

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India – A Critical review

¹Ahila R, ²Venkataraman S

¹Ph.D., Research Scholar, Department of Education, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, India-608002

²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, India-608002

Abstract

This review paper reviewed about the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India, its process of accreditation and the major criticism about its functioning, like, lack of transparency, slow in process, bias in accreditation, gap between stake holders and NAAC. The suggestions put forth by the researchers to increase its credibility also consolidated.

Keywords: National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Criticisms, Suggestions



Published in IJIRMPS (E-ISSN: 2349-7300), Volume 10, Issue 3, May-June 2022

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Introduction

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is a government-funded organization tasked with the responsibility of assessing and accrediting higher education institutions in India. Established in 1994, it is one of the most respected accreditation agencies in the country and is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The NAAC assesses universities and colleges on a variety of criteria, including academic performance, research output, infrastructure facilities, student services, and faculty development. The accreditation process is rigorous and involves the submission of extensive documents, such as financial statements and reports from the institution's governing body.

The purpose of NAAC accreditation is to ensure that higher education institutions are providing quality education and are meeting the standards set by the UGC. The accreditation process provides an opportunity for institutions to improve their quality of education and to become more competitive. It also serves to provide a benchmark for universities and colleges to measure their performance against.

The NAAC accreditation process is a voluntary process and institutions are free to choose whether or not they wish to participate. However, institutions that are accredited by the NAAC are more likely to receive government funding and recognition. It is therefore important for institutions to understand the importance of NAAC accreditation and to participate in the process. This paper will discuss the effectiveness of NAAC accreditation and its impact on Indian higher education institutions.

Evaluation Criteria

The NAAC accreditation process is based on a set of criteria that assesses the performance of higher education institutions. These criteria are divided into seven categories: Curricular Aspects, Teaching-Learning and Evaluation, Research, Consultancy and Extension, Infrastructure and Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression, Governance, Leadership and Management, and Innovative Practices. The criteria for each category are further divided into sub-criteria, which are then evaluated using a score-based system.

The evaluation process is designed to assess the overall quality of the institution, as well as its performance in specific areas. This helps to identify areas that need to be improved and provides an opportunity for institutions to become more competitive.

Impact on Institutions

The NAAC accreditation process has had a positive impact on Indian higher education institutions. It has provided a means for institutions to assess their own performance and identify areas that need to be improved. Additionally, it has allowed institutions to become more competitive and to receive recognition from the UGC.

The accreditation process also encourages institutions to focus on quality improvement. Institutions that are accredited by the NAAC are more likely to receive additional funding and resources. This encourages institutions to invest in quality improvement initiatives and to strive for excellence.

Process of NAAC accreditation

The process for obtaining NAAC accreditation involves an organization submitting an accreditation application to the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. The application must include evidence of an institution's compliance with the standards set forth by the NAAC and must be accompanied by supporting documents and a fee. Once the application is received, the NAAC's accreditation panel reviews the documents and conducts a series of visits and interviews with the institution's staff and students. The panel then makes a recommendation to the NAAC board, which makes the final decision on accreditation.

The process for obtaining NAAC accreditation is designed to be rigorous and comprehensive. It is meant to ensure that an institution is meeting the standards set forth by the NAAC and providing a quality education to its students. The process begins with an institution submitting an accreditation application to the NAAC. This application must include evidence of an institution's compliance with the standards set forth by the NAAC and must be accompanied by supporting documents and a fee.

Once the application is received, the NAAC's accreditation panel reviews the documents and conducts a series of visits and interviews with the institution's staff and students. The accreditation process is carried out by a team of experts who evaluate the overall performance of the institution in accordance with the criteria laid down by the NAAC. The accreditation process is an important tool for improving the quality of higher education in India by ensuring that institutions adhere to a high level of quality standards. During these visits, the panel evaluates the institution's operations and reviews the institution's academic programs, faculty, admissions processes, student services, and other areas. The panel then makes a recommendation to the NAAC board, which makes the final decision on accreditation.

