

ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF RELEVANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA BY NAAC

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Abstract This article has attempted to explore the role of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) Accreditation in the Quality Improvement of Higher Education Institutions. NAAC has become an essential part of the Higher Education System to highpoint qualitative part of the Higher Education Institutions (Institute / College / University). The NAAC have brought significant changes in the Indian Higher Education system by creating an impact on the various quality parameters of the Institutions. NAAC gives direction and motivates the Institutions to address many of its issues through its criteria and critical indicators related to Quality Assessment and Accreditation processes, such as Evaluation Process and Reforms; Student Performance and Learning Outcomes; Promotion of Research and Facilities; Resource Mobilisation for Research, Innovation Ecosystem, Research Publications and Awards; Consultancy; Extension Activities; Collaboration; Library as a Learning Resource; IT Infrastructure; Faculty Empowerment Strategies; Resource Mobilisation and Financial Management; Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS); Institutional Values and Social Responsibilities; Best Practices and Institutional Distinctiveness.

Keywords: NAAC, Higher Education Institutions, Assessment, Quality

INTRODUCTION

In India, the demand for Higher education is rapidly increasing along with the challenges of quality and sustenance (Sharma, 2022). Education is essential for any country's progress. As a result, Higher Education must be the finest in terms of both quantity and quality (Kumar Raj, 2018). India's demand for Higher Education is rapidly rising, posing challenges in maintaining quality and sustainability and competing with worldwide Higher Education Institutions. In India, the number of universities and colleges has increased dramatically. The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India established an autonomous and independent agency called the NAAC in 1994 to evaluate and assess the quality of these Institutions (NAAC, 2020).

The NAAC is an organisation that aims to improve the educational quality and its value. Its implementation has resulted in a more positive work culture instinct and a desire among college and university teachers to gain more knowledge and information (Kaur & Gupta, 2021).

Its mission is to evaluate and accredit India's Higher education Institutions. It arose from references in the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (POA-1992) that emphasised the enhancement and improvement of the country's Higher Education Quality.

An institution/college has to prepare the SSR in seven criteria before the NAAC visit. Generally, the process of NAAC accreditation takes place once in a 5 years. After examining the intent institution's Institutional Assessment and Accreditation application, the NAAC grants the institution Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment status.

i) The production of qualified human resources through Higher Education.	ii) Higher Education as preparation for a job in research.
iii) Higher Education is defined as the effective management of educational resources.	iv) Increasing life chances through Higher Education.

Quality in Higher Education

Most countries' approaches to higher education quality began with the idea that, for various reasons, the quality of Higher Education requires monitoring. At its core, governments all around the world want Higher Education to be more responsive to their needs, including:

- Increasing the relevance of Higher Education to social and economic demands.
- Expanding access to Higher Education by increasing the number of people who can attend, usually at a lower cost per unit.
- Ensure that the services and procedures are comparable within and between institutions, including international comparisons.

Quality has been utilised as a strategy to ensure that some of these concerns are addressed. As a result, quality approaches are primarily concerned with creating quality monitoring procedures.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Harvey and Green (1993) underlined that there are many different methods to describe quality function in the Higher Education Sector, and each of the various definitions has its own perspective and standards. Each stakeholder's subjective definition of quality in a given sector is different. M. E. Erylmaz, E. Aydoan Kara (2016). The significance of quality certifications in the education sector was demonstrated by a study on quality management in Turkish Higher Education Institutions. According to the study, the main advantages of certificates included standardisation, prestige, notoriety and recognition for the faculty, improved service for all parties involved and process improvements. A semi-structured interview-based qualitative study was used by Walder, A. M. (2016) to explore academics' impressions of the effects of creative teaching. The interviews were done with assistant, associate and full professors at a Canadian university. An investigation of the underlying theory revealed that pedagogical innovations improve student access to courses, professionalisation, learning and graduation while also altering their attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, pedagogical advances refresh instructional methods and please instructors.

