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ABSTRACTS

EVOLUTION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM – A STUDY OF THE STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Quality Assurance System (QAS) was introduced into the state Universities in Sri Lanka fifteen years ago to improve quality of higher education (HE). However, the expected performance is not reflected in the reality. This paper aims to reflect upon the evolution of the QAS in the Sri Lankan HE sector and review its impact on the performance of state universities. This study employs qualitative methodology with document analysis, literature review and interviews. Display of compliance to QA standards without integration into the University practices, implementation of the QAS as a separate function, lack of interest and engagement of academic staff and students on QA activities, low emphasis on stakeholder involvement in QA practices are key issues emerged with the QAS. The literature review identified these as common issues prevailing in QAS implementation in global HE sector. There are positives of the QAS to the University performance as well. The policymakers and management are hence called to take appropriate actions to nurture and inculcate QAS in Universities. This study recommends areas to be explored in future research. In-depth research in narrow contexts of QAS implementation in the Sri Lankan HE sector is vital. This paper contributes to the original literature by covering a wide area of QAS in-state University sector in Sri Lanka. The paper presents data and information relevant, not only to the local sector, but to the broader international community interested in the implementation of the QAS in the HE sector.

Keywords: Evolution, Impact, Quality Assurance System, Sri Lanka, State Universities.