

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY: CHALLENGES IN INDIA AND KAZAKHSTAN

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ABSTRACT. Quality insurance in higher education serves as an essential mechanism to ensure academic standards, institutional responsibility and continuous improvement, especially in rapidly evolving educational landscapes of India and Kazakhstan. This summary examines the importance of quality assurance in these two countries, highlighting the distinct challenges they face and the adaptive strategies used to improve educational results. In India, the diversity of the education system, characterized by its vast number of various quality institutions and levels, has an important challenge. In addition, systemic problems such as financing of disparities, regulatory inconsistencies and the need to develop faculty further complicates quality insurance. To meet these challenges, India has adopted a multiple facets approach which includes the creation of accreditation agencies and the promotion of academic flexibility thanks to innovative teaching practices. Conversely, the Kazakhstan higher education system, although shaped by its post-Soviet heritage, undergoes substantial reforms aimed at aligning international standards. Despite significant government investments in education, challenges such as the initial lack of a robust quality insurance framework and the insufficient commitment of stakeholders remain significant. Kazakhstan has adopted strategies focused on international collaboration, including partnerships with Western universities and participation in global accreditation programs, to improve its quality of education. Thanks to a comparative analysis, this summary reveals that India and Kazakhstan are faced with unique obstacles in their pursuit of quality insurance in higher education, but they also share a commitment to adaptive strategies aimed at promoting academic excellence. While these nations continue to evolve, the integration of quality insurance mechanisms will be essential to ensure that their higher education systems meet not only the needs of their populations, but also contribute to the production and worldwide dissemination. Understanding these dynamics is essential for decision-makers, educators and stakeholders invested in the future of higher education in the two contexts.

KEYWORDS: quality assurance, higher education, India, Kazakhstan, accrediting processes, educational policy, continuous improvement.

ҮНДІСТАН МЕН ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ БІЛІМ САПАСЫНЫҢ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ

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АНДАТПА. Жоғары білім беру саласындағы сапаны қамтамасыз ету — академиялық стандарттарды сақтау, институционалдық жауапкершілікті нығайту және үздіксіз жетілдірудің маңызды тетігі болып табылады, әсіресе Үндістан мен Қазақстан сияқты қарқынды дамып келе жатқан білім беру кеңістіктерінде. Бұл аннотация аталған екі елдегі сапаны қамтамасыз етудің маңыздылығын зерделейді, олардың бетпе-бет келіп отырған өзіндік сын-қатерлерін және білім беру нәтижелерін жақсартуға бағытталған бейімделу стратегияларын айқындайды. Үндістанда білім беру жүйесінің әркелкілігі мен көпқырлылығы, сапа деңгейлері әртүрлі мекемелердің көптігі

айтарлықтай қиындық тудырады. Бұдан бөлек, қаржыландырудағы теңсіздіктер, нормативтік-құқықтық қайшылықтар және профессорлық-оқытушылық құрамды дамыту қажеттілігі сияқты жүйелі мәселелер сапаны қамтамасыз етуге кедергі келтіреді. Бұл қиындықтарды еңсеру үшін Үндістан сапаны қамтамасыз етудің бірнеше қырлы тәсілдерін қабылдады, соның ішінде аккредиттеу агенттіктерін құру және инновациялық оқыту тәжірибесі арқылы академиялық икемділікті арттыру бар. Керісінше, посткеңестік мұраның ықпалымен қалыптасқан Қазақстанның жоғары білім беру жүйесі халықаралық стандарттарға сәйкестендіру бағытында ауқымды реформаларды бастан өткеруде. Мемлекеттің білім беруге бағытталған елеулі инвестицияларына қарамастан, сапаны қамтамасыз етудің орнықты жүйесінің бастапқыда болмауы және мүдделі тараптардың жеткіліксіз белсенділігі әлі де өзекті мәселелер қатарында. Қазақстан сапаны арттыру мақсатында батыс университеттерімен әріптестік орнату және жаһандық аккредиттеу бағдарламаларына қатысу сияқты халықаралық ынтымақтастыққа негізделген стратегияларды жүзеге асыруда. Салыстырмалы талдау арқылы бұл зерттеу Үндістан мен Қазақстанның жоғары білім берудегі сапаны қамтамасыз ету жолында өзіне тән кедергілерге тап болып отырғанын көрсетеді, алайда екі ел де академиялық үздіксіздікке жетуге бағытталған бейімделу стратегияларын енгізуде бірдей ниеттестік танытуда. Бұл мемлекеттер өз даму жолын жалғастыра отырып, сапаны қамтамасыз ету тетіктерін енгізу арқылы тек өз халқының қажеттіліктерін қанағаттандырып қана қоймай, білім өндірісі мен оны жаһандық деңгейде таратуға да үлес қоса алады. Осы үдерістерді терең түсіну — екі елдегі жоғары білімнің болашағына мүдделі шешім қабылдаушылар, оқытушылар мен стейкхолдерлер үшін аса маңызды.

