



QUALITY MATTERS

Theme: The Role of Digitalization in Advancing Quality Education

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA)

Vol. 16. No. 64 December 2022

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QUOTES OF THIS ISSUE

Hard work and education will take you farther than any government program can ever promise.

Mia Love

The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

Malcolm Forbes

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.

Anonymous

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This newsletter is published every three months by the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) of St. Mary's University (SMU). The objective of the newsletter is to inform the SMU community as well as business and industry, government and non-government stakeholders and others about the activities and accomplishments of the institution in fostering quality education and research in the Ethiopian Higher Education setting.

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FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Dear Reader,

Welcome to this edition of Quality Matters, Vol. 16, No. 64, December 2022.

As usual, we have been exerting our maximum effort to make this newsletter appealing to our readers. Among many other timely issues, we have selected *“The role of digitalization in Advancing Quality Education”* as the major focus of this edition. With this regard, we have invited an IT expert from the Ministry of Education as our guest of interview to share his theoretical knowledge and practical experiences about what digitization and/or digitalization are in general. We hope you will enjoy it.

Our leading article has also something to say about the focus point of this edition. Under the title, *“Digitalization of Education in India-An analysis”*, the article elaborates the role and importance of digitalization in the realm of education. The positive and negative sides of the IT intervention in education are briefly discussed in this piece of writing.

In the Campus News section, we have news about what is happening in the University.

Good Read!

RESEARCH CORNER

Adopted from “Digitalization of education in India – An analysis”

Dr. Himanshu Rastogi

Basic Components of Digital Education

Use of information and communication technology in education is based on certain pre-requisites and only after meeting out these basic infrastructural requirements we can move towards digitalization of education. Some of the important peripheral components towards digital bound classrooms are expressed below:

1) **Smart Boards-** SMART Board is an interactive whiteboard developed by SMART Technologies. It is a large touch-sensitive whiteboard that uses a sensor for detecting user input (e.g. scrolling interaction) that are equivalent to normal PC input devices, such as mouse or keyboards. A projector is used to display a computer’s video output onto the whiteboard, which then acts as a huge touchscreen.

2) **Class Room PC-** Most classes require students to prepare a lot of reports and assignments followed by presentations. Thus, the basic requirement of digital class demands for the availability of personal computers/ laptops/ tablets wherein large amount of educational information and data be stored and retrieves as and when required. This allows students to be more in tune with their learning by allowing them to have their own personal computers.

3) **Projectors-**Projectors are the basic requirements for digital class as they help in displaying on board the presentations of both the teachers and students for imparting broad based learning. Projectors are hooked with the laptop and acts as a reflector of information from laptop to large screen on the whiteboard for visual presentation before class.

4) **Internet Connectivity-** For successful implementation of ICT in education, uninterrupted internet connectivity is the basic requirement. Thus, good internet

connectivity should be ensured so that information can be shared with others without any delay and so also e-mails and browsing of study material, research reports, world bank and other national and international reports can easily be assessed.

Online Learning Applications Instrumental in Digitalization of Education

Digital learning is replacing traditional educational methods more and more each day. The inclusion of digital learning in the classrooms can vary from simply using tablets instead of paper to using elaborate software programs and equipment as opposed to the simple pen. Add to it there has been increasing dependence on websites and study aids designed for at-home use. Even use of social networks and communications platforms to create and manage digital assignments is on the rise. Irrespective of the extent of technology integrated into the classroom, digital learning has come to play a crucial role in education. It empowers students by getting them to be more interested in learning and expanding their horizons. Below are the important online learning applications and tools which are prominently utilized as part of digitalization of education.

1) **Google Classroom-** Google Classroom is a free web service designed for schools to help them with drafting, mass distribution and grading assignments in a paperless form. With Google Classroom, the learning process becomes extremely easy and is streamlined by way of sharing files between teachers and students. Here the students can post their queries on the lessons taught in the classrooms and receive answers from teachers and other students. Teachers can also post study materials for students to review at home. Google Classroom combines Google Drive for assignment creation and distribution, Google Docs,



Sheets and Slides for writing, Gmail for communication, and Google Calendar for scheduling.

