



STATUS OF LIBRARIES IN NAAC ASSESSMENT COLLEGES: A CASE STUDY OF NAGAON DISTRICT OF ASSAM (INDIA)

By

DR. (MD.) MANIKUZ ZAMAN CHOWDHURY

Librarian, Dhing College

Dist.Nagaon (Assam)

Pin-782123

Abstract: *The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) conducts assessment and accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) such as colleges, universities or other recognised institutions to derive an understanding of the 'Quality Status' of the institution. NAAC evaluates the institutions for its conformance to the standards of quality in terms of its performance related to the educational processes and outcomes, curriculum coverage, teaching-learning processes, faculty, research, infrastructure, learning resources, organisation, governance, financial well being and student services. Among the different educational institutions, the Colleges play a crucial role in higher education in Assam. In the Nagaon district of Assam, there are 17 (Seventeen) Colleges, where 16 (sixteen) Colleges are Accredited by NAAC and the libraries of these Colleges are great contribution in the assessment.*

Keywords: NAAC, HEI, Quality Status, UGC, Accreditation, Nagaon, Quality Assessment

Introduction: NAAC stands for National Assessment and Accreditation Council. The National Policy on Education (NPE) and the Programme of Action (POA), 1986 inter alia recommended that: "Excellence of institutions of Higher Education is a function of many aspects: self-evaluation and self-improvement are important. If a mechanism is setup which will encourage self assessment in institutions and assessment and accreditation by a Council. The quality process, participation, achievements etc, will be constantly monitored and improved." In pursuance of the above, the University Grants Commission (UGC), under section 12 CCC of the UGC Act of 1956(3), established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) on 16 September 1994 in Bangalore. This concern among academics for ensuring quality in higher education has been a source of strength and inspiration for NAAC.

Vision: To make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives.

Mission: To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects;

To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality of teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions;

To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education;

To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programmes;

To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

Aims and objectives: The prime agenda of NAAC is to Assess and Accredite institutions of higher learning with an objective of helping them to work continuously to improve the quality of education. Assessment is a performance evaluation of an institution and is accomplished through a process based on self study and peer review using defined criteria. Accreditation refers to the certification given by NAAC which is valid for a period of five years. NAAC functions through its General Council (GC), Executive Committee (EC) and other academic, advisory and administrative sub-committees. Vice-Chancellors of Universities, Directors of higher education and Science and Technology institutes, Deans, Principals of colleges, Heads of Departments representatively drawn from all disciplines, educational administrators provide expertise and leadership for the academic activities of NAAC. In addition, NAAC is also generating a large pool of experts/assessors in all subjects by conducting orientation programmes periodically across the country.

NAAC is entrusted with the task of performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation of Universities, Colleges and other higher institutions of India. The philosophy of NAAC is judgmental, so that all constituencies of institutions of higher learning are empowered to maximise their resources, opportunities and capabilities. The main aims and objectives of NAAC assessment and accreditation:

1. **Quality Assurance:** NAAC aims to promote and ensure the quality and excellence of higher education institutions in India. It seeks to establish and maintain standards of quality in all aspects of education and institutional functioning.
2. **Continuous Improvement:** NAAC encourages institutions to focus on continuous improvement. It assesses institutions to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, thus fostering a culture of self-evaluation and enhancement.
3. **Benchmarking:** NAAC serves as a benchmarking system for Indian higher education institutions. Institutions can use their NAAC accreditation status to demonstrate their quality and excellence to stakeholders, including students, parents, and funding agencies.
4. **Feedback and Assessment:** NAAC provides constructive feedback to institutions based on its assessments. This feedback helps institutions identify areas for improvement and develop action plans to enhance their overall quality.
5. **Accountability:** Through its accreditation process, NAAC holds institutions accountable for meeting established quality standards. Accreditation serves as a measure of an institution's commitment to maintaining these standards.
6. **Enhanced Academic Environment:** NAAC encourages institutions to create a conducive academic environment that promotes teaching, research, and student development.
7. **Transparency and Credibility:** The accreditation process is transparent and credible, helping students and parents make informed decisions about the quality of education offered by different institutions.
8. **Global Recognition:** NAAC serves as a benchmarking system for Indian higher education institutions. Institutions can use their NAAC accreditations to identify areas for improvement and develop action plans to enhance their overall quality.
9. **Promotion of research and Innovation:** NAAC encourages institutions to promote research and innovation in their academic programs. This fosters a culture of research and development in higher education.
10. **Facilitating Funding:** NAAC accreditation can impact an institution's eligibility for government funding and grants. Accredited institutions are often favoured in funding allocation decisions, which can help them, invest in infrastructure and academic improvements.
11. **Quality enhancement Cells:** NAAC promotes the establishment of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) within institutions to facilitate quality assurance and enhancement activities.
12. **Stakeholder Confidence:** NAAC accreditation instills confidence in various stakeholders, including students, parents, employers, and funding agencies, regarding the quality and credibility of higher education institutions.