ТҮЙІН СӨЗДЕР: сапаны қамтамасыз ету, жоғары білім, Үндістан, Қазақстан, аккредиттеу үдерістері, білім саясаты, үздіксіз жетілдіру.

КАЧЕСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЕ ВЫЗОВЫ ИНДИИ И КАЗАХСТАНА

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АННОТАЦИЯ. В статье рассматриваются актуальные вопросы обеспечения качества в системе высшего образования в Индии и Казахстане — странах с различными историко-культурными и институциональными условиями, но схожими стремлениями к модернизации и международной интеграции. Обеспечение качества выступает важнейшим механизмом, направленным на поддержание академических стандартов, укрепление институциональной ответственности и достижение устойчивого развития образовательной сферы. Цель исследования заключается в проведении сравнительного анализа подходов к обеспечению качества в системах высшего образования Индии и Казахстана, выявлении ключевых вызовов, с которыми сталкиваются эти страны, и определении эффективных стратегий адаптации. Методология исследования основана на аналитическом и сравнительном подходах с применением документального анализа нормативных актов, стратегических программ в сфере образования и аккредитационных практик. Оригинальность и ценность данного исследования заключаются в сопоставлении уникального опыта двух государств, что позволяет глубже понять трансформационные процессы в сфере обеспечения качества высшего образования в условиях глобализации. Результаты анализа показывают, что Индия сталкивается с такими трудностями, как институциональное разнообразие, неравномерность финансирования, регуляторная фрагментарность и нехватка квалифицированных преподавательских кадров. В ответ на эти вызовы страна реализует комплексную стратегию, включающую развитие аккредитационных структур и внедрение инновационных педагогических практик. Казахстан, в свою очередь, осуществляет масштабные реформы, направленные на приведение системы высшего образования к международным стандартам, несмотря на сохраняющиеся проблемы, связанные с первоначальным отсутствием устойчивой системы обеспечения качества и ограниченной вовлечённостью заинтересованных сторон. Активное международное сотрудничество, участие в глобальных аккредитационных инициативах и развитие партнёрств с зарубежными университетами становятся важными факторами повышения качества казахстанского образования. Сравнительный анализ показывает, что, несмотря на различия в контексте, обе страны демонстрируют стремление к внедрению эффективных и адаптивных стратегий обеспечения качества, направленных на повышение конкурентоспособности национальных систем высшего образования в глобальном образовательном пространстве.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: обеспечение качества, высшее образование, Индия, Казахстан, процессы аккредитации, образовательная политика, непрерывное улучшение.

INTRODUCTION. The quality guarantee in higher education has become a fundamental factor in the global landscape, supporting the guarantee of educational standards and the improvement of institutional credibility. As nations strive to compete in a globalized economy, the emphasis on quality guarantee mechanisms has become increasingly pronounced. These mechanisms not only facilitate the delivery of high quality education, but also encourage confidence among interested parties, including students, employers and academic institutions. However, the implementation of effective quality guarantee practices is full of challenges, particularly in various contexts such as India and Kazakhstan.

In India, the vast and heterogeneous educational panorama presents unique obstacles, including variations in institutional resources, regional disparities and different regulatory frameworks. The need for a quality guarantee cohesive framework that accommodates these variations is essential to guarantee educational equivalence and equity throughout the country. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan, who has suffered significant educational reforms since its independence, faces its own set of challenges, including the transition from a centralized educational system to one that emphasizes quality and responsibility. The integration of international standards within a locally relevant context remains a pressing concern.