2) **EPathshala**- Epathshala, a portal initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and National Council of Educational Research and Training was launched in November 2015 as one of the initiatives of digital campaign. Epathshala is a gigantic educational reserve that hosts resources for teachers, students, parents, researchers and educators which is available on multiple platforms such as Web, Android, IOS and windows platforms. The students can get access of all the required material, including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other print and non-print materials through ePathshala and can be downloaded by the user for offline use with absolutely no limits on downloads. ePathshala also allows users to carry many books as their device supports. These books allow users to pinch, select, zoom, highlight, navigate, share and make notes digitally.

3) **Cuemath**- Cuemath is an interactive learning platform for math. The platform's focus is to enhance the quality and method of math learning and teaching. Its multi-format approach to math involves puzzle cards, workbooks, tabs and math boxes. The start-up launched the first ever 'Mathematical Universe', where they developed a set of characters who embark on math-based adventures in stories. This comic book-style medium enables the student to interact with the possibilities of the mathematical universe.

4) **Khan Academy**- Khan Academy is a non-profit organization that was conceptualized with an aim of building a range of online tools that can help students understand various lessons and concepts in an easier way. The Khan Academy produces short lessons in the form of videos both on the Khan Academy's YouTube channel and on its hugely popular website www.khanacademy.org. Its website also includes supplementary practice exercises and materials for educators. Lessons are presented by way of videos, interactive activities, and challenges. Hence teachers can make use of Khan Academy to supplement their

teaching and also provide extra work to students and help them with all or difficult content.

5) **GuruQ.in**- Parents and students are usually faced with challenges of finding the right tutors, who can provide quality education, are reliable, have a good teaching background, and suit their budget.

6) **Kahoot**- It is a game-based learning platform where students can learn via games or, 'Kahoots,' which are multiple-choice quizzes. With this digital tool, which can be accessed via a web browser, teachers draft extra questionnaires, discussions online with academic lessons. The material can be then projected in the classrooms and questions are answered by students while playing and learning at the same time. This not only enhances student engagement but also creates a dynamic, social, and fun educational environment.

7) **BYJU'S**- BYJU'S is one of the leading edutech startups which uses a combination of gamification techniques to keep students engaged. At BYJU'S, technology offers teachers a combination of tools, mediums, and interactive formats to deliver concepts in the most personalized format. The app offers comprehensive learning programs in Math and Science for students between classes 4th-12th. It also has test prep courses for competitive exams like CAT, NEET & JEE, IAS, GRE & GMAT etc.

8) **Seesaw**-Seesaw is a user friendly learning portfolio tool that empowers students to independently document what they are learning and perceiving at school. Students can use photos, videos, drawings, text notes, links and also Seesaw's built-in audio recording and drawing tools to showcase their knowledge imbibed, and also explain how they got their answers. Student's projects are stored securely in the cloud. Seesaw is made available on several different devices, such as Chromebooks, computers, iOS devices, Android devices as well as Kindle devices through which parents can access their wards work.

9) **Toppr**- Toppr is one of the fastest growing learning apps that provide personalized learning for students



studying for various boards, Olympiads, engineering, Commerce and medical competitive exams. The platform enables students to learn comprehensively, improve their examination scores, and rise to their full potential. The platform also provides personalized, adaptive learning tests and practice packages that help students ascertain and improve their rank.

Adverse Impact of Digitalization of Education on Students

There is no doubt that the introduction of ICT in the field of education has helped students and teachers by promoting better flow of information any time at any place at the convenience of teacher and students by just clicking a button. The digitalization has also helped in availability of huge information related to any topic of interest thereby expanding the knowledge horizon and better learning. However, there is flip side of ICT enabled education system which is hampering the mental toughness and analytical skills of students and also has been resulting in attitudinal problems among the learners. Some of the important impacts of digitalization of education on students are highlighted below.

1) **Addiction**- Due to continuous dependence on electronic modes like laptops, mobile phones and other gadgets for seeking information and completing of assignments, projects and even for preparing study notes and completing homework online and submitting to the evaluator in softcopy has proved to be harmful. As a result, young vulnerable teens often get attached to computers for several hours. This often leads to their health being impacted, especially their vision.

2) **Obesity**-Obesity is a global serious problem and one of the main reasons for underage children to become obese at a young age. This is resulted from spending their maximum time on studies via computer devices and also in free times they stick themselves to online games than engage themselves to outdoor and physical activities. This lack of physical activity

leads them to obesity, fatness, heart disease, diabetics, repetitive strain injury or eyestrain, wrong posture/position, neck pain, and physical and mental stress.

