

Yes , We can make a difference !

**Our Dream to make INQAAHE a Microcosm
of Global Quality Culture**

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***INQAAHE President's address at General
Assembly and Conference at Chicago on 1st
April 2015.***



Historic Occasion

Dear friends, Colleagues, Brothers & Sisters,

Today I stand here as the president of “**The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education**” (INQAAHE).

This is a historic occasion. It is historic because for the first time INQAAHE Conference is being held in America,

It is historic because for the first time in 25 years of in history of INQAAHE, you have voted me to be not only the first Indian but also the first Asian to hold this prestigious position.

Great Speech of Vivekananda in Chicago



For me not only this occasion is historic but also the place Chicago itself is of great value as well.

Chicago is the place where long back in 1893, Swami Vivekananda delivered his famous speech during the World Parliament of Religions.

“ Holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any one in the world... If anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart.”

“ As the different streams having their sources in different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.”

The famous speech which advocated tolerance and respect to all religions, is considered as one of the all time great speeches such as [Abraham Lincoln](#)'s Gettysburg address or [Nelson Mandela](#)'s speech at his trial in 1964. [Story of Credentials]

Great legacy

On the historically important occasion, I feel very humble to be at the helm of a global organisation that represents voice of the International Quality Assurance Community in the higher education.

Stalwarts like David Woodhouse, Richard Lewis, Maria Jose and Carol Bobby have led this organisation with great integrity and dignity.

Experts from all over the world such as Lee Harvey , Antony Stella, Late Marjori P lenne, Nadia Badrawi have contributed to its collective wisdom.

What gives me courage ?

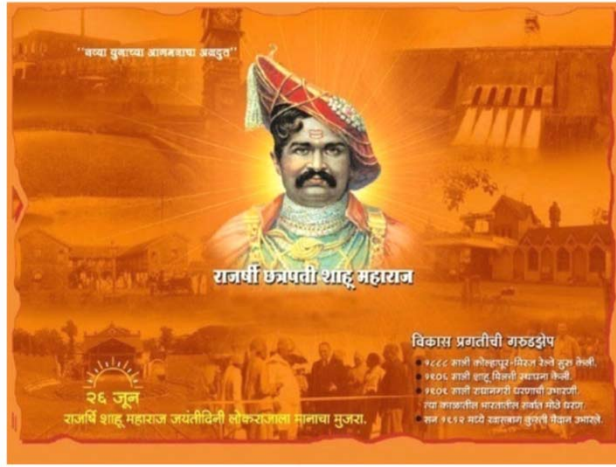
I wonder from where could I get courage and strength to carry forward this great legacy. The sheer burden of expectations that comes with this post makes me nervous. However immediately I realise that I do not represent myself here as an individual.

In fact I represent here many worlds within this complex and diverse world. I bring here all those experiences and expectations.

I hail from a small village Titave, which is not even a tiny patch on map of India, the village where even today there is no Bank, hospital or a high school. Villagers need to go to nearby bigger town to get these facilities.

I have lost my father in war and my illiterate mother, a farmer till now, has brought me up against all odds. I bring here all the experiences of struggle for livelihood and troubled childhood that millions of kids face even today in many parts of the world.

Today I stand before you wearing this typical turban which is traditional attire and symbol of Kolhapur a small city in India, which was formerly a princely state ruled by benevolent king and social reformer Shahu Maharaj. Reservation for backward classes in education and employment was introduced in this state as early as 1902.



I fondly remember my days of schooling and University education at Shahu Vidyanekethan and Shivaji University.

That is where I met great teachers like JM Salunkhe, GT Mahajan and Asok Chousalkar .

From them I have learnt biggest truth of quality in teaching, that no methodology or technology can replace a committed teacher.

My learning



The University where I graduated has not produced Nobel Laureates nor does it feature in so called global rankings. But it has produced great citizens from thousands of first generation learners from rural masses.

This university named after Shivaji, the great Maratha Warrior, King who established the Kingdom which was truly of the people, by the people and for the people. Kolhapur and Maharashtra has rich tradition of education and social reforms.

I have learnt respect for all the religions and respect for diversity from these great heroes of the Kolhapur and Maharashtra state where I belong to.

INDIA - MY COUNTRY



I come from India, one of the oldest civilization of the world. To put it in the words of Swami Vivekanand in 1893 “ I am proud to belong to a nation, which has sheltered persecuted and refugees of all religions and nations of the earth”.

