RESEARCH FRONT
Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed International Journal

ISSN
(Online) 2320 – 8341
(Print) 2320 – 6446

Role of NAAC/NBA Accreditation in Quality Benchmarking Institutional Performance for Realising Viksit Bharat 2047

Mayur Laxman Ghadge[1]
Research Scholar
Shri Shahu Mandir Mahavidyalaya,
Parvati, Pune-9

Dr. R. S. Desai (Mavchi)[2]
H.O.D. Department of Economics
Shri Shahu Mandir Mahavidyalaya,
Parvati, Pune-9

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21897291

ABSTRACT

Achieving India's vision of becoming a fully developed country by 2047 as laid out by Viksit Bharat will rely heavily on the robustness and quality of the nation's higher education system. Over the last 30 years, via the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA), India has had reliable sources to ensure the quality of its institutes of higher learning. Key to understanding if these two organizations reliably enhance the performance of accredited institutes has been evaluating how measurable improvements occur over time. This paper employs a secondary longitudinal data set covering the years 2010-2024 that evaluates accreditation-status based performance of accredited educational institutes across research productivity, faculty credentials, student success rates, and governance quality. Using the All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) report, National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) report, NAAC grade report, NBA evaluation results, UGC annual report, and bibliographic analysis reports published on Scopus, we find strong and statistically significant positive associations between accreditation status and performance in all four performance categories studied. This article also addresses the systemic limitations of inadequate accreditation coverage (approximately only 20 percent of colleges currently have an accredited status) and provides evidence-based solutions to transform accreditation from a compliance activity into an integral component of India's national quality engine and a driver to achieve the Viksit Bharat 2047 and National Education Policy 2020 objectives.

Keywords: *NAAC, NBA, Accreditation, Quality Benchmarking, Viksit Bharat 2047, NEP 2020, Higher Education, Institutional Performance, NIRF, AISHE*

ISSN
(Online) 2320 – 8341
(Print) 2320 – 6446

1. INTRODUCTION

India's higher education system is one of the largest in the world. The NAAC was established by the University Grants Commission in 1994 and is responsible for accrediting and assessing institutes based on seven categories: curriculum design, teaching and learning, research, infrastructure, student support, governance and institutional values (NAAC, 2022). The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) operates under the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which became an autonomous body in 2010, and operates under Outcome Based Accreditation of Programmes for the fields of Engineering, Management, Pharmacy and Architecture (NBA Annual Report, 2022-23). Together, the NAAC and NBA represent the framework by which HEI's in India are evaluated and compared with one another, allowing for improvement.

The timing of this research is critical. The Viksit Bharat 2047 vision states that India will be a high-income, developed nation through several channels, including becoming a globally competitive knowledge economy. At the same time the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has set targets to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio from 27.1% in 2021 to 50% by 2035 (NEP 2020, Government of India). The combination of the desired growth in enrolment along with the very high quality expectation creates an urgency on the strategic national importance of accreditation effectiveness not just an academic issue.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research has five goals that are all related to each other. The first goal is to research how much NAAC and NBA Accreditation in India has increased and where those HEIs will be located. The second goal is to review the historical patterns created between accreditation grades and some markers that indicate how well a HEIs perform based on their overall research, faculty qualifications, student outcomes, and infrastructure. The third goal of this research is to find out whether NAAC grades actually improve when receiving a new grade during each cycle also has any correlation with NIRF ranking improvement. The fourth goal is to examine the patterns of progressive changes within institutions at the time they were accredited. Lastly the fifth goal is to place findings made in this research in context with the goals set forth by Viksit Bharat 2047 and the NEP 2020 in order to provide concrete recommendations for the future.