This article aims to analyze the importance of quality guarantee in higher education at a global scale, with an approach concentrated in the critical role it plays in the educational landscapes of India and Kazakhstan. When examining the challenges that these nations face, the article underlines the need for adaptive and culturally sensitive quality guarantee systems that can respond to the intricate demands of modern education while improving global competitiveness. The search for quality in higher education is a fundamental focus for nations trying to improve their educational landscapes, with various institutions that emerge to face this challenge. In this context, the independent Agency for accreditation and rating (IAAR) in Kazakhstan and the University Grants Commission (UGC) in India represent two distinct but significant paintings aimed at guaranteeing educational excellence. While both organizations share general objectives

to promote quality guarantee and to improve higher education standards, their structures and functions reveal significant differences that reflect their national contexts.

The IAAR operates as an independent entity, mainly in charge of the accreditation of the higher educational institutions and the evaluation of their services with respect to the established benchmarks. His approach emphasizes transparency and responsibility, incorporating the involvement of the parties concerned in the evaluation process. On the contrary, the UGC, a statutory body, exercises a wider regulatory influence on universities and colleges in India. In addition to the quality insurance, the UGC is responsible for funding, promotion of research and development of higher education policies.

Despite their common attention on quality, the methods used by IAAR and UGC highlight contrasting approaches. The IAR method is characterized by a systematic evaluation process based on evidence, promoting a culture of continuous improvement between the institutions. On the contrary, the UCC framework integrates a more prescriptive regulatory position, imposing respect for national policies and guidelines, which can sometimes hinder institutional autonomy.

This article undertakes to dissect these similarities and differences, providing a complete analysis of how IAAR and UGC align their functions and objectives with the wider objectives of educational progress in Kazakhstan and India, respectively. Through this comparative evaluation, insights will be revealed on their effectiveness and adaptability to the evolution of higher education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS OF RESEARCH.

This research will use a qualitative comparative methodology to analyze critical roles and unique quality guarantee challenges in higher education in India and Kazakhstan. The primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with the main parties concerned, including university administrators, members of the faculty and quality insurance professionals in both countries. The interview questions will focus on existing quality guarantee framework, perceived efficacy and challenges that they had to face in the implementation of these paintings in the context of global educational standards.

In addition, a thematic analysis will be conducted

to identify common issues and divergent prospects regarding quality guarantee practices. The sources of secondary data, such as government relations, publications of the accreditation bodies and international assessments, will be revised to provide a global understanding of the political environment and institutional responses to the quality guarantee challenges. The comparative aspect will highlight the socio-cultural and economic factors that influence the guarantee of quality in both nations, thus located their experiences within the wider global educational panorama. This method aims to contribute to deepening the quality guarantee practices that align with international benchmarks.

The University Subsidies Commission (UGC) has played a fundamental role in guaranteeing quality guarantee in Indian higher education institutions since its inception. Its commitment to establish standards, promote academic excellence and improve research capacity highlights its importance in the configuration of higher education. Srivastava, Tandon and Sachdeva [1] underline the importance of UGC quality mandate initiatives, pointing out that consciousness and implementation among teachers are crucial for effectiveness. In this context, Phukan [2] analyzes several UGC initiatives aimed at improving and maintaining quality, emphasizing a systematic approach for quality improvement.

Despite these efforts, the challenges persist in the implementation of quality guarantee frameworks. Deb [3] identifies challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, the lack of qualified teachers and resistance to change, which hinders the general quality of education. Similarly, Garg&Kaushik [4] highlight the need for continuous quality control mechanisms in higher education, which remain underdeveloped in many institutions. This echoes Singh&Mishra [5], who argue that traditional quality guarantee practices need adaptation in response to modern educational demands and innovations.

As Indian higher education evolves, government and management frameworks must adapt to market demands. Jha S.K. [6] explores the change of state education to market, emphasizing that this transition requires an infrastructure capable of maintaining quality standards. In addition, Shukla [7] analyzes the potential of solid governance mechanisms to improve quality guarantee practices throughout the sector.

In the light of these challenges, Fernandes, [8] describes the strategies for implementing alignment with the National Education Policy of India 2020, emphasizing the need for a cohesive action to achieve objectives. Innovations in governance and quality guarantee must prioritize the participation of teachers and adopt modern pedagogical practices, backed by Pandey's criticism [9] from existing policies in teacher training. Finally, the role of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Council is indispensable in this speech, as clarified by Prakash et al. [10], highlighting the need for rigorous accreditation standards to ensure quality education in India.