3) **Social Disconnection**- Although the internet has reduced physical distances between people, that doesn't mean they bring all closer together and emotional distance is increased in some aspects. People are always busy with their own virtual world and pass the day almost alone. They forget the real world and therefore their connection with family is very loose. Children too are spending more time in virtual world and they adopt wrong thoughts and wrong connections with their peers. All in all, cyber-crimes and extra marital affairs with the use of ICT gadgets and other similar crimes are vividly seen with this regard.

4) **Reduced Face-to-Face Interaction**- In traditional teaching system there was direct face-to-face conversation between teachers and students which used to develop a web of understanding and confidence on each other. Nowadays, people mostly like online communication rather than real conversations so people tend to become more individualistic and introvert. Another limitation is that we are not able to express our feeling or what we actually want to say by the use of e-mail or social networking sites. Thus, we require face to face communication with them to express our real feeling.

5) **Unwarranted Information at Tender Age**- Since the introduction of ICT in education, students are being provided with tablets, laptops, smart mobile phones with high speed internet connectivity so that they can browse the required information within a click. The dark side of this vast sweeping information technology is that students are viewing unwarranted websites and prohibited content at the tender age which pollutes their tender minds and forces them to unnecessary activities and sometimes even result in promotion of crimes.

6) **Lack of Concentration**- SMS and text messaging has become a favorite pastime of many students. Stu-

dents are seen playing with their cell phones day and night and also during lectures. Being over connected to the on-line world has resulted in lack of focus and concentration in academics and to some extent even in sports and extracurricular activities.

7) **Declining Writing Skills-** Due to excessive usage of online chatting and use of keyboard for typing text along with use of shortcuts in texting the writing skills of today's young generation have declined quite tremendously. These days, students are relying more and more on digital communication that they have totally forgot about improving their writing skills. They don't know the spelling of different words, how to use grammar properly and how to do cursive writing.

8) **Increasing Incidents of Cheating-** Technological developments in the field of education such as introduction of graphical calculators, high tech smart watches, mini cameras and similar equipment have become a great source to cheat in examinations. It is easier for students to write formulas and notes on graphing calculators with little chance of being caught.

9) **Declining Mathematical Skills-** With the advent of ICT in education and promotion of high tech and scientific/programmed calculators in class rooms and examinations the calculative powers of students have declined enormously. Even, for simple additions and subtractions the find hard to make mental calculations and rely totally on calculators. This is not good in interest of student as it dents the capability to apply brain.

Focus Areas in the Future

To make ICT and digitalization of education a success with more fruitful results in terms of knowledge and the teaching-learning process, we should focus on areas that help students and teachers gain positive education from digitalization in the future. Modern educational technology is less effective when learning objectives are unclear and the focus of the technology used is dim. The schools need to convene a tech-

nology planning team comprising of administrators, teachers, technology coordinators, students, parents and representatives of the community (community-wide involvement) to determine the educational goals for students and types of technology that will support efforts to meet the goals. The team should also develop a vision of how technology can improve teaching and learning. Students cannot be expected to benefit from technology if their teachers are neither familiar nor comfortable with it. Many teachers fall behind their students when it comes to modern technology skills and competences, thus making it difficult to interest, motivate and engage children in conventional lessons. They need to have experience with the technology. Hence, it is important to provide professional development to teachers to help them not only to learn how to use new technology, but also how to provide meaningful instruction and activities using technology in the classroom. Longer class periods and more allowance for team teaching should be built in the daily schedule. Students may need more than a daily 30- or 40-minute period to find, explore and synthesize material. Thus, more time should be allotted in their daily schedule along with allowing teachers to collaborate and work with their students. With a potentially powerful effect of media and the growing empirical evidence for negative impact of technology on students, parents should take care in limiting the exposure of their children to detrimental technology. They should keep a vigil on what content their kids or children are reading and viewing in the name of online education.

(Source: http://ijrar.com/upload_issue/ijrar_issue_20543139.pdf)

“The process of digitalization in education offers a lot of benefits for students, such as faster access to tests and grades through online systems. E-learning systems allow submitting papers, doing instant plagiarism checks, and tracking attendance.”

(Source: internet)

INTERVIEW



Quality Matters invited Mr. Basiliyos Betru Tilahun, an ICT expert by profession, to share some important points from his wide experience in his field of study. He is currently working at the Ministry of Education as senior IT engineer. We would like to thank him for his willingness to be our guest.