Shroff Neha (2016) talked about it in her paper "Quality issues of Higher Education using NAAC data" about NAAC-accredited institutions and colleges in Gujarat for the first, second and third cycle of evaluation in the last 10 years. The author emphasised on the NAAC specified best practises for quality as a tool to achieve greater results, as well as

the importance of maintaining strong quality practises in order to keep high ranking grades in the NAAC prospect assessment.

"Role of NAAC in Enhancing Quality in Higher Education in India: Issues and Challenges," by Radhabinod Singh Tongbram, was published in 2018. The NAAC is a self-governing body formed by the UGC with the mission of assessing and certifying institutions of higher learning, with the goal of assisting them in continually improving the quality of Higher Education. Institutions place a strong emphasis on assessment and accreditation in order to retain their Quality Status and meet the requirements for all academic activities, learning resources, organisational management, publications and research output.

In their paper "A Symbiotic Analysis of NAAC Accredited Higher Education Institutions in the State of Tamil Nadu, India," S. Amutha and B. S. Ponmudiraj (2019) reported NAAC criteria analysis of 92 colleges in Tamil Nadu as per NAAC's updated Accreditation Framework. The challenges and prospects of Tamil Nadu institutions for Assessment and Accreditation were also covered in the study.

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Role of NAAC Accreditation in Quality Improvement of Higher Education Institution

The NAAC took into account changes in the education system due to the impact of technology, private participation and globalisation and the resulting shift in values when developing the following fundamental values for its accreditation framework.

Supporting in the Development of the Country

Higher Education Institutions play an essential role in human resource development, addressing the needs of the economy, society and the country as a whole and contributing to the nation's overall growth. As a result, it's only natural that the NAAC's Assessment and Accreditation process examine how HEIs have responded to and contributed to national development.

Promoting Students' Global Competences

The demand for internationally acceptable Higher Education standards has increased as economic activities have become more liberalised and globalised. As a result, the NAAC's certification process should examine the role of HEIs in preparing students to attain core skills (innovative and creative) in order to successfully meet global criteria.

Inculcating Value System among Students

Higher Education Institutions are responsible for instilling desirable value systems (values compatible with social, cultural, spiritual, moral and other factors) in students. As a result, the NAAC assessment looks at how HEIs instil these essential and desired qualities in their students.

Promoting Technology Use

To stay up with the advancements in the other fields of human effort, HEIs must provide their students with cutting-edge educational tools to enhance their learning experiences.

The Search for Excellence

The pursuit of excellence in all that the institutions undertake will contribute to the general development of the country's Higher Education system. The preparation of an institution's SAR could be the start of this 'Quest for Excellence'. Identification of the institution's strengths and weaknesses in various spheres/criteria could be another step in this path.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on Primary and Secondary Research, as well as primary research. A mixed research approach is adopted in the present study, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. As a result, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used in the current Research Study.

The data is collected through primary and secondary data sources. The collected data is analysed and processed in light of the research objectives. Whether for primary or secondary data gathering, the tools used in a study are determined by the investigator's aims or by the study's needs. The study's tools should be used within the study's context. In the study's aims and requirements framework, the Structured Questionnaire collects primary data from Teachers from

Sample Higher Education Institute. An interview schedule is a set of structured questions prepared by an interviewer to collect information or data from an interviewee about a specific topic.

Sample Selection

The sample comprises various stakeholders from the Sample Higher Education Institution within the Nashik District for the study. The principal, IQAC members, teachers and students were chosen as stakeholders.

Around 200 Higher Education Institutions are working in Nashik District. Out of which 20 Higher Education Institutions were selected for this study and 100 Teachers (five Teachers from each sample respondent HEI) are chosen as a sample.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis involves working with the data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, coding it, synthesising it and searching for the pattern. Thus, for any research, the analytical task of coming up with findings and interpretation is indispensable.