Higher Education of Kazakhstan is undergoing significant reform to face quality challenges, focusing on five main areas: digitization, financing, curriculum alignment, stakeholder engagement and technology integration [11]. Digitization is crucial, as evidenced by the digital gap identified in universities, illustrating the need for improved quality education. In addition, financing for on-line teaching is vital, especially in the development of contexts such as Zimbabwe, where effective financial strategies are essential. [12] In addition, the alignment of curricula with the international demands of the labor market is imperative, given the technological interruptions that reshaped management education [13]. This multifaceted approach promises to strengthen the guarantee of quality in higher education.

The quality education quality guarantee system is located in front of unique challenges, including alignment with international standards and the need for integration into a knowledge-based economy. The Bologna process acts as a significant framework that influences these reforms, demonstrating a case of transfer and adaptation of policies to the Kazakh context. In addition, the role of the rankings highlights the coercive and regulatory isomorphism that affects Kazakhstani higher education policies, underlining the need for strategic improvements [14].

The transition to an economy based on knowledge also has difficulties, since educational institutions must cultivate innovation and resilience to improve quality insurance. The implications of this term on sustainable development emit the relevance to face pedagogical challenges considering global practices. The involvement

of industry in the guarantee of quality through university-employers-employers emerges as a critical strategy, showing how collaborative efforts are fundamental for educational improvement [15]. The global positioning of Kazakhstan requires an examination of the contributions of international graduates, illustrating the benefits of their skills in the progress of the countries of origin [16]. Alternative financing models can also influence the stability and performance of higher education, thus offering paths for further developments. Leadership styles within the management of education higher at the end model the implementation of these strategies, underlining the importance of an effective governance. Addressing systemic issues requires insights from various contexts, including local and global educational paintings [17].

RESULTS AND THEIR DISCUSSION. The evaluation of the IAAR in Kazakhstan reveals significant strengths, which eventually influences the scenario of the quality of higher education and institutional development in the country. One of IAAR's main strengths is committed to improving the quality of education through strict accreditation processes that align with international standards. This alignment not only facilitates the recognition of Kazakh institutions in a global scenario, but also encourages a culture of continuous improvement among universities. In addition, IAAR plays a key role in defending the involvement of stakeholders, as evidenced by their efforts to incorporate the prospects of various academic and professional communities. This inclusion promotes a broader understanding of educational needs and enhances the relevance of academic programs, particularly in adapting to the complexities of Kazakhstan's transition economy. However, the efficacy of IAAR is slightly impaired by some slight areas of growth, including resource limitations and insufficient emphasis on digitization. Although institutions increasingly use digital tools, IAAR has struggled to completely integrate these innovations into their accreditation structures. This gap can make it difficult for the agency's response to contemporary educational demands and the rapidly changing global scenario.

In addition, the impact of IAAR on institutional development was mixed. Although it boosted some institutions for higher educational standards, its

comprehensive influence remains reduced due to structural and regulatory challenges in the Kazakh Educational System. As a result, there is a critical need for IAAR to reinforce its operational capabilities and to engage with international accreditation practices to further improve the quality of higher education in Kazakhstan, thus ensuring that they meet national and global expectations.

On the other hand, in India The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the principal regulatory body for higher education in India, established under the UGC Act of 1956. It plays a crucial role in funding, accrediting, and maintaining academic standards across universities and higher education institutions. Despite its significant mandate, the UGC faces multiple structural, operational, and policy challenges that limit its effectiveness as an accreditation agency. This analysis examines the strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring reform in the UGC's accreditation and regulatory mechanisms. The UGC functions as a statutory body empowered by the central government to oversee higher education. It regulates institutions, allocates funding, and ensures the maintenance of academic standards. The governance structure of the UGC consists of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and ten members appointed by the government. This composition provides diverse perspectives from academia, industry, and policy-making bodies, which enhances its decision-making process. One of the UGC's primary functions is the allocation of grants to Central, State, and Deemed Universities to support infrastructural development, faculty training, and research initiatives. In the financial year 2023-24, the UGC received ₹20,560.82 crores from the Ministry of Education, underscoring its pivotal role in higher education funding. The UGC has also undertaken significant initiatives aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, including the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) system, which allows students to transfer and accumulate credits across institutions, and the Multiple Entry and Exit (ME-ME) system, which provides flexibility in higher education pathways. The commission has further encouraged interdisciplinary and skill-based learning models, which aim to bridge the gap between academia and industry. [18]

In addition to funding and regulatory oversight, the UGC promotes research and innovation

through initiatives such as the STRIDE program, which supports trans-disciplinary research, and the Basic Scientific Research (BSR) grants, which enhance the research capabilities of universities. Moreover, the commission has made efforts to ensure equity and inclusion in higher education by implementing scholarships and fellowships for students from marginalized communities, such as SC/ST, OBC, and economically weaker sections. The UGC has also established initiatives like the Anti-Ragging Helpline and Gender Sensitization Programs to improve campus safety and create a more inclusive learning environment. To expand access to higher education, the UGC has integrated digital and distance learning initiatives, including the SWAYAM platform and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) regulations. These programs aim to make education more accessible, particularly for students in rural and remote areas. The commission has also encouraged universities to adopt hybrid learning models, combining traditional classroom instruction with digital resources.