QM: Thank you, Mr. Basiliyos for giving us your precious time for the interview. Even though we know you and your contributions in the field of Information Technology, we would like you to introduce yourself to our readers so that they can have very good understanding of who you are.

Mr. Basiliyos: Thank you very much and thank you for having me. I am working for the Ministry of Education as an IT engineer. I have been working here for the last 12 + years and have a solid experience in the teaching learning profession as well. I am working currently in the field of IT with regard to its utilization in education.

QM: What is the role or the importance of digitalization in higher education?

Mr. Basiliyos: Okay, perhaps before we go directly to the role of digitalization in education, it is better to briefly explain what digitalization itself is meant. According to Gartner's glossary of technological terminologies, "digitalization is the process of changing from analog to digital form, also known as digital enablement. Said another way, digitization takes an analog process and changes it to a digital form without any different-in-kind changes to the process itself." This is all about changing the old versions of written

or audio materials into modern digital stores such as computers and other digital gadgets without changing any of their contents. In short, digitalization is just a matter of converting the analog format to digital format.

Now let's come to how we can utilize this digital technology in the context of education or in the teaching learning process. When we think of utilizing digital technology, which is the changing of analog source of data to its equivalence in digitalized form, specifically in the sector of education, it is all about enhancing the quality of education with the help of this technological advancement and this can be explained in different ways. This technology is of course based on the uninterrupted presence of internet connection, without which we cannot think of any forward move in this arena. We cannot think of IT or digitalization without sufficient availability of internet connection. The medium of connection is the internet. We can't think of anything about digitalization without internet network. It is through good connection of internet and the wise utilization of digitalization that we can change the analog format of our old educational system and teaching materials thereof into modern form of IT so that we can easily cover a wide range of educational territories in a country in question without

any need of physical presence. It is in this form of utilization of digitalization that we can reach millions of citizens wherever they are as long as there is internet connection. And this job is done through online with no need of allotting human resource here and there. Understandably, we have nearly a million of students in our country who failed to pass the national exam and if we were able to provide this technological utility to our students, we would be able to have a good number of students who could join colleges and universities and thereby minimize the expenses and overall costs we are still budgeting in the remedial program, which was proposed to help students get a second chance to join universities. We would enable our young citizens to join colleges if we provide them with this technology starting from lower grades and high schools as well. All in all, we can say that this technology, i.e, digitalization can enhance and modernize the process of teaching-learning.

When we think of applying digital technology, we have to think of the inclusive approach of this technological advancement in the teaching learning process. As we have different students with differing capabilities, or differently abled students, some might be with hearing impairment; some might be with vision impairment, some might be physically challenged ones. Hence, when we apply this digital technology, at least, we should have a minimum benchmark so that all these differences are entertained equally. Therefore, it is our responsibility to involve all these stakeholders or beneficiaries of the education system as a student so that the required quality of education is met through digitalization.

QM. There are two terms we hear people interchangeably using: digitization and digitalization. Is there a difference between these terms?

Mr. Basiliyos: Well, actually, there are about three terms used with this regard and they mean almost the same, just with a slight difference. They are digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation. According to sources, though all the three processes positively influence technology, they slightly differ in “scope, impact level, and end goals”. Specifically, with respect to scope, “Digitization focuses on data conversion and is about improving processes with digital solutions, while digital transformation is leveraging technology for a total organizational over-

haul.” In other words, “Digitalization deals with information processing, or how digitized data can be used to improve workflows through automating existing processes.” And about the third term we can say that “digital transformation is all about leveraging knowledge and integrating it in all business areas to enhance engagement and create new value.” What we can say about these terms is they have a difference.

QM: It is obvious that the level of civilization varies from country to country. Then, how do you see the challenges developing countries such as ours face with regard to implementing IT, with specific reference to digitalization in education?