Perception of the Principal/IQAC Members/Teachers regarding the status of the perceived outcomes of Accreditation in terms of *Indicators of General Benefits of Accreditation to Higher Education Institutions*.

Table 1: Perception of the Respondents Regarding the Present Status of Accreditation

Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
Has NAAC accredited your college?	78.0%	20.0%	2.0%
Are you satisfied with the present atmosphere of the college?	77.0%	12.0%	11.0%

Source: Primary Data.

The above data analysis reveals that out of the total sample, 78.0% of Higher Education Institutions are accredited by the NAAC, whereas 20% are not accredited. Further, The above data analysis reveals that out of the total sample of stakeholders of Higher Education Institutions, 77% of respondents are satisfied with the present atmosphere of the college at the same time, 12% of sample respondents are not satisfied with the present atmosphere of the college.

Table 2: Analysis of Present Infrastructure of Sample Higher Education Institution

Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
Is there any provision for providing computer training to all the students in the college?	74.0%	25.0%	1.0%
Does the college make use of the internet for transacting educational programs?	94.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Does your college allow students to move from one discipline to the other?	76.0%	14.0%	10.0%
Is there a provision for having tutorial classes for the students?	84.0%	14.0%	2.0%
Are there Departmental libraries for faculty and students?	84.0%	16.0%	0.0%
Does your college subscribe to research journals for reference as per the different Departmental requirements?	76.0%	12.0%	12.0%
Do the library collections cater to the needs of the users?	84.0%	2.0%	14.0%
Does the library ensure the purchase and use of current titles, important journals, and other reading materials?	73.0%	12.0%	15.0%
Is there proper hostel facilities available in your college?	46.0%	54.0%	0.0%
Is the accommodation sufficient to meet the demands for boys and girls?	51.0%	30.0%	19.0%
Do you think the kitchen and toilets of the hostels are in a hygienic condition?	53.0%	28.0%	19.0%
Is the current Hostel Fee structure adequate for all the students?	45.0%	38.0%	17.0%
Does the Institution provide facilities like a common room, wash/restroom for women, students, and staff?	94.0%	6.0%	0.0%
Did reaccreditation take place in your college?	76.0%	20.0%	4.0%

Source: Primary Data.

In the education sector, infrastructure is crucial. The design of classrooms, auditoriums, laboratories and the campus area, among other things, are critical components of a learning environment. Higher Education Institutions' classroom and interior design have a significant impact on a student's learning and, as a result, the outcome. High-quality infrastructure, among other things, promotes better instruction, increases student results and lowers dropout rates.

The above data shows the Infrastructure and Learning Atmosphere of Higher Education Institutions. The above data reveals that most sample respondents responded that adequate infrastructure is available in their Higher Education Institutions.

Likert Scale Analysis using Mean Score Analysis

There are many examples of vertical Likert items, but a Likert item that follows the guidelines of the original 1932

publication has its items arranged horizontally. Although some concerns have been raised regarding potential bias in horizontal Likert items, sentiment levels represent value. To calculate each sentiment level in a Likert item, a value must be given to differentiate it from other sentiment levels. Put another way, and it does not make sense to assign "1" to both "Agree" and "Disagree" because they don't express the same responses.

The succeeding formula was used to calculate the mean score of given frequencies:

$$\frac{[(\text{number of customers who selected-response 1}) * (\text{weighting of response 1}) + (\text{number of customers who selected-response 2}) * (\text{weighting of response 2}) + \dots + (\text{number of customers who selected-response n}) * (\text{weighting of response n})]}{(\text{total number of customers, i.e. 200})}$$

The mean score is calculated to assess the opinion for various statements regarding NAAC assessment of sample Higher Education Institutions.