13. **Institutional Growth and Development:** NAAC aims to contribute to the growth and development of higher education institutions in India by helping them achieve higher levels of excellence and competitiveness. These aims and objectives collectively contribute to the overall mission of NAAC, Which is to enhance the quality of higher education in India and ensure that institutions provide a high standard of education and services to their students and communities.

Process: NAAC has formulated a three-stage process for assessment and accreditation as given below:

Preparation of the Self –Study Report by the institution/department based on the parameters defined by NAAC

Validation of the Self-Study Report by a team of peers through on site visit; presentation of detailed quality report to the institution;

The final decision on assessment and accreditation by the Executive Committee (EC) of NAAC.

Some key details and functions of NAAC:

1. **Assessment and Accreditation:** NAAC primary function is to assess and accredit higher education institutions in India. The accreditation process involves evaluating various aspects of institutions in India. This accreditation process involves evaluating various aspects of institutions, including its academic programs, infrastructure, governance, faculty quality, research output, and student support services.
2. **Quality Assurance:** NAAC's accreditation process is aimed at promoting and maintaining the quality of education in Indian higher education institutions. Accreditation helps institutions identify areas of improvement and encourages them to meet and exceed established quality standards.
3. **Peer Review:** NAAC uses a peer-based evaluation system, where a team of experts, including academics and administrators, visits the institution and conducts an in-depth assessment. The peer process ensures an objective and comprehensive evaluation.
4. **Grading System:** Institutions are graded based on their performance in the NAAC assessment. NAAC uses a seven-point grading scale, with 'A++' being the highest and 'D' being the lowest. The grade awarded reflects the institution's overall quality and performance.
5. **Self-Study Report (SSR):** As part of the accreditation process, institutions are required to prepare a Self-Study Report (SSR). This report provides a detailed self-assessment of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, and plans for improvement.
6. **Accreditation Cycles:** Institutions are typically accredited for a specified period, such as five years. After the accreditation period expires, institutions undergo a reassessment to maintain their accreditation status.
7. **Recognition:** NAAC accreditation is widely recognised and respected in India. Many government agencies, funding bodies, and employers consider NAAC accreditation as an indicator of an institution's quality and standards.
8. **Capacity Building:** NAAC conducts workshops, seminars, and training programs to help institutions enhance their quality assurance processes. It also offers guidance on self-assessment and quality improvement.
9. **Continuous Improvement:** NAAC encourages institutions to focus on continuous improvement in various aspects of their functioning. This emphasis on improvement helps institutions stay relevant and responsive to changing educational needs.
10. **Transparency and Accountability:** NAAC's assessment process is transparent and accountable. Institutions receive detailed feedback and recommendations based on the assessment, which they can use to enhance their quality.
11. **Impact on Funding:** In some cases, NAAC accreditation can impact a college or university's eligibility for government funding and grants. Accredited institutions are often favoured in funding allocation decisions.
12. **Global Recognition:** While NAAC Primarily assesses and accredits Indian institutions, its standards and processes align with international best practices in higher education quality assurance. The alignment can help Indian institutions gain global recognition and partnerships.

NAAC plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of higher education in India by encouraging institutions to strive for excellence and continuous improvement. Its assessments help students and parents make informed decisions about the quality of education provided by different institutions.