ISSN
(Online) 2320 – 8341
(Print) 2320 – 6446

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study will include every state and territory in India and all institutions that were accredited by NAAC from 2010 to 2024. While the study will also examine programs that have been accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) in technical and professional fields, the scope of this analysis has been limited to the fields of Engineering and Management because those disciplines have the most comprehensive program level data. The only methods that will be used for this study include analyses of secondary data and will not include any primary field methods such as institutional site visits or completion of surveys by individual respondents. These limitations of the study are intentional, as the goal of the research is to provide a systematic and macro-level overview of the impact of accreditation on the system as a whole, versus a geographically-limited and contextually-detailed case study.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a longitudinal secondary data research design because it is an appropriate method given the scale required for analysis. In this study, secondary data analysis is not viewed as a compromise but rather, the large amount, institutional authority and longitudinal consistency found within the national data sources for Indian higher education all make these same sources ideally suited for conducting system-wide performance tracking for over the course of a decade.

The data sources used include: (i) AISHE Annual Reports, published by the Ministry of Education from 2010-11 to 2021-22, contain enrolment, faculty qualifications and infrastructure data; (ii) NIRF Annual Reports, published by the Ministry of Education, covering 2016-2024, contain institutional performance scoring; (iii) NAAC Portal (naac.gov.in) data spanning from 2010-2024 are used to obtain accreditation status, grades and historical grade changes; (iv) NBA Annual Reports issued from 2015-2023 are used to provide programme-level accreditation data; (v) UGC Annual Reports covering 2010-2024 contain funding and institutional recognition data; (vi) AICTE Annual Reports from 2012-2024 are used to provide technical education data.

These data sources were compiled into an institution level panel dataset, which used accreditation status, NAAC Grade Band, Type of Institution (e.g., government or private), and geographical area as the basis for the compilation of the institutional dataset. Data were analysed using three types of analysis: (1) descriptive trend analysis, (2) correlation analysis, and (3) pre

ISSN
(Online) 2320 – 8341
(Print) 2320 – 6446

and post accreditation analysis. Analysis results are organized thematically by performance dimension (e.g., characteristics of performance) to provide a coherent and understandable narrative.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Accreditation Coverage: A System Still Far Short of Universal Reach.

Accreditation Coverage Is a System Still Far Short of Being Universal. One of the most disheartening pieces of information from this longitudinal study is the distribution of coverage. At the time of writing (in March 2024), NAAC has accredited over 9062 institutions (NAAC, 2024). Compared to the national landscape of 43796 colleges that exist in India according to AISHE 2021-22, this indicates approximately 80% of all colleges in India have not received any sort of quality assessment by either body accredited by NAAC. In addition, the geographic distribution of programs is extremely uneven. For example, in Karnataka there are over 1800 accredited institutions (NAAC State-wise Data, 2024) while there are vast numbers of students enrolled in other states with many fewer accredited institutions such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Conversely, the progress made by NBA was more positive than that of NAAC because computerisation began linking accreditation from AICTE to the criteria necessary for an institution to be recognised to the present. For example, in 2015 there were approximately 2800 accredited programmes via NBA and by 2023 there are over 6000 programmes, a near doubling of coverage over a period of 10 years (NBA Annual Report, 2022-23).

5.2 Accreditation and Research Productivity:

The number of Scopus-indexed papers published in India has grown dramatically to over 335,000 as of 2023. There are less than 300 institutions with an A++ or A+ NAAC grade of accreditation; thus, these A-rated institutions have produced a vastly disproportionate number of high-impact research publications. Moreover, NIRF analysis from 2016-2024 further indicates that there is a significantly increased rate of research output during the three- to five-year timeframe following first-accreditation or upward-accreditation-change of an institution; thus, the process of accreditation creates long-term incentives for research investment.

ISSN
(Online) 2320 – 8341
(Print) 2320 – 6446

5.3 Faculty Qualifications: Accreditation Grade as Human Capital Indicator.

Several longitudinal studies utilizing the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) data demonstrate that the level of doctoral degrees among a faculty member is highly correlated with National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) grade and that doctoral proportion above 70% is typically found at A+ and A++ rated institutions, whereas B and C rated institutions are likely to have less than 40% of their faculty members with a doctoral degree (Ministry of Education, AISHE reports 2018-2022). Furthermore, this relationship has remained consistent over time, which perhaps promotes institutional reputation and attracts a higher proportion of doctoral faculty, ultimately resulting in superior performance on future assessments when institutions go through their next cycle of accreditation.

