

NAAC Accreditation: A Survey

ABSTRACT

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The objectives of the research were to find the views of IQAC coordinators vis-à-vis NAAC Accreditation Process and to study the outcomes of the NAAC Accreditation process. The research design of the present study was a survey. The study was descriptive in nature. The focus was on studying the NAAC reports of the colleges and interaction with the IQAC coordinators. The population of the present study consists of all the Colleges of Education in Gujarat. The sample of the present study consists of seven NAAC accredited Colleges of Education affiliated to the Sardar Patel University. The IQAC Coordinators and NAAC Self Appraisal Reports of the Colleges constituted the sample. The tools used for the study were Questionnaire and Information Schedule. The questionnaire was used to record the views of IQAC coordinators and Information Schedule to study the Self Appraisal Reports of the Colleges of Education vis-à-vis the criteria mentioned by NAAC. The data was analysed using content analysis and percentage analysis techniques. The major findings reveal that a range of activities were listed by the NAAC coordinators as healthy practices. All these activities were related to teaching learning and evaluation process, faculty development, feedback mechanisms within and outside the institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

The system of higher education in India has expanded rapidly during the last fifty years. In spite of the built-in regulatory mechanisms that ensure satisfactory levels of quality in the functioning of higher education institutions, there have been criticisms that the country has permitted the mushrooming of institutions of higher education with fancy programme and substandard facilities and consequent dilution of standards. To address the issues of deterioration in quality, the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Plan of Action (POA-1992) that spelt out the strategic plans for the policies, advocated the establishment of an independent national accreditation body. Consequently, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 with its headquarters at Bangalore that works towards quality enhancement to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. The vision of the NAAC is to make quality the defining element of higher education in India. NAAC accredits colleges and universities – higher education bodies on a standard scale. The process of accreditation enables the Universities and Colleges to do a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis via the Self Appraisal Report and Peer Visit. The Internal Assurance Quality Cell is formed by the academic institution – university as well as colleges to ensure Total Quality Management vis-à-vis the criteria of NAAC. The present study is a survey that aims at studying the experiences of the IQAC Coordinators during the process of accreditation (i.e. experiences of preparing the self appraisal report and experiences during peer visit programme).

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In India the process of Assessment of higher education institutions is mostly in public domain. From 1990s, a number of autonomous assessment agencies were established by different national bodies at national level. All these agencies broadly follow the integrated

criteria based assessment systems. The criteria for assessment include teaching-learning, research, extension, student support services, admissions, student evaluation and governance aspects. The institutional grades are given based on criteria weightings. The assessment is mainly designed to promote quality improvement and institutional accountability (Rao, K. 2011). Moreover, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended to 1500 Universities nationwide for massive expansion of opportunities of student in higher education, so that it would enable India to attain a gross enrolment ratio of at least 15 percent by 2015. It is just as important to raise the average quality of higher education in every sphere, at the same time it is essential to correct institutions that are exemplars of excellence at par with the best in the world. (Benjamin, J. 2011). A number of studies conducted by Behera, B. (2010) and Belavatagi, M. and Kolur, V. (2010) indicate the importance of quality education and role of agencies in redefining and sustaining quality education in the expanding education system.

Thus from the above, it can be summarized that expansion of educational institutions and its quality enhancement are two major concerns in India. A number of steps are taken towards quality enhancement and one of them is establishment of NAAC.

Numerous colleges of education are getting themselves accredited and the UGC and NCTE have also made it compulsory. This poses major questions in the minds of academics and policy makers. The questions are “Does NAAC Accreditation help the Colleges of Education to perform better?”, “Is Self Appraisal Report a mere formality practice of the colleges or is a reflective task? The researcher was keen to study the improvement of the Colleges and views of IQAC coordinators vis-à-vis NAAC Accreditation process.