Benefits of Accreditation:

Institution to know its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities through an informed review process

Identification of internal areas of planning and resource allocation

Collegiality on the campus

Funding agencies look for objective data for performance funding

Institutions to initiate innovative and modern methods of pedagogy

New sense of direction and identity for institutions

The society look for reliable information on quality education offered

Employers look for reliable information on the quality of education offered to the prospective recruits

Intra and inter-institutional interactions

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) use a set of criteria to assess and accredit higher education institutions. These criteria are organised into seven distinct categories, each of which is further divided into sub-criteria. Institutions are evaluated on their performance against these criteria to determine their accreditation status. They are:

1. Curricular Aspects(CA) :

- a) Curriculum Design and Development: The relevance, flexibility, and innovative features of the curriculum.
- b) Academic Flexibility: The availability of choices within the curriculum and opportunities for inter-disciplinary learning.
- c) Curriculum Enrichment: Efforts to enhance the curriculum through value-added courses, skill development, and student-centred learning.

2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation (TLE) :

- a) Teaching-Learning Process: The effectiveness of teaching methods, student engagement, and mentoring.
- b) Student Performance and Learning Outcomes: The assessment of student performance, attainment of learning outcomes, and feedback mechanisms.
- c) Continuous Assessment and Evaluation: The evaluation methods, fairness, and transparency in assessment practices.

3. Research, Consultancy, and Extension (RCE) :

- a) Promotion of Research: The support and encouragement for research Activities among faculty and students.
- b) Consultancy: The involvement of the institution in consultancy and extension activities.
- c) Institutional Values and Social Responsibilities: The institution's commitment to societal development and ethical values.

4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources (ILR) :

- a) Physical Infrastructure: The adequacy and maintenance of infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, and libraries.
- b) Library and Information Resources: The availability of library resources, digital resources, and access to online databases.
- c) ICT Infrastructure and services: The use of technology in teaching, research, and administration.

5. Student Support and Progression (SSP) :

- a) Student mentoring and Support: The institution's support systems, including counselling and guidance services.
- b) Student Progression: The efforts to ensure student progression, including placement and career guidance.
- c) Student Participation and Activities: Opportunities for students to engage in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

6. Governance, Leadership, and Management (GLM) :

- Governance and Institutional Values: The transparency and effectiveness of governance structures.
- Innovation and Best Practices: The institution's initiatives to promote innovation and best practices.
- Financial Management and Resource Mobilization: The financial sustainability and resource utilization.

7. Institutional Values and Best Practices (IVBP) :

- Institutional Values and Social Responsibility: The institution's commitment to ethical values and societal development.
- Best Practices: The adoption of best practices in teaching, research, and administration.

Institutions are evaluated on each of these criteria and sub-criteria, and they receive a grade based on their performance. NAAC uses a seven-point grading system for the accreditation of higher education institutions. They are:

- A++ (Outstanding):** Institutions that receive this grade demonstrate exceptional quality and excellence in all aspects of their functioning. They are considered outstanding in terms of infrastructure, academic programs, research and overall quality.
- A+ (Very good):** Institutions receiving an A+ grade are also considered to have a very high level of quality and excellence. They excel in most aspects but may have some areas for improvement.
- A (Good):** This grade is awarded to institutions that meet the quality standards set by NAAC. They have good infrastructure, academic programs, and overall quality.
- B++ (High Satisfactory):** Institutions receiving a B++ grade are deemed to be highly satisfactory in terms of quality. While they may have some areas that need improvement, they generally perform well.
- B+ (Satisfactory):** This grade is given to institutions that meet the basic quality standards but have room for improvement in various areas.
- B (Adequate):** Institutions receiving a B grade are considered adequate but need significant improvements in various aspects to reach higher levels of quality.
- C (Inadequate):** Institutions that receive a C grade generally have serious deficiencies in their functioning and infrastructure. They are considered inadequate in terms of quality.