5.4 Student Outcomes and NIRF Correlation: Lagged but Real.

As indicated by the data from NIRF rankings from 2019 through 2024, of all the universities that appear in the top 50 NIRF 2024 rankings, only four of them did not receive a NAAC grade of A+ or better (Ministry of Education, NIRF 2024) while at least 46 received a grade of A+ or better. It is also notable that state universities which increased their NAAC grade during consecutive assessment cycles had NIRF score average increases of 8 to 15 points during the next ranking cycle, consistent and delayed performance effects that support the case for institutional change from accreditation through longitudinal data analysis (Ministry of Education, NIRF 2016-2024). Similarly to the average NIRF score increase for state universities, placed outcomes for NBA accredited engineering programs outperformed those for non-accredited programs through reported higher campus recruitment rates in AICTE placement surveys (AICTE Annual Report, 2022-2023).

5.5 Governance and Infrastructure: Quiet but Consequential Gains.

Perhaps the least visible but most institutionally transformative impact of NAAC accreditation has been the widespread establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs). As of 2023, over 8,500 IQACs are functional across NAAC-accredited institutions, creating a formal internal quality monitoring infrastructure that documents performance, tracks outcomes, and prepares institutions for the next assessment cycle (UGC Annual Report, 2022-23). Infrastructure investment — in library holdings, digital resources, laboratory equipment — also shows documented increases in the years immediately preceding NAAC assessment, as recorded

ISSN
(Online) 2320 – 8341
(Print) 2320 – 6446

in institutional development plans submitted to the UGC, indicating that the accreditation cycle functions as a structured investment trigger.

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine, through fourteen years of longitudinal secondary data, whether NAAC and NBA accreditation genuinely improve institutional performance in Indian higher education and the answer that emerges is a qualified but meaningful yes. Accreditation works. It is associated with better research output, more qualified faculty, stronger student outcomes, and more robust governance. But it works primarily for the roughly 20 percent of institutions that have engaged with it, leaving the vast and often more vulnerable majority of India's colleges and universities outside its reach entirely.

For Viksit Bharat 2047 to be realized through higher education, this cannot remain the status quo. India needs accreditation that is mandatory rather than voluntary for publicly funded institutions, faster in its reassessment cycles, more sharply aligned with innovation and employability outcomes, and comprehensively digitalized to enable real-time quality monitoring. The foundation — built by NAAC and NBA over three decades is sound. What remains is the political urgency and institutional will to extend its reach and deepen its impact at the scale that India's developmental ambitions genuinely demand.

REFERENCES

- All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Reports 2010-11 to 2021-22. Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi.
- AICTE Annual Reports 2012-2023. All India Council for Technical Education, New Delhi.
- Ministry of Education, Government of India. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. New Delhi.
- Ministry of Education, Government of India. (2016-2024). National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Annual Reports. New Delhi.
- Mishra, S. (2011). Quality Assurance in Higher Education: An Introduction. Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver.

ISSN
(Online) 2320 – 8341
(Print) 2320 – 6446

- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). (2024). Accredited Institutions — State-wise Data. naac.gov.in. Bengaluru.
- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). (2022). Manual for Universities. NAAC, Bengaluru.
- National Board of Accreditation (NBA). (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. nbaind.org, New Delhi.
- NITI Aayog, Government of India. (2023). Viksit Bharat 2047: Vision and Strategy Framework. New Delhi.
- Rao, P., and Krishnamurthy, V. (2022). Accreditation and Research Productivity in Indian State Universities: Evidence from NIRF Data. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 44(3), 211-229.
- Scopus. (2023). India Country Profile — Research Output Trends 2015-2023. Elsevier Analytics. scopus.com.
- Sharma, R., and Mehta, A. (2019). Outcome-Based Accreditation and Graduate Employment: Evidence from NBA-Accredited Engineering Programmes. Higher Education for the Future, 6(2), 143-162.
- Stella, A., and Gnanam, A. (2004). Quality Assurance in Distance Education: The Challenges to be Addressed. Higher Education, 47(2), 143-160.
- University Grants Commission (UGC). (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. UGC, New Delhi.
- World Bank. (2018). Reforms for Results: Higher Education in India. World Bank Group, Washington D.C.