



Research Paper

NAAC Evaluation: An Advantage for Higher Education

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Abstract

Education broadens and opens the mind, enabling you to enhance and develop your life in numerous ways. These days, they are universities, colleges, and schools. By giving them a good education, the finest human resources may be created. Since we are competing on a global scale, high-quality education is necessary. Both internally and externally, quality assessment is crucial. However, as internal evaluation is accomplished by self-study, self-analysis, and self-interpretation, it should be prioritized above external evaluation. For higher education institutions to deliver high-quality instruction, accreditation is essential. UGC has created an independent body for the same NAAC. Enhancing, promoting, and maintaining high-quality education in higher education institutions is the goal of NAAC's founding.

The accreditation status of Higher Education Institutes speaks about that particular institute is meeting the standards set by the accreditation agency. NAAC makes the institutions to go through the process of self-evaluation and them to develop and maintain autonomy and innovation in higher education. There are certain issues and challenges which the institutions have to face in order to maintain and promote the quality of education. This chapter attempts to describe the process of accreditation, issues and challenges faced by the institutions.

Keywords: Quality Education, NAAC, Issues and Challenges

I. Introduction:

Higher education is essential to building an information-based and knowledge-based society. To teach, train, conduct research, and provide community service is the goal and vision of higher education. Given these circumstances, our nation needs an efficient and successful quality assurance system. The University Grants Commission of India created NAAC to evaluate and accredit the nation's higher education institutions. Through a mix of internal and external quality evaluation, promotion, and sustainability programs, NAAC plays a crucial role in guaranteeing the quality of higher education in India. In this context we have focused on how NAAC insists for the quality and excellence in its vision of every higher education institution and advocates the best practices, benchmarking approach for quality enhancement in Higher Education.

Higher education has a huge, intricate, and essential function in institutions; education is the foundation of a nation. With numerous political, economic, and social ramifications, a vast array of opportunities and challenges are arising. The difficulties posed by changing views on knowledge itself are arguably the most serious, as they have a big impact on the crucial role that universities play in society. The provision of higher education without compromising the standard of instruction should be the top priority. In such a setting, the nation must have an efficient and successful quality assurance system in place. The Accreditation unit is suggested by the National Policy Mission as a way to preserve the caliber of higher education in institutions. Based on this, University Grants Commission (UGC), under section 12 CCC of the UGC Act (Act 3 of 1956), established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as an Autonomous Institution on 16 September 1994 with registered Office at Bangalore. The prime aim of NAAC is to Assess and Accredite institutions and universities of higher learning with an objective of helping them to work continuously to improve the quality of education, in order to empowerment of higher learning and to maximize their resources, opportunities and capabilities.

Governance of NAAC:

The NAAC is run by its Executive Committee (EC) and General Council (GC). Policymakers and prominent academics from a variety of higher education systems are represented in the general council and executive committees of educational administrators. The chairperson of the Executive Committee is a distinguished academician, whereas the chairperson of the UGC serves as the president of the NAAC General

Council. In addition to serving as the academic and administrative leader of NAAC, the Director also serves as the member-secretary of the Executive Council and General Council. The NAAC's policies are guided by the legislative bodies. The NAAC has several advisory and consultative groups in addition to legislative entities to direct its operations in various areas of higher education. The activities of NAAC are supported by core staff and consultants. In addition, it receives assistance and guidance from external resource persons from across the nations who are not full time members of NAAC.

Core values of NAAC:

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operate in a changing environment all over the world. Significant changes have been required in the Indian higher education system due to the necessity of expanding the system, the impact of technology on the delivery of education, the rise in private participation in higher education, and the effects of globalization (including liberal cross-border and trans-national educational imperatives). When creating the core values, NAAC took these developments and the resulting change in values into consideration. Therefore, the NAAC QA process is based on a value framework that is appropriate and relevant to the national context in order to guarantee external and internal validity and credibility. The accreditation framework of NAAC is thus based on five core values detailed below.

(i) Contributing to National Development

The majority of HEIs has an exceptional ability to adjust to changes while still pursuing their own aims and ambitions. An unspoken objective of Indian HEIs has always been to support national development. In order to meet the demands of the economy, society, and nation at large, HEIs play a crucial role in the development of human resources and the capacity building of individuals. This helps the nation grow. HEIs may support national development in a number of ways, including promoting social justice, guaranteeing equity, and expanding access to higher education. It is therefore appropriate that the assessment and Accreditation (A&A) process of NAAC looks into the ways HEIs have been responding to and contributing towards national development.