Range of institutional Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)

CGPA	Letter Grade	Status
3.51-4.00	A++	Accredited
3.26-3.50	A+	Accredited
3.01-3.25	A	Accredited
2.76-3.00	B++	Accredited
2.51-2.75	B+	Accredited
2.01 -2.50	B	Accredited
1.51-2.00	C	Accredited
<1.50	D	Not accredited

Objective of the study: The study is conducted to achieve the following some specific objectives:

- To find out the Awareness College libraries about NAAC Assessment.
- To identify the current status of College libraries under the study
- To find out the current grade status by NAAC
- To find out the benefits of NAAC Assessment in Libraries.
- To examine the impact of NAAC accreditation on the libraries.

Area of the Study: The Study covers college libraries of Nagaon District of Assam (India).

Methodology: The following methods were employed to gathering data:

Interview Method: Direct interviews were made with some of the students, faculty members and non-teaching staff, especially Librarian of these colleges to know about the experience & improvement during NAAC Assessment.

Questionary Method: Questionaries were distributed to the college libraries to get the data for know the current status of library.

There are 17 (seventeen) numbers of colleges in Nagaon District. Among them the 16 colleges were accredited by NAAC. One college is not accredited by NAAC but they had completed the required process for NAAC Accreditation. This college is newly provincialised by the Govt. of Assam in 01.01.2021.

Table: List of College libraries in Nagaon District of Assam

SI. No .	Name of the College	Name of the Library	Year of Establish-ment	Total Number of Books	Library Automati on	Graded by NAAC	Year	Cycle
1.	Nowgong College(Autonomo us) Science, Arts and Commerce	M.N.D.Library	1944	60467	Yes	A	2021	III
2.	A.D.P. College(Science and Arts)	Central Library	1959	51345	Yes	B++	2022	III
3.	Nowgong Girls College (Science and Arts)	M.C.D.G. Central Library	1960	46000	Yes	A	2015	III
4.	Nagaon G.N.D.G.Commerc e College (Commerce)	Ratna Kanta Bora Library	1984	12960	Yes	B++	2016	II
5.	Khagarijan College (Arts)	Central Library	1972	19132	Yes	B++	2023	III
6.	Dhing College (Science, Arts and Commerce)	Ratna Kanta Barkakati Library	1965	20337	Yes	B+	2023	III
7.	Dr.B.K.B. College (Arts)	Central Library	1967	17714	Yes	A	2022	III
8.	Kaliabor College (Science, Arts and Commerce)	Central Library	1969	42312	Yes	A	2015	II
9.	Kampur College (Arts)	Kampur College Library	1968	17169	Yes	C++	2005	I
10.	Raha College (Science, Arts and Commerce)	R.L.B.Central Library	1964	30824	Yes	B	2023	III
11.	Rupahi College (Science, Arts and Commerce)	Central Library	1981	22102	Yes	B+	2022	III
12.	Nonoi College (Arts)	Dina Nath Bezbarua	1985	3870	Process	B++	2023	I

		Library						
13.	Samaguri College (Arts)	Pholmai Bora Memorial Library	1990	5055	Process	B+	2023	I
14.	Juria College (Arts)	Library Juria College	1989	5316	Process	B	2023	I
15.	Batadrava S.S.College (Arts)	Central Library	1989	8144	-----	B++	2023	I
16.	Katahguri College (Arts)	Katahguri College Library	1985	3642	Process	Process	Provincilised in 2021	
17.	Hatisung College (Arts)	Central Library	1988	11436	Process	B++	2023	I

Findings: From the above table, it is clear that out of 17 (seventeen) Colleges of Nagaon District of Assam, there are 8 (Eight) Colleges completed the NAAC Accreditation of cycle –III, 2 (two) Colleges completed the NAAC Accreditation of Cycle-II and 6 (Six) Colleges completed the NAAC Accreditation Cycle-I.

There is only one college namely Katahguri College is not accredited by NAAC .This College is newly provincilised.The Government of Assam is provincilised this college in 01.01.2021.But the college is completed the process for NAAC Accreditation.

The Libraries of the above Colleges were played a crucial role in the NAAC Accreditation of their respective College. Out of Seventeen Colleges, there are 11 (Eleven) College Libraries are completed library automation, 6 (six) College Libraries are under processed for library automation and only one college library namely Batadrava S.S.College, Central Library is not process for library automation due to not having librarian.College libraries serve as a fundamental repository of knowledge, playing a critical role in providing access to diverse resources crucial for academic and research activities. The availability of up-to-date and relevant resources positively influences the institution's assessment parameters.