India is a country, in search of which Columbus started his famous voyage but eventually landed here to discover America. Today we are among the youngest nations of the world in terms of demographic dividend.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has predicted that by 2020, India will have 116 million workers in the work-starting age bracket of 20 to 24 years. With over 800 Universities and 38000 Colleges in the Country, my agency National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has a huge task of quality assuring the world’s largest higher education system in terms of number alone. With experience of Assessment & Accreditation of about 7000 Colleges and 200 Universities in the past decade, I bring here the rich and complex experience of Quality Assurance in my country.

Asian Values



Dissolving Boundaries for a Quality Region

I also proudly represent here the world's biggest continent Asia, accounting for over half of world's population. Being the elected president of Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), a decade old QA network which comprises 150 members from about 50 countries in Asia and the Pacific, I have been advancing the cause of Asia in higher education QA across global platforms .

Higher Education Quality Assurance systems from development countries like Japan, South Korea, huge developing economies like China & India and small states like Bhutan and Laos add to rich diversities and complexity of Quality Assurance mechanism in this region. Many people see the biggest student Market in Asia , but in this I see a biggest opportunity of east west collaboration thought international mobility of education .

Blessed with strong support of colleagues from Asia-Pacific, I could undertake several initiatives like APQN Quality Awards, Journal, Quality Hubs and several inter-regional collaborations making APQN a vibrant QA Community.

So I bring to INQAHE family rich experience and support of Asia Pacific QA community .While claiming to be proud of my Indian or Asian origin , I absolutely don't mean to be fanatic of regionalism. In fact I believe strongly in what Buddha has said sometimes 2500 years ago.

*“In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west;
people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.”*

Blessed by you

And last but the foremost, today I stand here as someone to whom INQAAHE community around the world have reposed it's faith through their votes. I don't claim to be the leader of INQAAHE, but I can proudly claim to be someone who is blessed to represent aspirations and dreams of higher education quality community around the globe.

INQAAHE is already doing good job under able leadership of successive Presidents and Boards. I thought this election would be an opportunity to raise some pertinent issues which have bothered me and colleagues despite good work by it's leaders for the last several years of association with INQAAHE.

I had reached out to each one of during election campaign and presented my thoughts as my dreams with hope that these things can eventually become our dreams.

Having received overwhelming support for my Presidency, I believe it was a vote for the dreams that I shared with you in my campaign titled Can we make a difference? And your response was –

Yes, we can !

New
Initiatives and
our Dream
for
INQAAHE



Now that you have given me and the board the mandate, I humbly reiterate my commitment to strive for following as part of our quality agenda for years to come.

- Collaboration of INQAAHE GGP with other external reviews such as ENQA, CHEA, EQAR and APQN, etc. to avoid duplication of efforts and reduction in cost burden on agencies. [Why do we need multiple reviews spending energy and money of agencies / networks when mutual recognition of reviews is possible? Upcoming APQR has this mutual recognition provision ?]

- Leveraging INQAAHE's potential to make it a brand similar to global visa for mutual recognition of accredited qualifications. Can INQAAHE become the first and last word to trust any HEI or it's qualification globally based on QA decision of INQAAHE member rather than letting students at the mercy of the market forces and dubious agents ?



- Collaboration with UNESCO and other intergovernmental global and regional bodies to make INQAAHE truly global voice of higher education QA community and facilitate / influence the global initiatives like Global convention for recognition of HE qualifications, etc can give INQAAHE it's rightful place in global HE scenario.

- More inclusive and balanced representation from all regions on the INQAAHE Board, Projects and sponsorships for activities. Now also there is an attempt for regional balance, as we see. You have already made history this time by electing first Asian as President. I believe we will continue this spirit of balancing diversity on our governing structures.
- Introduction of INQAAHE Quality Awards for contributions to QA by agencies and individuals. APQN has set up annual awards and agencies are extremely happy to receive global recognition for good work. We can do it at global level to recognize contributions of our own colleagues and agencies .

- Capacity building activities for developing QA bodies by identifying Quality Hubs across regions . APQN already has many quality hubs which provide their resources free of cost for activities like workshops , exchange training programs.
- Generating funds through various value added services. Given the value of trust , most of our agencies boast among higher education community , it will not be very difficult to generate good amount of funds from value added services like directory of accredited HEIs and programs, advertisements on websites, publications and conferences. APQN has become completely self-sufficient network in last few years by using some of these methods.