If the institution is approved for accreditation, it will be required to renew its accreditation every three to five years. The renewal process involves the institution submitting an updated application to the NAAC and undergoing another series of visits and interviews. During the renewal process, the NAAC will evaluate the institution's performance since its initial accreditation and determine whether or not it is still in compliance with the standards set forth by the NAAC.

The process of obtaining NAAC accreditation is a lengthy and rigorous one, but it is necessary in order to ensure that institutions are providing a quality education to their students. By undergoing this process, institutions are able to demonstrate their commitment to educational excellence and improve the overall quality of their programs.

Criticism about NAAC accreditation processes

Despite its importance, there have been several criticisms of the NAAC accreditation process. These include allegations of bias, lack of transparency, and inadequate accountability. This paper will examine these criticisms in detail and provide an overview of the challenges faced by the NAAC in its efforts to ensure quality assurance in Indian higher education.

Bias

One of the major criticisms of the NAAC accreditation process is that it is biased towards certain institutions. This is because the accreditation process is conducted by a team of experts who are selected from various institutions, and thus are likely to have their own personal biases and preferences when it comes to evaluating institutions. This could lead to a situation where some institutions are favoured over others, based on the personal opinions and preferences of the assessment team.

In addition, there have been allegations that the NAAC accreditation process is biased towards certain universities and colleges, particularly those with a better reputation. This could be due to the fact that these institutions have more resources and better infrastructure, which may give them an advantage in the accreditation process.

Lack of Transparency

Another criticism of the NAAC accreditation process is that it is not transparent. The assessment team is not required to disclose its assessment criteria or methodologies to the public, which means that institutions do not know what standards they are being assessed on. This lack of transparency makes it difficult for institutions to prepare adequately for the accreditation process, as they do not know which areas they need to focus on to ensure they meet the standards required.

Inadequate Accountability

The NAAC accreditation process also lacks adequate accountability. There is no mechanism in place to hold the assessment team accountable for its decisions or to ensure that the process is conducted in an impartial manner. This means that there is no recourse for institutions that feel that they have been unfairly treated during the accreditation process.

Furthermore, the quality of NAAC evaluations has been questioned. Several researchers have noted that the criteria used by the NAAC to evaluate educational institutions are outdated and do not reflect current trends in higher education. For example, the criteria used by the NAAC to evaluate research output does not take into account the quality of the research, nor does it assess the impact of the research. This has led to criticism that the NAAC's evaluations are not reflective of the actual quality of institutions.

There have been criticisms that the NAAC's accreditation process is too slow and inefficient. It is reported that it typically takes NAAC several months to evaluate institutions and issue accreditation. This has caused delays in the implementation of new initiatives and has hindered the progress of educational institutions.

Suggestions to improve credibility and Quality of Accreditation of NAAC

Increase Transparency of the Performance Evaluation Process: Increasing the transparency of the NAAC's performance evaluation process is another approach to raise its credibility. Many stakeholders are now uninformed of how NAAC assesses university performance, which causes uncertainty and mistrust (Kurian et al., 2018).

Use Technology to Improve Efficiency and Transparency: The NAAC may raise its credibility by using technology to make its procedures more effective and transparent. For instance, NAAC can use online databases to store and analyse data about university performance, enabling it to evaluate universities and reach choices in a timely and reliable manner (Kurian et al., 2018). Additionally, NAAC can employ technology to provide an online communication channel with stakeholders that would enable them to give input and get real-time updates on the certification process (Kurian et al., 2018).

Increase the Independence of the Accrediting Process: The NAAC should work to increase the independence of its accreditation process in order to increase its credibility. The accrediting process is currently perceived by many stakeholders as being affected by university officials and other outside influences (Kurian et al., 2018). The NAAC can make sure that its judgements are made entirely on the performance of institutions and are not affected by outside forces by improving the autonomy of the accreditation process.