Mr. Basiliyos: Yeah, as you mentioned, there are different challenges depending on the level of civilization and the economic development of countries. We can put these challenges in three different ledgers. The first ledger is the enabling environment. This is related to policies, strategies, guidelines and so on. Even though Ethiopia has introduced Digital Transformation Strategy 2025 that focuses on the four pillars, to use the benefit of the digital world, there might be challenges that could negatively influence the strategy which “aims to engage Ethiopian sectors and institutions in developing and aligning action plans and creating wealth through technology.” Basically, the plan of the strategy “aims for Ethiopia to become a middle-income country and a leading manufacturing and trade center by 2025. It dreams of increasing the share of manufacturing in GDP from the current 5% to 17%. It dreams of doubling the country’s exports and ensuring that manufacturing accounts for 40% of exports.” Therefore, it is quite important to avoid obstacles that may hamper the implementation of this digital strategy the nation has introduced. The second one is the human aspect. When I say the human aspect, I mean the need for skilled manpower to run the Information Technology (IT) and the digitalization process. Unless we have the necessary skilled manpower, it is not possible to meet our expectations from the digital world almost all developed countries are enjoying. Therefore, especially the academic environment should be aware of and have the necessary knowledge with regard to applying digital technology. If we want to introduce and utilize software or a digital program in the education sector, we need to have the required number of experts who can manage



this technology as teachers and IT professionals in colleges and educational facilities. Hence, it's vitally important to fill this gap through any means possible such as trainings and scholarships. The third ledger or challenge is the infrastructure. It is all about connecting students, connecting people to the internet; and about creating access to the internet. Besides creating access to the internet, it is also crucially important to make devices and power supplies available everywhere. It is very important to realize that access to electricity or power supply is essential in carrying out digital programs. Therefore, it is the duty of especially the government to provide the digital service with the necessary infrastructure. To make the infrastructure available and to make ready the necessary skilled manpower, it is very important that the government should exert its efforts in accommodating the finance and any input towards this digital service.

QM: What do you think is the role of this modern concept of digitization on the revolutionization of teaching learning such as enhancing the overall educational experience as well as using it as a means of livelihood for students and educators as well? And distance wise what challenges are there?

Mr. Basiliyos: Wherever any citizen is found, as long as there is good connection of internet and uninterrupted power supply, there is no problem of distance. Distance is not a problem in the digital world. You can, for example, be hired by any international organization and can give your service through the so called virtual office. As long as you know how to use this technology, there is no problem with regard to where to do what. As a matter of fact, nowadays, even tertiary education including third degrees are carried out through online without the need to avail a scheduled classroom teaching. But we need to have access to such opportunities. In our country, even though there are millions of citizens who could incline to use this digital technology, due to the fact that we have a limited access with this respect, so many of them couldn't get the chance. And because of this, many people could not fulfil their wishes and aspirations. This problem should be addressed soon if we want to utilize the digital technology at most. If we were able to employ this service ten or twenty years back, by now we could have millions of citizens who could economically support themselves and their country

through digital transformation. So we have to create digital literate citizens as much as possible. If we enhance online education, we can reach anywhere in the country with little expense and can enlighten citizens without the need to go there physically.

QM: Would you tell us about the impacts of digitized resources and open educational materials on the affordability and accessibility of educational content, data privacy, digital literacy, and effective pedagogical approaches in online and blended learning environments?

Mr. Basiliyos: When we think of online learning, we have to think of also the related costs. First, we need to afford the connectivity service, that is both electricity and internet connection. In addition, we need to afford the devices that enhance online learning. On top of all these, we need to have skilled manpower, what I usually mention as the human aspect. We also have to design the curriculum that needs to be implemented through digital technology. The activities that go through online must align with the national curriculum. One main point we can mention here cost wise is that it is relatively cheaper to attend online programs than to attend physically in classroom teachings.

QM: People say that COVID 19 had played a great role in the fast growth and development of using digitalization. How far is it true dear Mr. Basiliyos?

Mr. Basiliyos: Yeah, all in all we can say that COVID 19 has negatively affected communities and countries worldwide. So many people died; the economies of countries ruined, etc. However, we cannot deny the fact that it has played a positive role in the development of digital technology. Though so many people have been affected to the extent of losing their lives, we can't underestimate the fact that it contributed a lot in the utilization of online activities such as webinars, teleconferences, zoom conferences, online teaching learning, etc. It was after COVID 19 that every online service has been booming to a higher level in all sectors not only in education. During the time COVID 19 was in its higher devastating level, almost all physical contacts in colleges and universities were ceased and online service was in place instead. During that time both private and public institutions were trying to use this digital technology to deliver their education to their students. Of course, when they

were doing so, some of them were successful and some of them were challenged due to the fact that that practice was almost newly introduced and the access to it was very much limited to only big cities and localities. Nevertheless, we can conclude that the pandemic has had a positive impact on the enhancement of online services despite its negative impact upon societies.

QM: Besides power outage, there seems is poor internet connection in our country. How do you see this problem or challenge? And how does it affect digital service especially in the education service?