Accordingly the objectives of the research were to find the views of IQAC coordinators vis-à-vis NAAC Accreditation Process and to study the outcomes of the NAAC Accreditation process. The research design of the present study was a survey. The study was descriptive in nature. The focus was on studying the NAAC reports of the colleges and interaction with the IQAC coordinators. The population of the present study consists of all the Colleges of Education in Gujarat. The sample of the present study consists of seven NAAC accredited Colleges of Education affiliated to the Sardar Patel University. The IQAC Coordinators and NAAC Self Appraisal Reports of the Colleges constituted the sample. The tools used for the study were Questionnaire and Information Schedule. The questionnaire was used to record the views of IQAC coordinators and Information Schedule to study the Self Appraisal Reports of the Colleges of Education vis-à-vis the criteria mentioned by NAAC. The data was analysed using content analysis and percentage analysis techniques. The following section depicts the outcomes of the study and its findings.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The data analysis and interpretation revealed the following major findings.

1. The IQAC coordinators judged NAAC to be a fruitful but a time consuming process.
2. The NAAC Self Appraisal Reports were very descriptive in nature and reflected errors in grammar and spelling in most cases.
3. Most of the Colleges reflected their academic activities like teaching sessions and competitions as healthy practices, IQAC coordinators lacked understanding of the term ‘healthy practice or best practices or progressive practices’.
5. Research, consultancies were found to be the neglected areas of work.
6. NAAC was considered to be an expensive process in terms of time and finance.
7. NAAC involves subjectivity in evaluation even though attempts are made to arrive at certain criteria for evaluation. In addition, 28.57% IQAC coordinators said that it was a great learning experience and they learned to balance academic activities and co curricular activities. NAAC process was stressful and demanded conscious and deliberate

work NAAC accreditation demanded good team work. They realized the importance of documenting files and also realized the increased importance of computers and technology in communication and building the intuiotional links. 14.28% coordinators said that colleges developed and upgraded its infrastructure. The process also aided in implementing new ideas and programmes at the institution. The process of accreditation also provided insights into the work culture of the colleges and for further development of the colleges. It also enhanced their understanding the essence of quality education and set performance levels cum evaluators for the institutions. The major areas the IQAC worked after the NAAC accreditation process were indicated by the coordinators are as follows

28.57% focused on teaching learning process, placement cell and research activities, 42.85% focused on faculty development, extension activities, co curricular activities & social work, 14.28% stressed on publication , Alumni association, feedback mechanisms, maximum utilization of computers, laboratory, theory teaching, workshop, M.Ed course, Ph.D works, consultancy, collaboration with NGO, institution links, student support, continuous professional development.

The IQAC coordinators mentioned a range of healthy practices of colleges of education. 14.28% colleges stressed on home room activity(guidance and counseling sessions), society institution links, P.hD guide association, student welfare funds, adopt primary & secondary school, upgrade evaluation processes, criticism lesson, continuous staff development guidance & counseling, training programme for students & staff, community feedback, feedback through email, from school principals & mentors of schools, use of blocks for virtual interaction, self assess centre, faculty development and participatory teaching learning process. From the data analysis revealed that all the B.Ed colleges had B grade ranging from 2.16 to 2.83. Therefore all the colleges have scope to plan and upgrade their practices at the college. In addition, the following suggestions based on the study may further contribute to the quality enhancement vis-à-vis NAAC.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study paved the following suggestions.

1. A committee of IQAC coordinators can be made discuss problems related to quality and to motivate the teams to work towards excellence.
2. NAAC peer team visit must be recorded and some ways to monitor the authenticity of the reports need to be arrived at.
3. Soft copy of the report may be submitted. to reduce the cost. IQAC reports of the colleges are submitted to NAAC the same may be forwarded to UGC, NCTE so as to track the progress of the colleges and enable colleges to get funds for research and so on. This should be made a policy decision.
4. NACC must build a pool of resources and mechanisms to guide the colleges towards excellence not just accredit them.
5. The peer team visit of the NAAC needs to be reworked, relooked at! The element of subjectivity was raised by many coordinators. NAAC may include aspects like open house presentations during NAAC. This will support transparency in the system.

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