment practices in evaluation and conducting field study/action research at under graduate level.

Table-2: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of Curriculum Improvement Transaction, Evaluation, Research and nature of institutional location

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Rural	58(38.67)	74(49.33)	18(12.00)	150(100)	17.88**
Urban	77(51.33)	72(48.00)	1(0.67)	150(100)	
Total	135(45.00)	146(48.67)	19(6.33)	300(100)	

Note: ** significant at 0.01 level
 Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage



On these aspects of curriculum development, teaching- learning process, evaluation and research the IQACs of both urban and rural colleges were found to be more occasional (48.67%) in functioning as evident from the Table-2 and the related figure. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from urban colleges (51.33%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research functions whereas majority (49.33%) of respondents of rural colleges opined that IQACs are functioning occasionally in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research was significantly associated with nature of institutional location at 0.01 level of significance. However, within the significant association from the frequencies of responses it was found that the association of urban colleges and curriculum improvement, transaction, evaluation and research is more regular than the rural colleges.

Practices of Feedback Response from Stakeholders

IQACs of higher education institutions adopt several practices for feedback response from stakeholders to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wide range of activities like collecting students feedback on teaching learning activities, encouraging peer assessment of teachers, preparing students feedback analysis report, organising PTA meetings and seeking their feedback, installing grievance redressal box at department level, arranging remedial coaching for slow learners and using stakeholders’ feedback in quality improvement practices.

Table-3: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of feedback response from stakeholders and nature of institutional location

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Rural	63(26.25)	143(59.58)	34(14.17)	240(100)	22.74**
Urban	113(47.08)	106(44.17)	21(8.75)	240(100)	
Total	176(36.67)	249(51.88)	55(11.46)	480(100)	

Note: - ** significant at 0.01 level, Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage

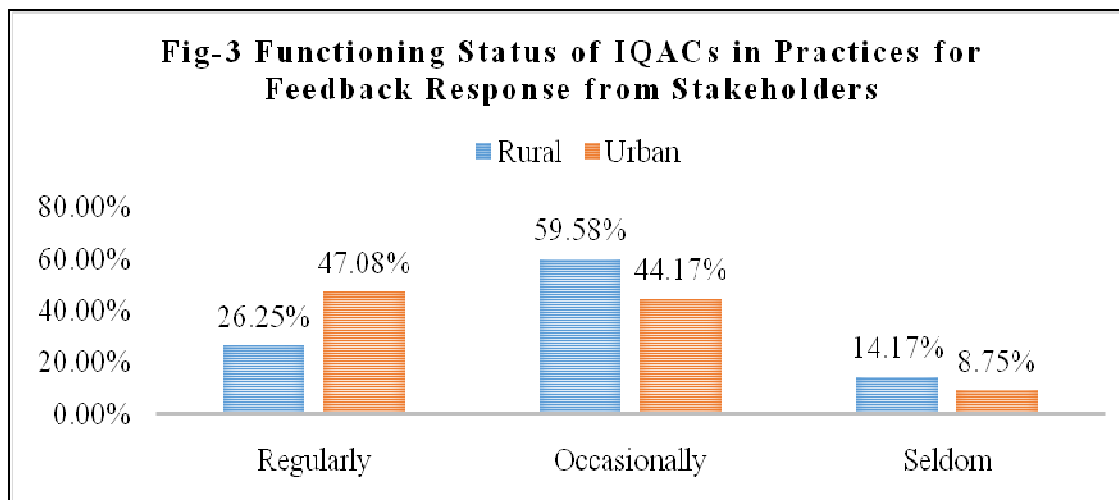


Table-3 and the related figure reveal that in all around 52 per cent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about practices for feedback response from stakeholders on occasional basis irrespective of their institutional location. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from urban colleges (47.08%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in practices for feedback response from stakeholders where as in case of rural colleges majority of respondents (59.58%) opined that IQACs are functioning occasionally in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in practices for feedback response from stakeholders was significantly associated with nature of institutional location at 0.01 level of significance. The IQACs of urban colleges were found to be more regular in functioning for feedback response from stakeholders than the IQACs of rural colleges.

Professional Development of Teachers

IQACs of higher education institutions adopt several practices for professional development of teachers to improve quality of higher education. These practices cover wide range of activities like opportunities for orientation and refresher course, encouraging publication of research work in journals, encouraging faculty members to undertake research projects, giving financial incentives for research publication in books and journals, encouraging participation and organisation of seminars and workshops, encouraging e-learning based continuous professional development of teachers.

Table-4: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies in professional development of teachers and institutional location

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Rural	67 (37.22)	83 (46.11)	30(16.67)	180 (100)	8.42*
Urban	92 (51.11)	71 (39.44)	17(9.44)	180 (100)	
Total	159 (44.17)	154 (42.78)	47(13.06)	360 (100)	

Note: - * significant at 0.05 level, Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage

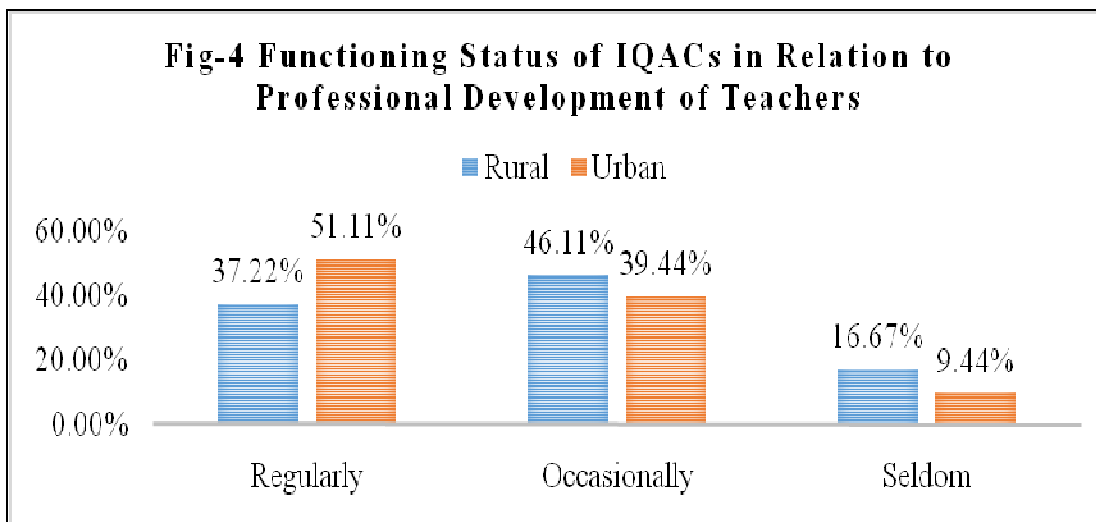


Table-4 and the related figure reveal that in all around 44 per cent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about practices for professional development of teachers on regular basis irrespective of their institutional location. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from urban colleges (51.11%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in practices for professional development of teachers where as in case of rural colleges majority of respondents (46.11%) opined that IQACs are functioning occasionally in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in practices for professional development of teachers was significantly associated with nature of institutional location at 0.05 level of significance. The IQACs of urban colleges were found to be more regular in functioning for professional development of teachers than the IQACs of rural colleges.

Documentation and Dissemination of Quality related Activities

IQAC’s functions related to documentation and dissemination of quality related activities covers several activities like preparing and uploading Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) in institutional website, publishing quality related activities in the form of a bulletin, documenting teachers’ achievement and preparation of self-appraisal report, publishing research journals and publishing magazines with creative articles of teachers and students.

Table-5: Chi-Square Test of Association between Frequencies of Documentation and Dissemination of Quality related Activities and nature of institutional location

Nature of Colleges	Frequency of Operation of IQAC activities			Total	Chi Square df=2
	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom		
Rural	73(48.67)	49(32.67)	28(18.67)	150(100)	6.44*
Urban	94(62.67)	39(26.00)	17(11.33)	150(100)	
Total	167(55.67)	88(29.33)	45(15.00)	300(100)	

Note: - * significant at 0.05 level, Numbers in the parentheses indicate percentage

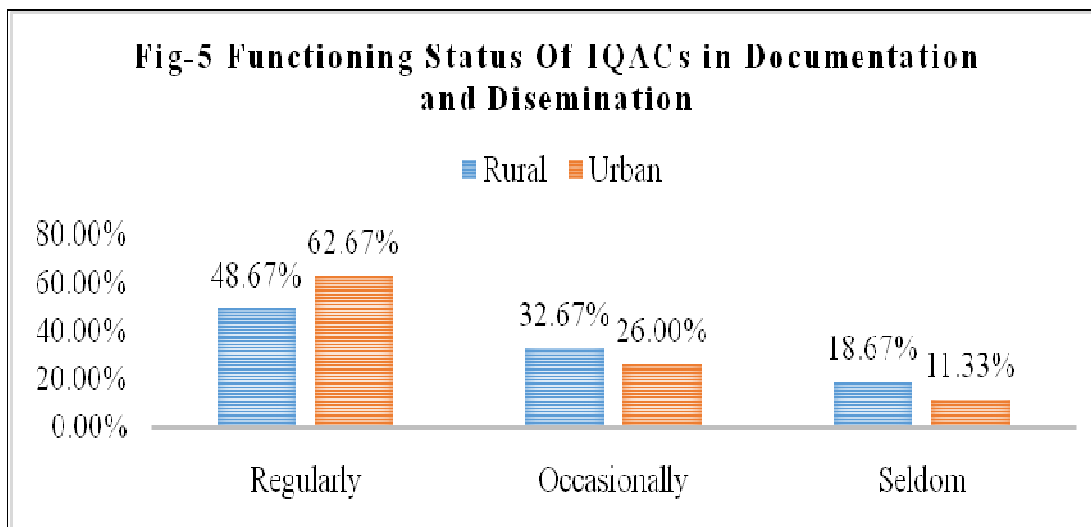


Table-5 and the related figure reveals that in all around 56 per cent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about documentation and dissemination of quality related activities on regular basis irrespective of their institutional location. It can be noticed that majority of respondents from urban colleges (62.67%) stated about more regularity of different functions of IQACs in documentation and dissemination of quality related activities where as in case of rural colleges majority of respondents (48.67%) opined that IQACs are functioning regularly in these aspects. From the above table it can be observed that the regularity in functioning status of IQACs in documentation and dissemination of quality related activities were significantly associated with nature of institutional location at 0.05 level of significance. The IQACs of urban colleges were found to be more regular in functioning for documentation and dissemination of quality related activities than the IQACs of rural colleges.

CONCLUSION

The present status of functioning of IQACs in the higher education institutions are in functional status. Regularity in different kinds of functions of IQACs in urban and rural colleges follow a typical order of response given by the members of IQACs in the sample institutions. The study has revealed that IQACs of Urban colleges are functioning better than rural colleges. The institutional location was found positively associated with regularity of functioning of IQACs in different components. Future challenges of quality higher education needs to be linked with the proper functioning of IQACs which can sustain and enhance institutional quality. The objectives of mechanism like IQAC may be fulfilled through the dynamic institutional leadership and involvement of committed faculty members in the system. To make IQAC more active the committee members must be oriented to work efficiently. ICT should be used for sharing quality related experiences with other institutions.

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