Table 3: Mean Score Analysis of Statement Related to NAAC

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score
Environmental up-gradation take place in college after NAAC's assessment.	3	3	7	10	77	4.55
Qualitative improvement take place in college after NAAC's assessment.	5	4	6	17	68	4.39
New innovative teaching methods adopted in the colleges after NAAC's assessment.	10	12	8	12	58	3.96
The modern teaching aids used in classroom instruction to provide modern knowledge and information to the students before and after NAAC's assessment.	2	8	2	41	47	4.23
The major changes took place in the hostel facilities after NAAC's assessment.	34	23	4	12	27	2.75
NAAC's assessment is essential for quality development of college.	2	4	0	34	60	4.46
NAAC's assessment is essential for the educational improvement in Higher Education Institutions.	6	10	5	15	64	4.21
NAAC process has motivated your College towards quality improvement.	6	9	9	32	44	3.99
NAAC accreditation being mandatory for Higher Education Institutions has made quality a culture of these Institutions.	2	3	9	34	52	4.31
NAAC assessment acted as a tool of SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints) for College.	2	13	16	33	36	3.88
NAAC accreditation given a new sense of direction and identity to College.	2	2	8	19	69	4.51
NAAC assessment has acted as a catalyst for Institutional self-improvement.	6	3	8	24	59	4.27
NAAC assessment/accreditation process helps Institutions in various domains of quality such as quality assurance, quality enhancement and quality maintenance in totality.	4	13	8	34	41	3.95
NAAC accreditation resulted in public accountability of College.	2	2	6	38	53	4.41
NAAC accreditation as the award of the status enhanced the reputation of College.	2	2	4	23	69	4.55
NAAC accreditation enhanced the work environment in the College.	4	6	8	31	51	4.19
Accreditation promoted intra-institutional interactions in College.	8	2	12	34	44	4.04

Findings based in Likert Scale Analysis

The above statement asked to stackholder of Higher Education Institution to assess the role of Higher Education Institution in Quality and Infrastructure improvement. The mean score of above statements are higher than 2.00. Hence, it can be concluded that:

- Environmental upgradation take place in college after NAAC's assessment.
- Qualitative improvement takes place in college after NAAC's assessment.
- New innovative teaching methods adopted in the colleges after NAAC's assessment.
- The modern teaching aids used in classroom instruction to provide modern knowledge and information to the students before and after NAAC's assessment.
- The major changes took place in the hostel facilities after NAAC's assessment.
- NAAC's assessment is essential for quality development of college.
- NAAC's assessment is essential for the educational improvement in Higher Education Institutions.
- NAAC process has motivated your college towards quality improvement.
- NAAC accreditation being mandatory for Higher Education Institutions has made quality a culture of these institutions.
- NAAC assessment acted as a tool of SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints) for College.
- NAAC accreditation given a new sense of direction and identity to College.
- NAAC assessment has acted as a catalyst for Institutional self-improvement.
- NAAC assessment/accreditation process helps Institutions in various domains of quality such as quality assurance, quality enhancement and quality maintenance in totality.
- NAAC accreditation resulted in public accountability of College.

- NAAC accreditation as the award of the status enhanced the reputation of College.
- NAAC accreditation enhanced the work environment in the College.
- Accreditation promoted intra-institutional interactions in College.

CONCLUSION

There is a rising concern that quality assurance must focus on improving what is offered to stakeholders, even if this requires a significant rethinking of Higher Education. In many systems, accountability is still a top goal, and there is a worry that credibility must be created first, and progress will follow. Internal improvement is the only way to go. If the improvement goal is to help students develop their transformational abilities, quality monitoring should use a transformative framework rather than simple operationalisations like fitness for purpose.

External quality monitoring will only be effective in the long run, if it is clearly linked to an internal culture of continuous quality improvement that focuses on understanding stakeholder requirements in an open, responsive manner. Quality monitoring requires a “paradigm shift,” transforming it from an accountability tool to a critical component of establishing a culture of continuous improvement in the transformative process.

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Author Contribution

Both the Authors contribute equally.

Conflict of Interest

We declared that we have no conflict of interest.

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