(ii) Fostering Global Competencies among Students

The rapidly accelerating worldwide advancements also justify the inclusion of student skill development in the NAAC's evaluation scope, putting pupils on par with their international peers. As economic operations become more liberalized and globalized, it is essential to produce highly qualified human resources. As a result, it is clear that higher education needs to meet internationally recognized criteria. As a result, the NAAC certification process must include how HEIs help students develop the basic competences they need to successfully navigate the difficulties of the world. This calls on the HEIs to adopt an inventive, imaginative, and enterprising mindset. Towards achieving this, HEIs may establish collaborations with industries, network with the neighborhood agencies/bodies and foster a closer relationship between the “world of competent-learning” and the “world of skilled work”.

(iii) Inculcating a Value System among Students

In the absence of suitable value systems, talents lose their worth, even if skill development is essential for students to succeed in the labor market. The duty of instilling desired value systems in students must fall on the shoulders of HEIs. At the local, national, and universal levels—as outlined in the Manual for Universities NAAC for Quality and Excellence in Higher Education—it is crucial that students absorb the proper values that correspond with social, cultural, economic, and environmental realities in a nation like India, which is characterized by cultural plurality and diversity. Despite the country's diversity and plurality, there is a recurring worry about teaching fundamental universal values like truth and righteousness in addition to other values highlighted in the nation's numerous policy papers.

The seeds of values such as cooperation and mutual understanding during the early stages of education have to be reiterated and re-emphasized at the higher education also through appropriate learning experiences and opportunities. The NAAC assessment therefore examines how these essential and desirable values are being inculcated in the students, by the HEIs.

(iv) Promoting the Use of Technology

The influence of science and technology is responsible for the majority of the noteworthy advancements that are currently visible. Although the benefits of utilizing contemporary tools and technical advancements in daily life are widely acknowledged, the accompanying shifts in the application of new technology for education, learning, and HEI governance leave much to be desired. All HEIs must implement technological advancements and innovations in educational transactions in order to have a noticeable effect on administration and academic progress. Adoption of important technical advancements is necessary at a time when our educational institutions are expected to function on par with their international counterparts. Many

students no longer find traditional higher education delivery techniques to be as compelling. To keep pace with the developments in other spheres of human endeavor, HEIs have to enrich the learning experiences of their students by providing them with state-of-the-art educational technologies. The campus community must be adequately prepared to make use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) optimally. Conscious effort is also needed to invest in hardware and to orient the faculty suitably. In addition to using technology as a learning resource, managing the activities of the institution in a technology-enabled way will ensure effective institutional functioning. For example, documentation and data management in the HEIs are areas where the process of assessment by NAAC has made a significant impact. Desired moves in this direction include switching to electronic data management and setting up an institutional website to give stakeholders quick access to pertinent information. To put it another way, HEIs that effectively employ ICT will be able to implement ICT-enabled administrative procedures, leverage ICT for networking and resource sharing, and impart ICT literacy to the campus community. As a result, NAAC accreditation would examine how HEIs have implemented electronic resources and data management systems, as well as how they have accessed internal and external stakeholders, especially the student body.

(v) Pursuit of Greatness

HEIs should show a desire to become centers of excellence while also aiding in the development of students' talents and the nation. Outstanding performance in all they do will help the nation's higher education system grow overall. The evaluation or, even earlier, the creation of the Steering Committee for the Reparation of the Self-Study Report (SSR) of Manual for Universities an institution might be the first step in this "Quest for Excellence." Finding the institution's strengths and shortcomings in the teaching and learning procedures might be another step in this route. The aforementioned five basic characteristics serve as the basis for evaluating schools that voluntarily apply for NAAC certification. The HEIs may also add their own core values to these in conformity with the goals and mission.