- Global Quality Information Portal will be one of my priorities which can give good alternative to students who often depend on rankings. APQN Quality Information portal , UNESCO Higher education Portal , Cross Roads by ECA in Europe are some initiatives that INQAAHE can think of bringing together to give the students around globe, a one stop solution to seek information on higher education qualifications and institutions.
- Reducing the registration fees for INQAAHE conference and forums below 350 USD so it becomes possible for many who are deprived from these key annual events due to very high fees in the range of 650 to 900 USD. (APQN does equally big conferences in 250 USD, since last many years)

•More formal and stronger relationships with Regional QA networks would be key of strengthening INQAAHE's role as global facilitator in my humble opinion. Regional networks like ENQA, RIACES , APQN, CANQATE, ANQAHE , AQAN, etc , to name a few, are doing excellent work . QA bodies relate more closely with them for various reasons including socio-political, economical and cultural proximities . INQAAHE can go beyond annual meeting with regional networks and forge stronger ties by various means like joint projects , formation of joint steering groups and provide formal opportunity to regional networks to have their say in development / governance of INQAAHE.

INQAAHE and APQN events at Fiji in 2016.

In order to make sure that we not only talk but act on ideas , I made efforts to persuade Fiji Higher Education Commission to hold APQN annual conference back o back with INQAAHE forum in 2016. This is real example of how networks can come together in interest of members. **Thank you Fiji !**
Thank you APQN.

Mission of INQAAHE

I have realised that most of these issues perfectly blend with mission and purposes laid down in constitution of INQAAHE.

The Mission of INQAAHE says that ‘the central purpose and role of INQAAHE is to promote and advance excellence in higher education through the support of an active international community of quality assurance agencies. In order to achieve this goal, the network focuses on the development of the theory and practice of quality assurance, the exchange and understanding of the policies and actions of its members, and the promotion of quality assurance for **the benefit of higher education, institutions, students and society at large.**

The strategic goals of INQAAHE for 2013-2017 are as follows:

1. To maintain and enhance INQAAHE's role as world leader in quality assurance and umbrella organization for quality assurance agencies
2. To develop a global quality assurance community
3. To advance the body of knowledge in, and ensure continued effectiveness of quality assurance
4. To advocate and promote the concept of quality assurance as the driving force for continuous improvement of tertiary education.

One of the key objective stated in strategic plan is Ensuring worldwide visibility of INQAAHE's role as the leading organization for quality assurance agencies.

The Bigger picture

While applauding these laudable objectives, I need to be realistic in stating that we are yet to go a long way in achieving this global visibility and importance.

Mahatma Gandhi has said. “Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you have seen, and ask yourself if this step you contemplate is going to be any use to him.”

I would say whatever we do here must be ultimately relevant not only to our members but also to students and society at large. Because I believe we are responsible for aspirations of millions of students around the globe who are looking for a world where there is easy access to information on quality of HEIs, there is easy portability of qualifications around the world .

The Bigger picture

I am looking forward to a day , **when every single institute offering higher education qualification would aspire to flash INQAAHE logo on it's website and admission brochure, I am looking forward to a day where there will be no higher education quality assurance agency in world which is not a member of INQAAHE and finally I am waiting for a day when every single student who wish to opt for tertiary education qualification will look for INQAAHE's quality tag before taking her/ his admission.**

This, I believe could be our ultimate dream for INQAAHE , to be relevant to the larger cause for which higher education and QA community exists.

Today, I take this opportunity to thank you for supporting this agenda and invite you to join us in taking forward this agenda. I am blessed with support of Carol and other board members who are committed to the mission of INQAAHE

Silver Jubilee of INQAAHE-

Dear Friends in year 2016, INQAAHE will celebrate it's silver jubilee. Me and my board are grateful to you for giving us this rare opportunity to be at helm when this organisation is completing 25 years of it's meaningful existence.

I propose that we use this opportunity not only to celebrate but also to reflect and rejuvenate ourselves to contribute to much greater cause. We can take up all above initiatives as part of Sliver Jubilee and consider many options like publications, lecture /seminar series across all regions , , multilingual website, INQAAHE Quality Ambassadors, fund raising events and reaching out to society at large to make INQAAHE's presence felt in global higher education space.

We can plan a grand Silver Jubilee function in India or other country .

Yes , we can!

In my presentation at INQAAHE Forum at Tallinn, last year I shared story of Indian Musk Deer.

The ancient scriptures have a fable about this animal found mostly in Himalayan ranges of India, which has a scented spot above its forehead that gives off a musk fragrance. This deer runs here and there in search of the scent, not knowing the scent comes from its own body.

I conclude with quote from Speech of Barak Obama when he took over to make history as President of USA



...And reaffirm that fundamental truth, that, out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope. And where we are met with cynicism and doubts and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes, we can."

Come, let us work together to realize INQAAHE's full potential and transform INQAAHE in to a true microcosm of global quality culture in higher education.

Let Harmony within diversity be the slogan and strategy of global higher education QA community.

Most affected stakeholders of my INQAAHE mission

Asiana and Abhimanyu





Thank You

JP

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