Mr. Basiliyos: That was what I was mentioning from the very beginning. I said that access to technology is unthinkable without the presence of internet connection and uninterrupted power supply. As we can understand from what people usually do, we can say that the economic capacity of people is very much limited and that is why we see them around educational institutions and schools where there is a wifi connection to just have a free connection. Most of them can't afford to use the data connection due to lack of money for internet packages; many people including students have lower economic status. So they take advantage of free connections anywhere. This can be seen as one challenge. The other challenge is not being able to have a reliable source of network and power, that is to mean uninterrupted source of facilities mentioned. There is also a solution for that. If you see cities and towns, we can get internet services here and there as long as there is electricity and internet connection, but if we go off the main roads to about ten or so kilometers, we don't get any digital service because there is no electricity. In towns and cities, if we are able to provide free network connections through wifi installations, many people can make use of them and achieve their goals. On the hand, when we face power outage, we can use alternative methods such as generators and/or solar energy in colleges and institutions. Through these methods, we can overcome challenges that we face in applying digital technology in education. We can also introduce the offline mode of teaching as an alternative. This sort of teaching happens when internet connection is off. Once students download their materials while there is connection, they can use it offline and can send it when the connection becomes alive. And when students are using the internet, they

should be wise enough to save their stuffs while working so that they can continue their activities offline.

QM: These were our questions, dear Mr. Basiliyos. We are pleased if you give us additional information you think are worth mentioning to help our readers become more aware of this modern concept of the IT age. Thank you very much.

Basiliyos: Thank you again for giving me this chance. Maybe one thing I would like to add with regard to the education sector is that we need to have an initiative toward creating symbiotic coordination among stakeholders such as the government, private and public higher education institutions, NGO's that work on education, and so on. As long as we are working for the same purpose or objective, as long as we run to achieve the same goal, we all have to have a synchronized modus operandi of dealing with common social tasks and responsibilities. We need to have good partnership so that we can achieve the results we expect in having an enlightened society especially with respect to producing IT literate citizens in every walk of life. To achieve the goal of quality digital service in the education sector, all stakeholders should get involved in an unstrained manner. As we all know, we have a good policy along with a digital strategy that stands for the fruition of digital community that properly uses the digital transformation. It is therefore the responsibility of all to work in favor of this plan and result in citizens who can utilize IT in all sphere of life. And there is a draft expected to be endorsed soon by the concerned state apparatus. It is about eLearning. These and other conditions create an enabling environment that foster digitalization to be most useful in our country.

My other say is that we have to work on the human aspect without which we cannot achieve anything at all. The concerned body in the government should focus on this side of the challenge. People must be trained or educated so that we can reach millions of people across the country. This is all what I have to say. If we create a coalition that works for the same purpose, we can save so many things that we would expend while running alone. Thank you so much once again.

QM: Thank you very much dear Ato Basiliyos for giving us your precious time and educative views on digitalization and related issues.

CAMPUS NEWS

CEIQA conducted a half day training

The Quality Enhancement Committee of the Department of Basic Courses (DBC) in collaboration with the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) of SMU conducted a half day awareness creation session under a title “Internal Quality Assurance System and Practices of SMU” that targeted the academic and administrative staff of the University on Saturday Morning, the 5th of August, 2023 in the Multi-Purpose Hall, Undergraduate Campus. The training was given by Ato Shegaw G/Medhin, Director of CEIQA for 28 staff members of SMU.

A number of issues related with quality and quality assurance were presented in the session. Among others, the definition and concepts of quality and quality assurance, components of quality assurance system, quality audit, Education and Training Authority’s (ETA’s) ten focus areas of quality and the internal quality assurance system, Structure and Practices of SMU, major functions of CEIQA were discussed as most important points.



As noted by the presenter, the concept of quality is too difficult to define in that it has several definitions given by different scholars at various times. However, through the efforts of a group of scholars of the field,

these definitions have been squeezed and put into five major definitions; quality as exception, quality as fitness for purpose, quality as consistency/perfection, quality as value for money and quality as transformation. Of these, “quality as fitness for purpose” is the one that is accepted by Ethiopia hence followed by ETA.



Regarding Quality Assurance, it was said that quality is not something that someone can achieve alone. Rather, it is a system that is composed of three key components; input, process and output. It was also noted that quality assurance system has three key components; Accreditation (at institutional and program level), Internal Quality Assurance and External Quality Assurance. The latter two are carried out by the concerned institution and ETA, respectively, as per the standards set.