Changing Scenario

Role of NAAC in the changing scenario of higher education needs to be redefined with respect to recognition cum accreditation, programme accreditation, national level ranking of universities, preparation of national benchmarks, national and international database, research and development centre, developing reports and policy papers to Government of India (GOI), accreditation of multiple accreditation agencies, recognition of regional/state level accreditation bodies etc. Assessment and Accreditation by NAAC may be made mandatory for all higher education institutions of the country. NAAC may start programme accreditation Ranking of institutions may not be very much relevant when compared to grading All accreditation agencies including NAAC are to be accredited once in three years. While NAAC could be accredited by recognized international accreditation bodies, NAAC could perform this function for all the multiple accreditation agencies getting recognized by Government of India (GOI). NAAC grading and duration of accreditation may be linked and longer period of accreditation may be considered for the third cycle of institutional accreditation. NAAC needs to continue to be an Apex Assessment and Accreditation body for higher education institution, in the country providing vision and leadership.

NAAC Accreditation Process

Higher education institutions are deemed qualified to apply for NAAC accreditation and evaluation if they have graduated two successive batches or have been in operation for the previous six years, whichever comes first. They must also meet the other requirements or be covered by any additional regulations that may be pertinent. Offshore educational institutions and remote learning are not covered by NAAC accreditation. A reference number is given to the institutions upon uploading the All India Higher Survey on Higher Education data to the AISHE site. This is a necessary step for any institution hoping to register for the accreditation process. The NAAC assesses the quality of higher education institutions through an internationally accepted methodology which is guided by its vision and mission statements. NAAC changes its parameters for assessing the quality of higher education with the passage of time. Earlier accreditation process was offline now it is totally e-process or digitized process. These changes also reflect the example of quality education and innovation. NAAC assesses and grades institutions through three step process instrument.

Need and role of Accreditation

Educational system in any country cannot flourish without quality and higher education. The quality of higher education leads India towards global economic power. With the mushroom growth of the Higher Educational Institutions and universities no doubt day by day quality has lapsed. The NAAC assessment and accreditation are terms broadly used for understanding the —Quality Status of an institution. The NAAC's accreditation process follows a transparent, systematic, and objective approach for institutional improvement. Moreover, the assessment process provides an opportunity for following purpose;

1. To measure its effectiveness and efficiency,
2. To identify its strengths and weaknesses and
3. To take necessary steps for improvement.

As education plays vital role to the society, the quality of education must be monitored. To understand the quality and effectiveness of the education, NAAC play great role by accreditation process, like encouraging quality improvement, searching of student who are having potential, planning for investment of public and private funds, Encouragement of self-evaluation, involvement of staff and student in activity, Confidence and assurance on quality to all stakeholders, quantification of the strengths, weaknesses in the processes, widespread recognition and greater appreciation of Institutions and to motivates the institutions.

Advantage of Assessment and Accreditation by NAAC

Changes in Improvement of Institutional quality

1. Institution knows its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities through an informed review process.
2. Identification of internal areas of planning and resource allocation.
3. Collegiality on the campus.
4. Funding agencies looks for objective data for performance funding.
5. Institutions to initiate innovative and modern methods of pedagogy.
6. New sense of direction and identity for institutions.
7. Intra and inter-institutional interactions.
8. Provides a sound base for good decision to improve institutional functioning.
9. Creates sound and challenging academic environment in the Institution.
10. Empowerment of internalization of the quality culture such as organization of methodology of documentation.

Benefits to students:

1. Students will earn education which is a balanced and high academic quality and professional relevance and that the needs of the corporate world which are well integrated into programmes, activities and processes at their institutions.
2. Enhances employability of graduates.
3. Financial aid and typical funding agencies is available only to students who enroll at a college, university, or other institution that has been accredited by NAAC.
4. Student becomes competent in various fields to achieve his goals due to good academic environment.

Placement: Many companies, as part of their campus recruiting programs, only look at 'A' graded colleges. An accreditation, consequently, increases the number of companies coming on campus, thereby increasing the diversity of career opportunities available to students on campus.

Further Studies: While applying abroad, colleges often look at the grading of your college to gain a better understanding of your performance as a student relative to your peer group. The higher the accreditation, the better it increases your chances for a favorable reply.

Satisfaction to Employers

1. NAAC's accreditation assures and provides potential employers that students came from different courses.
2. NAAC accreditation helps the students passing out who have acquired competence based on well-established technical inputs.
3. Employers look for concerned and useful information on the quality of education offered to the potential recruits.