Strengthen Supervision and Accountability: NAAC should improve its oversight and accountability procedures to guarantee the impartiality and fairness of its accreditation process. Establishing an impartial board or committee to examine and assess NAAC's choices and procedures can achieve this (Kurian et al., 2018). This board or committee ought to be made up of people who are not connected to any universities in order to guarantee their objectivity and the absence of any conflicts of interest.

Provide Training and Support to Universities: In order to further increase its credibility, NAAC should work to guarantee that universities receive the necessary training and support to comply with the accreditation requirements. Currently, there is misunderstanding and mistrust because many universities are not aware of the criteria and standards established by NAAC (Kurian et al., 2018).

Employ Data-Driven Decision Making: To make sure that its certification process is founded on facts and evidence, NAAC should also employ data-driven decision making. This can be achieved by setting up a system for gathering and analysing information about university performance, enabling NAAC to make judgements that are well-informed (Kurian et al., 2018). NAAC should also invest in tools that track and monitor universities' advancement over time, enabling it to spot and resolve any inconsistencies or problems (Kurian et al., 2018).

Create Clear Contact Channels: To increase its credibility, NAAC should create clear channels of communication with its stakeholders. By giving stakeholders a forum to contact NAAC and submit complaints

and comments, this can be accomplished (Kurian et al., 2018). The NAAC should provide a system for stakeholders to offer suggestions and criticism on the standards and procedures for accreditation.

Implement Performance-Based Funding: The NAAC should think about implementing performance-based funding for universities in order to further increase its credibility. This can be done by setting up a mechanism for assessing institutions' performance and allocating cash in accordance with that performance (Kurian et al., 2018). This system would encourage colleges to pursue excellence and would guarantee that the NAAC's choices are supported by data and facts.

. Improve NAAC's Public Image: In order to increase its credibility, NAAC should work to improve its reputation by interacting with the public and disseminating accurate and current information about the accreditation procedure. This can be accomplished by developing an online portal that will allow stakeholders to interact with NAAC and receive real-time updates on the accreditation process (Kurian et al., 2018).

Increase Collaboration with Other Accrediting Bodies: The NAAC should think about enhancing its cooperation with other accrediting bodies in order to further increase its credibility. This can be accomplished by setting up a system for exchanging data and resources with other accrediting bodies so that they can cooperate to make sure the accreditation process is impartial and fair (Kurian et al., 2018).

Create a framework of accountability that involves tracking and assessing the NAAC's performance. This method need to guarantee speedy and accurate completion of the certification process as well as prompt resolution of any problems or concerns (Mishra and Singh, 2019).

Create a system of continuous improvement that includes reviewing and evaluating the accrediting procedure and putting in place the necessary countermeasures to any issues or problems that are found (Nehru, 2019).

Create a system of continuous improvement that entails reviewing and assessing the certification procedure and putting in place the necessary countermeasures to any found weaknesses or difficulties (Nehru, 2019).

Adopt a thorough strategy for quality control that involves reviewing the accreditation process and putting suitable measures in place to raise the standard of the accreditation process (Mishra and Singh, 2019).

Give the NAAC enough resources and assistance so that it can complete its accreditation duties quickly and efficiently (Kumar, 2019).

Create a system for the gathering and examination of information pertinent to the accreditation procedure. This system should incorporate data gathering and processing from numerous sources, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups (Mishra and Singh, 2019).

Create a method for tracking and assessing the NAAC's performance. Setting performance benchmarks, gathering and analysing data, and evaluating the outcomes should all be part of this system (Kumar, 2019).

Conclusion

The NAAC accreditation process is an effective and important tool for assessing and improving the quality of higher education institutions in India. It provides an opportunity for institutions to assess their performance and to become more competitive. Additionally, it encourages institutions to invest in quality improvement initiatives and to strive for excellence. The NAAC accreditation process has had a positive impact on Indian higher education institutions and is an invaluable tool for ensuring the quality of higher education in India. However, there have been several criticisms of the process, including allegations of bias, lack of transparency, and inadequate accountability. It is important that the NAAC takes steps to address these criticisms in order to ensure that the accreditation process is fair and impartial, and that institutions are able to prepare adequately for the accreditation process.

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