Despite these strengths, the UGC faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness as an accreditation agency. One of the most significant issues is its bureaucratic and rigid structure, which leads to delays in policy implementation and fund disbursement. The centralized nature of its decision-making process limits institutional autonomy, making it difficult for universities to adapt to contemporary educational needs. The accreditation system under the UGC, managed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), has also faced criticism for its limited reach, lack of transparency, and inconsistent evaluation mechanisms. Many universities remain unaccredited or receive accreditation grades that do not accurately reflect their quality due to flaws in self-assessment processes. Financial distribution remains another area of concern. Central universities receive a disproportionate share of funding, while state universities often face resource constraints. Private universities, despite their growing role in Indian higher education, receive minimal financial assistance from the UGC. Additionally, institutions frequently encounter difficulties in accessing UGC grants due to administrative hurdles and inefficient bureaucratic procedures. Overlapping responsibilities with other regulatory bodies, such

as the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the National Medical Commission (NMC), and the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), create further confusion and inefficiencies in policy implementation. Institutional autonomy remains a contentious issue within the UGC framework. Universities have expressed concerns over excessive regulation of curriculum design, faculty appointments, and assessment criteria, which restricts their ability to innovate and respond to changing educational demands. Moreover, the UGC has struggled to curb the proliferation of fake universities despite maintaining an Anti-Fake University Cell. In the 2023-24 period, it identified 20 fake universities, yet enforcement mechanisms remain weak, allowing many fraudulent institutions to continue operating.

CONCLUSION. In conclusion, the roles of the regulatory body of independent agency for accreditation and rating (IAAR) and the Commission for the subsidies of the University (UGC) are fundamental in establishing and supporting quality in higher education, although through different approaches and functions. Both organizations contribute significantly to the accreditation processes, promoting international collaboration and supporting research and development, however they show distinctive characteristics and operating methodologies. IAAR works mainly as an independent entity engaged in improving educational standards within the institutions. Underlines an accreditation system based on evidence, focusing on institutional performance, on the results of learning and on the commitment of the interested parties. This independent evaluation promotes transparency and responsibility, crucial elements in a highly competitive educational panorama. On the contrary, the UGC operates as a government body that not only supervises funding, but is also providing guidelines and policies for higher education institutions. The regulatory framework of the UCC is deeply rooted in national policy and its accreditation process is often intertwined with government objectives, such as the promotion of access to education and the guarantee of compliance with the educational standards established at the federal level.

In the examination of international collaboration, IAAR places a strong emphasis on the creation

of partnerships that transcend national borders. Actively encourages institutions to engage in exchanges that improve their academic and research profiles on a global phase. This collaboration is crucial to promote innovation and spread knowledge in different educational systems. On the contrary, while the UGC recognizes the importance of international partnerships, its efforts are often more aligned with the facilitation of local respect with global standards rather than actively promoting international academic mobility. The UGC initiatives, therefore, can reflect a more focused approach at national level, underlining the collaboration that aligns with general government educational strategies.

The support for research and development illustrates further distinctions in the roles of these two bodies. The IAAR pursues a picture that not only evaluates the quality of the research results, but also promotes an environment in favor of innovation and investigation between higher

education institutions. This is exemplified by the encouragement of interdisciplinary research and the integration of research in the curriculum. On the other hand, the UGC directly facilitates the financing of research and grants, ensuring that institutions may have the necessary resources to conduct high quality research. However, this can also create scenarios in which the research priorities are strongly influenced by the government agenda, potentially compromising academic freedom. In summary, while both IAR and UGC are decisive in enhancing the quality of higher education, their approaches spread significantly in accreditation processes, in international collaborations and in the support of research and development activities. The synergistic interaction of both bodies can ultimately lead to a more robust and dynamic higher education system, which supports quality and fair access while promoting innovation and collaboration in the global arena.

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