IMPACT OF NAAC ON HIGHER EDUCATION

IQAC funds from UGC

Higher education itself bears the primary responsibility for quality. To guarantee a culture of quality at the institutional level, each institution should establish an effective Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). NAAC must receive an Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) every year. UGC is providing three (3.00) lakh rupees to the college for the formation of IQAC and five (5.00) lakh rupees to the universities. The pursuit of excellence is an ongoing activity that aims to raise the institutions' potential and skills to the greatest possible level. Institutions must be accredited by NAAC with a Grade "A" in order to qualify for UGC programs such as the "Universities with Potential for Excellence" (UPE) Universities of Excellence (UoE) Status. Further Colleges with Potential for Excellence" (CPE) will also be decided by the UGC with respect to the NAAC

Accreditation status either “B” or “A”. Only such of the colleges which are accredited with ‘A’ grade with more than 3.5 CGPA will be eligible for consideration as College of Excellence (CE) under the Scheme.

Many policy decisions such as UGC Autonomous College Status, continuation of Autonomy by UGC (NAAC/NBA certificate, Whether college has been accredited by NAAC/NBA, mention the rating). One of the major consideration for applying for Deemed to be University Status or Deemed University to open new campus is depends on NAAC Accreditation. Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions Regulations (2012): All Institution of Higher Learning will have to compulsorily undergo the accreditation from an accrediting agency. Many Institutions are applying to NAAC for the purpose of Accreditation. More than 5000 accredited Institutions have established Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC): Quality enhancement need to be encouraged and Quality must be embedded in the institutional culture.

The Academic Audit, need to be periodic process in the HEIs. IQAC has to operate as an internal mechanism of an institution which would work 365 days for qualitative improvement in all activities of the institution. More than 26 states have established State Level Quality Assurance Cells (SLQAC), in turn those states have conducted more than 400 workshops in their jurisdiction.

Over 2500 seminars and conferences on quality-related topics were facilitated nationwide, including the use of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), the use of ICT for quality enhancement, curriculum design and development, teaching, learning, and evaluation, best practices in higher education, student participation for quality enhancement, and academic and administration audit. Accreditation has become a potent weapon in the fight for employment; colleges and universities are advertising to attract good employees and students; management is interested in improving the campus's infrastructure, support services, wi-fi, library automation, and accessibility for people with disabilities; alumni are being sought after, met, supported, and resources are being mobilized, etc. Rising significance of the Accreditation is reflected in competition among HEIs and student enrolment in the campuses. The societal recognition, competitive market forces on employability and its acceptability has risen in the recent years.

Many Universities are taking the cognizance of the NAAC accreditation status for granting permanent affiliation etc. and to apply for UGC Act 1956, 12B status. The Department of Science and Technology under its scheme Faculty improvement in Science and Technology (FIST) utilizes the NAAC accreditation. The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) identifies colleges with potential for excellence and provides academic and physical infrastructure for achieving excellence in teaching and unique exposure of students to experimental sciences. Most of the colleges which are the acumen towards research in biotechnology have applied to the DBT availed the grants. Most of the North Eastern States have applied for Star College scheme and got the funding states like Assam, Meghalaya & Aizawl. Consideration for expansion in terms of courses and student in-take in teacher education institutions by NCTE, have been decided based on the NAAC grading.

Accreditation motivates faculty to participate actively in academic and related Institutional / departmental activities. The CAS, API schemes has been implemented by the Colleges and Universities facilitates the Improvements at the Individual level initially and further it enhances the involvement of the faculty for institutional growth. Accreditation opens up a sound and challenging academic environment in the Institutions, and adds value to the overall performance of the institution and contributes to social and economic development of the country by producing high quality technical manpower. Accreditation promotes intrainstitutional and inter institutional initiatives. Communication Channels has been established for bottom up approach in many institutions. Relationships and papers written by faculty have been increased in the recent years. Inter institutional collaborations, research work, faculty exchange, students exchange has been invented for mutual benefits.

Many publications has been brought out within NAAC and in collaboration with UNESCO, APQN, COL Training Programmes for Teacher Educators etc., More details can be obtained from the NAAC website. Many parents, students, employers, Government Agencies, funding agencies, Foreign Universities, Collaborating agencies, are looking the NAAC website for information about status of the Institutions. Many of the foreign Universities are looking for the NAAC accreditation before admitting the students for respective courses. A few Universities have given the fee waive, accommodation, scholarships to the students who are from India and from the accredited Institutions.

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