The paper highlighted that libraries contribute significantly to the enhancement of academic excellence by providing an environment conducive to learning, supporting research endeavors, and fostering a culture of intellectual curiosity among students and faculty members.

The integration of modern technologies and adaptive infrastructure within libraries was noted to be a determining factor in NAAC assessments. The incorporation of digital resources, online databases, and user-friendly interfaces greatly influences an institution's standing in evaluation.

The research identified that libraries play a crucial role in the overall development of students and faculty. They act as centers for skill development, aiding in the cultivation of critical thinking, research skills, and information literacy.

The adherence to NAAC quality standards, especially in the context of library infrastructure, resource curation, and service quality, emerged as a crucial aspect influencing the overall accreditation process. Collaboration between the library and other academic departments emerged as a significant factor. Partnerships and collaborative efforts across various departments and administrative units within the institution were found to positively impact the overall evaluation.

In conclusion, this research paper has explored the vital role that college libraries play in the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) assessment process. Through a comprehensive review of the literature and data analysis, several important findings have emerged.

First, it is evident that college libraries are not just repositories of books and resources but also serve as critical hubs for information dissemination and academic support. Their role in facilitating access to information, promoting research culture, and enhancing the overall learning environment cannot be overstated.

Second, the study has highlighted the positive correlation between the quality of library services and the NAAC assessment outcomes. Colleges that invest in modernizing and improving their library infrastructure tend to score higher in the NAAC assessments, which underscore the importance of library development in educational institutions.

Moreover, the research has shed light on the challenges faced by college libraries, such as budget constraints, outdated infrastructure, and staff shortages. Addressing these challenges is crucial for colleges aiming to enhance their NAAC ratings and overall educational quality.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that college administrators and policymakers recognize the pivotal role of libraries in the NAAC assessment process. Adequate funding and resources should be allocated to libraries to ensure they can meet the evolving needs of students and faculty. Additionally, colleges should invest in staff training and technology upgrades to keep pace with the digital transformation in education.

Conclusion and Suggestion: This research underscores the indispensable role of college libraries in the NAAC assessment and, by extension, in the quality of higher education. A well-supported and modernized library can significantly contribute to the overall academic excellence of an institution. By addressing the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities presented by libraries, colleges can not only achieve better NAAC ratings but also provide a richer learning experience for their students.

NAAC assessments are comprehensive and multi-dimensional. Its primary mission is to evaluate and ensure the quality and excellence of higher education institutions across India. NAAC visit to a College is a golden opportunity for improvement of all stakeholders i.e. Management, Principal, Teachers, Students, Guardians, Administrative Staff and even class IV personnel. There should be strong internal co-ordination & cohesion among the department & functionaries. The whole assessment process is holistic, objective, systematic and transparent based on the data presented by the College. The library is not just a resource repository but a dynamic hub that significantly contributes to an institution's academic excellence, infrastructure development, and compliance with quality standards. It stressed the need for continued investment, innovation, and strategic development within college libraries to bolster an institution's standing in the NAAC assessment.

References:

1. Pathan, Dr.S.N.(2005). "Quality Improvement Programme In Higher Education Through NAAC". Intectual Book Bureau Publications: Narayan Nagar, Hoshangabad Road, Bhopal-462026
2. <http://naac.gov.in> accessed on 30th December/2023
3. Mariamma A.Varghese, Shakuntala Katre, and S.Ravichandra Reddy (2019). Dynamics of Indian Higher Education. Abhijeet Publication.
4. <https://digitallearning.eletsonline.com>
5. Bhalerao, N.P.(2020). Impact of NAAC Accreditation on Higher Education Institutions: A Study of Select Colleges in Pune. International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, 10(4)
6. Gupta, S.K. (2018). The Role of NAAC in Improving the Quality of Higher Education in India. International Journal of Engineering Techonology, Management and Applied Sciences, 6(10).