The main agenda in the session, however, was the Internal Quality Assurance System, Structure and Practices of SMU. As was indicated by the Director, SMU has a well established quality assurance system that has greatly helped the creation of a dedicated institutional culture for quality. The internal quality assurance system of SMU is well structured. It was said that the structure has three levels. The system is overseen by the Institutional Standing Committee at

the Senate level, CEIQA in the middle and QECs at the level of academic departments and offices. The quality assurance system of SMU follows the “Deming Cycle”, which has PDCA (Plan, Do, Check and Act) as its components, as its model to assure quality at the institutional level. As indicated by the Director, the Cycle favors continuous improvement in quality.



A half-day training conducted

A half-day training was conducted on August 12, 2023, for undergraduate student club leaders at St. Mary’s University. The training, titled “Annual Plan Preparation and Plan Implementation,” was geared towards enhancing the skills and knowledge of club leaders in effectively planning and executing their club activities. The session was conducted by Ato Shegaw G/Medihin, the Director of CEIQA (Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance) office.

The training was attended by 14 club leaders from 8 clubs, including representatives from existing clubs and newcomers. Among the newcomers, the GAVEL and the Computer Science clubs were present. The diverse representation of clubs ensured a comprehensive exchange of ideas and experiences throughout the training.

During the half-day training session, Ato Shegaw provided an overview of the critical components related

to planning, elements of a plan, plan preparation, report writing, and plan implementation processes at St. Mary’s University.

It is worth mentioning that St. Mary’s University has placed significant importance on club activities and student engagement since 2014 E.C. This initiative, led by our university president, has fostered a vibrant club culture and provided students with ample opportunities for personal development and extracurricular involvement.



“Higher education is in the era of digital transformation (Dx). Learning technologies and digital platforms are no longer an afterthought; they are critical for teaching and learning. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for Dx, forcing colleges, universities, instructors, and students to shift online rapidly.”

(Source: internet)



St. Mary's University

Programs Offered



Undergraduate Degree Programs (Regular/Extension)

- ◆ Accounting & Finance
- ◆ Computer Science
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Tourism & Hospitality Management

Undergraduate Degree Programs (College of Open and Distance Learning)

- ◆ Accounting & Finance
- ◆ Banking and Finance
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Financial Economics
- ◆ Rural Development
- ◆ Agricultural Extension
- ◆ Agri-Business Management
- ◆ Agricultural Economics
- ◆ Cooperative (Accounting & Auditing)
- ◆ Cooperative (Business Management)
- ◆ Educational Planning & Management
- ◆ Economics
- ◆ Sociology
- ◆ Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- ◆ Public Administration and Development
- ◆ Management

Other Services Through Our Testing Center

- ◆ TOEFL iBT (Internet based)
- ◆ Recruitment test
- ◆ GRE
- ◆ Praxis
- ◆ (CISI) Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment

Graduate Programs (Regular)

- ◆ Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- ◆ MBA in Accounting and Finance
- ◆ MA in Project Management
- ◆ MA in Marketing Management
- ◆ MA in Social Work
- ◆ MA in Sociology
- ◆ MA in Development Economics
- ◆ MSc. in Agricultural Economics
- ◆ MSc. in Computer Science
- ◆ MSc in Quality and Productivity Management

Graduate Programs Offered in Partnership with Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

- ◆ MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship

Graduate Programs In Partnership With IGNOU (Distance)

- ◆ Master of Business Administration
- ◆ Master of Arts in Social Work
- ◆ Master of Arts in Economics
- ◆ Master of Arts in Public Administration
- ◆ MARD (Master of Arts in Rural Development)
- ◆ Master of Arts in Sociology
- ◆ Master of Arts in Political Science
- ◆ Master of Commerce

Short Term Training

- ◆ Business, IT, and Education areas
- ◆ Certified Quality Manager
- ◆ Certified Quality Engineer
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System
- ◆ ISO 31000:2015 Risk Management
- ◆ Supply Chain Management
- ◆ Quality Professional
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Auditor
- ◆ ISO 9001:2015 Lead Auditor
- ◆ Quality and Productivity areas
- ◆ Entrepreneurship
- ◆ and more

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+251 11 550 4762/63 (Undergraduate Distance)
+251 11 550 3140 (International Program)

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